

COMPACT
DIGITAL AUDIO
PACO 080

Gallas Tosca

PRISTINE
AUDIO
XR

This *Tosca* was always different; headstrong and full-blooded both when the red recording light was on and when it was off. Truly drama per musica. Her co-star, the great baritone Tito Gobbi, called it "one of the finest recordings [I] had participated in and one of [my] best experiences of this kind". Sixteen years after the sessions in August 1953, the Stranghi-like Walter Legge listened again to the Tosca he had produced for EMI. They had made *immortal contributions through records to the artistic history of our time*," he wrote to his heroine, Callas, who was by now living in semi-retirement in Paris. The two had become estranged, and it was, wrote Legge, when he relistened to their *Tosca* that he realised how trivial their disagreements were in the face of what they had together achieved (the letter worked: the producer and his Tosca were reconciled).

Art had begun as commerce, as is usual with the record business. In the early 1950s, Legge and EMI faced a problem. They were about to launch their own label in the United States, HMV Angel, rather than rely on American companies such as CBS for distribution. To run the new operation they had cunningly poached the formidable husband-and-wife team of Dario and Doris Soria from Cetra records. EMI knew that Italian opera was a big seller across the Atlantic and the Sorias, according to EMI music consultant Tony Locanto, "were skilled at marketing and promotion and knew the American market very well. Certainly Callas to them looked like an extremely promising and exciting artist who would add lustre to the new Angel catalogue".

As Legge wrote later: "I was rather late on the Callas bus. Italy was not officially my territory." He felt more at home north of the Alps, with Mozart and Herbert von Karajan in particular, but business was business and was, as ever, driven by talent — and the talent who had everyone talking was Callas. "At long last, a truly exciting Italian soprano!" wrote Legge. "My appetite was further whetted when one of her famous male colleagues described her as 'not your type of singer'."

A performance of *Norma* in Rome in 1951 convinced the deeply competitive Legge that he had to have her for EMI, though it would be a year and many meetings before he got her signature on a contract. It hadn't been easy, he recalled. "The expected tribute at every meeting, and my arms still aches at the recollection of the pots of flowering shrubs and trees that Dario [Soria] lugged in the Verona apartment."

Christopher Cook, Gramophone June 2007

Transfer notes

This recording has been issued and reissued so many times and on so many labels that it seemed futile to begin another transfer unless something really special and new could be brought to it, something to distinguish it clearly and dramatically from all that have gone before. I believe that has been accomplished. Working from mint French LP pressings, Pristine's 32-bit XR remastering process has lifted the veil of nearly 60 years to bring a dramatic new life and clarity to the sound quality familiar to so many for so long. The result of this process is truly astonishing to hear, and the sound quality revealed is ravishing. In its recommended Ambient Stereo incarnation there's a real sense of space around the performers as well. Finally, analysis of electrical hum buried in the original recording indicates an original performance pitch of A=444.78Hz, which has been preserved for this release. **AK**

FULL PROGRAMME NOTES CAN BE FOUND ONLINE AT WWW.PRISTINECLASSICAL.COM
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Puccini Tosca

Maria Callas

Giuseppe di Stefano

Tito Gobbi

Franco Calabrese

Angelo Mercuriali

Giuseppe Taddei

Melchiorre Lufaj

Dario Caselli

Alvaro Cordova

Chorus and Orchestra of La Scala, Milan

Chorus Master Vittorio Valluzzi

Conductor Vitojir de Sabata

Studio recording, 1953

PRISTINE
AUDIO
XR

Puccini Tosca

Disc 1

Act 1

- 1 Ah! Finalmente! (5:28)
- 2 Dammi i colori - Recondita armonia (4:21)
- 3 Gente là dentro! (1:10)
- 4 Mario! Mario! Mario! (6:54)
- 5 Ah, quegli occhi - Quale occhio al mondo può star di paro (5:09)
- 6 È buona la mia Tosca (4:55)
- 7 Un tal baccano in chiesa! (3:22)
- 8 Tutto è chiaro (3:02)
- 9 Ed io venivo a lui tutta dogliosa (3:54)
- 10 Tre sbirri, una carrozza (4:18)

Act 2

- 11 Tosca è un buon falco! (3:02)
- 12 Ha più forte (2:16)
- 13 Meno male! (3:14)
- 14 Dov'è dunque Angelotti? (1:59)
- 15 Ed or fra noi parliam da buoni amici (3:57)
- 16 Orsù, Tosca, parlate (2:59)
- 17 Basta, Roberti (1:27)
- 18 Nel pozzo, Del giardino (3:48)
- 19 Se la giurata fede debbo tradir (3:35)
- 20 Vissi d'arte (3:13)

Disc 2

- 1 Vedi, le man giunte io stendo a te! (3:39)

- 2 E qual via scegliete? (6:38)

Act 3

- 3 Io de' sospiri (5:33)
- 4 Mario Cavaradossi? A voi (3:02)
- 5 E lucevan le stelle (3:45)
- 6 Ah! Franchigia a Floria Tosca (2:32)
- 7 O dolci mani mansuete e pure (4:52)
- 8 E non giungono (2:25)
- 9 Com'è lunga l'attesa! (2:14)
- 10 Presto! Su, Mario! Mario! Su! Presto! Andiam! (1:14)

Maria Callas - *Tosca*

Giuseppe di Stefano - *Cavaradossi*

Tito Gobbi - *Scarpia*

Franco Calabrese - *Angelotti*

Angelo Mercuriali - *Spoletta*

Melchiorre Luise - *Sacrestan*

Dario Caselli - *Sciarrone/Gaoler*

Alvaro Cordova - *Shepherd*

Chorus & Orchestra of La Scala, Milan Victor de Sabata

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disc
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XR remastering by
Andrew Rose

Transfers from EMI box set
2 C 163-000410/1

Cover artwork based on a
photograph of Maria Callas

Giacomo Puccini Tosca

Text: **Luigi Illica &**

Giuseppe Giacosa

from *La Tosca* by **Victorien Sardou**

Producer: **Walter Legge**

Engineer: **Robert Beckett**

Recorded 10-21 August, 1953
Teatro alla Scala, Milan

Total duration: **1 hr 47:58**

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