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# Callas I Puritani

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XR

## THE CAST

Elvira - **Maria Callas** *soprano*  
Lord Arturo Talbo - **Giuseppe Di Stefano** *tenor*  
Sir Riccardo Forth - **Rolando Panerai** *bass*  
Sir Giorgio - **Nicola Rossi-Lemeni** *bass*  
Enrichetta di Francia - **Aurora Cattelani** *mezzo-soprano*  
Sir Bruno Robertson - **Angelo Mercuriali** *tenor*  
Lord Gualtiero Valton - **Carlo Forti** *bass*

John Steane in his notes to this set rightly reminds us that it was Callas's famous 78rpm record of Elvira's Second Act scena that awakened many attentive ears to the particular calibre and magic of Callas's art. By the time this set (which appeared three or four years later) was made, she was an established star, and the uniquely elegiac, plangent quality of her Bellini singing was amply confirmed. I can hardly think of any music in all her recorded repertory I would rather hear her interpret than "Qui la voce", "Oh, vieni al tempio" from the Wedding scene, or "Son vergin vezzosa". They seem to adumbrate the very best of her art: the limpid tone (here, in her prime, warm and sensuous), her moving, meaningful way with coloratura, pointed diction. That last attribute, allied to that vulnerable feeling Callas could always bring to her voice, are heard to marvellous effect in the recitative, most of all in the passage where Elvira is restored to her senses when her beloved Arturo returns to her side... **A. B.**, *Gramophone*, September 1987, *EMI reissue*

## Transfer notes

The year 1953 was a phenomenally busy one in the studio for Maria Callas. The previous September had seen her first opera recording, 1953 saw *Lucia di Lammermoor* (January & February), *I Puritani* (March), *Cavalleria Rusticana* (April & August), *Tosca* (August), and *La Traviata* (September) all recorded by EMI. The middle three were recorded at La Scala in Milan, where Callas was to record the majority of her major opera recordings, with the present recording being the first of these.

As was typical of the day, the voices were dry and the orchestra somewhat boxy and wooden in sound quality, generating a sound which was relatively clean and clear but not particularly flattering to any of the musicians. Furthermore the lower end was somewhat feeble, leaving the lower male voice sounding a little pale; overall the sound was flat and one-dimensional. This XR-remastering, best heard in its Ambient Stereo version, tackles all of these shortcomings; whilst of course the recording remains central and mono, a sense of reality and space is opened up around voices and orchestra we can truly believe in. The singers - both soloists and chorus - are immediate and very much alive in front of the listener, and the orchestra's tone is full and clear, shedding any hint of boxiness

Careful analysis or residual hum suggests an orchestral pitch of around A4=447Hz, which has been adopted here. **AR**

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# I Puritani

BELLINI



## Maria Callas

Giuseppe Di Stefano  
Rolando Panerai  
Nicola Rossi-Lemeni  
Aurora Cattelani  
Angelo Mercuriali  
Carlo Forti

Orchestra and Chorus of  
**Teatro alla Scala**  
Chorus Master **Vittore Veneziani**  
Conductor **Tullio Serafin**

Studio recording, Milan, 1953

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XR remastering by  
**Andrew Rose**

Cover artwork based on a  
photograph of **Maria Callas**

**Vincenzo Bellini**  
**I PURITANI**

Text: **Carlo Pepoli**  
Recorded 24-30 March, 1953  
Basilica di Santa Eufemia, Milan  
Producer: **Dino Olivieri**  
Engineers: **I. Varisco**  
Catalogue numbers  
Columbia 33.CX.1058-60

Total duration: **2hr 19:58**

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## Bellini I Puritani

### DISC 1: ACT 1 - Scene 1

- 1 Sinfonia (3:31)
- 2 All'erta! All'erta! (4:24)
- 3 O di Cromvel guerrieri (3:25)
- 4 A festa! (2:22)
- 5 Or dove fuggio io mai (2:51)
- 6 Ah! per sempre io ti perdei (5:01)

### Scene 2

- 7 O amato zio (2:17)
- 8 Sei com'arde in petto mio (6:51)
- 9 Odi, Qual suon si desta? (2:44)

### Scene 3

- 10 Ad Arturo onore (2:27)
- 11 A te, o cara, amor talora (6:25)
- 12 I rito augusto (6:14)
- 13 Son vergin vezzosa (12:20)
- 14 Ah vieni al tempio (7:05)

### DISC 2: ACT 2

- 1 Ah, dolor! Ah, terror! (5:27)
- 2 Qual novella? (2:59)
- 3 Cinta di fiori (7:10)
- 4 O rendetemi la speme (9:55)
- 5 Vien, diletto, è in ciel la luna! (2:45)
- 6 Il rival salvar tu dêi (4:41)
- 7 Se tra il buio fantasma vedrai (2:24)
- 8 Riccardo! Riccardo! (5:32)

### ACT 3

- 9 Son salvo, alfin son salvo (4:30)
- 10 A una fonte afflito e solo (2:30)
- 11 Qual suon! Alcun s'appressa (2:05)
- 12 Son già lontani! (3:13)
- 13 Fini, me lassa! (6:10)
- 14 Viena, vieni fra queste braccia (2:41)
- 15 Alto là! (3:17)
- 16 Credeasi, misera! (5:26)
- 17 Suon d'araldi? (1:16)

**Chorus & Orchestra of La Scala Serafin**