

Chapter 1 : Beverly Sills - Rigoletto Rcording Review

That one recording should continue to hold sway over many other attractive comers after so long is simply a tribute to Callas, Gobbi, Serafin and Walter Legge. Whatever the merits of its successors, and they are many, no Rigoletto has surpassed Gobbi in tonal variety, line, projection of character.

There I concentrated on the early stereo recordings. But, before that, there was an earlier generation of complete sets, in mono. The present one has by many been regarded as the true classic. It has been reissued on numerous occasions and is available on EMI as well as on Naxos since the copyright has expired. The competition in the old days consisted of three sets. The RCA remake dated from but was still in mono. These are fine casts, all of them, though variably successful. He was one of the finest Verdi baritones from around until his untimely death in His daughter Gilda was the German soprano Erna Berger, a splendid Mozart singer and in later years a good Lieder singer too. By she was fifty and while the agility was still intact the tone had aged. Jan Peerce was a mainstay at the Met for many years and a reliable singer. This is a Metropolitan Rigoletto as it might have been heard after WW2. Cetra was an Italian company and they recorded most of the standard operas plus quite a few Italian rarities. They employed Italian radio orchestras and almost entirely home-bred singers. This cast boasted the baritone who was the only serious challenger to Gobbi, Giuseppe Taddei. The Duke was sung by the natural heir to Beniamino Gigli, with the same honeyed pianissimos: Gigli never recorded the role complete but to get a notion of what it would have been like one should listen to Tagliavini. Lina Pagliughi had participated in a complete Rigoletto in the late s when she was still just around The RCA remake, recorded in Rome, had Robert Merrill in the title role; few singers have sported a more beautiful voice. He has also been accused of being rather bland or, at least, generalized in his readings. Gilda was sung by his then ex-wife Roberta Peters. As opposed to Berger and Pagliughi she was young and fresh. So where does the Serafin set stand in comparison? First of all it is the best recorded of the four. The Perlea set suffers from overload and distortion. Cetra was never known to be a high-tech company and the Cellini was made in the very infancy of the LP era. The choral passages are lifelike and thrilling. As for the conducting, Serafin wins hands down. He chooses sensible speeds, is lenient with the singers yet secures a rhythmic incisiveness that very often is truly infectious. The La Scala orchestra was on their best behaviour those September weeks and the chorus impresses even more. The courtiers at the beginning of act II, mocking Rigoletto, also have to be punchy. Of the solo singers Plinio Clabassi is a booming Monterone, even though his lowest notes are sketchy. Nicola Zaccaria is as usual reliable but his Sparafucile sounds too genial in the first encounter with Rigoletto. In the final act he is more sinister. Giuseppe Di Stefano should have been a near-ideal Duke of Mantua. He is ardent, vivacious and incisive with the words but he can also be crude and lacking in elegance. The Duke is an aristocrat and from such a person one expects style and refinement. He has many good moments, though. E il sol del anima is sung with fine tone and care for nuances. The end of the duet is magical, Gigli-like. In between he indulges in some provincial shouting. His big aria in act II is no doubt thrilling but his open, uncovered vowels are disturbing, especially when with hindsight we know that this did irreparable damage to his voice. But she was a masterly actress and could transform her voice to suit many different characters. Maybe she is at her most convincing in the Rigoletto-Gilda duet in act I scene 2, which is desert island stuff. And this is not only due to Callas but also to Tito Gobbi. He is magnificent throughout the performance. He made many memorable recordings: This Rigoletto is in the same league. It is the most human and vulnerable Rigoletto on record. The most formidable in his wrath and the most tragic when he realises the truth. He is fatherly caring when he meets Gilda. He is in despair when he meets the courtiers in act II. Under pressure the tone tends to become pinched. Of the four sets I have analysed above none is superior in every respect, all have their merits. For so diversified an opera as Rigoletto a single version cannot be sufficient. The Serafin is theatrically superior and the singing, though not free from blemishes, is on a high level. Sixten Ehrling conducts at white heat, Toscanini-like, with Hugo Hasslo as an uncommonly well-sung and expressive Rigoletto. You will never regret it!

Chapter 2 : 10 recommended recordings to listen to for Giuseppe Verdi's 200th birthday | The Seattle Times

This is a list of recordings of Rigoletto, an opera by Giuseppe Verdi with an Italian libretto by Francesco Maria Piave based on the play Le roi s'amuse by Victor Hugo. It was first performed at La Fenice in Venice on 11 March

Duke of Mantua Possente amor mi chiama Sung by: Duke of Mantua Questa o quella Sung by: Duke of Mantua Tutte le feste al tempio Sung by: As luck would have it, one of the Austrian censors, Luigi Martello, was a Verdi fan and it was he who suggested shifting the action from the French King to a fictional Mantuan Duke. It was at this stage that Rigoletto gained its name with the hunchback jester Triboulet becoming Rigoletto, a name taken from the title of another Hugo play, Rigoletti, ou Le dernier des fous. Rigolo meaning funny in French! Verdi was sufficiently happy with the results that he set to work, writing the bulk of the score in 40 days. The premiere was a huge success and Rigoletto has never been far from the operatic stage since. He was the king of France for most of the first half of the 16th Century, now long dead. The play was taken by the French government however, quite accurately as little more than a thinly veiled attack on the current King: Louis had come to the throne only two years earlier and after many years of political unrest the Government was extremely twitchy about perceived criticism. The play was swiftly banned. This particularly offended Hugo as censorship had supposedly been eliminated only two years previous. The printed text became wildly popular. Vincenzo Gonzaga Though Rigoletto was originally based on French kings, Verdi was not without an historical model for dirty Mantuan Dukes. There are a few possible candidates almost all of whom belong to the Gonzaga family. Most likely is Vincenzo Gonzaga who was Duke of Mantua from 1629 to 1643. His father was a frugal, puritanical hunchback but Vincenzo took a different path, spending vast sums of money on wine, horses and music. He wrote 10 libretti for Verdi starting with Ernani and including many of his greatest works including La Traviata and Simon Boccanegra. Amongst his many skills were his abilities as a negotiator, a talent he was repeatedly forced to use with both Verdi and the various European censors. Verdi could be harsh with him, he gave him hell when the first version of Rigoletto was blocked, but they formed a strong bond over many years and after Piave suffered a stroke in 1857 Verdi supported his wife and daughter as well as paying for his funeral when he died in 1857.

Chapter 3 : Rigoletto () - Rigoletto () - User Reviews - IMDb

This is a recording with incredible singing from three great voices: Sutherland, Pavarotti, and Milnes. It is simply an aural pleasure to hear.

Finally, my craving for the good, old Verdian melody led me to investigate my humble collection of recordings for one of his most melodic and most beautiful operas: I have found all in all three recordings, I have listened to all of them – to some with pleasure, to some with exasperation, to some with rapture – and I have bought a wonderful book for the complete libretto which turned out to be much more than that. Here are some random thoughts of mine about this opera, these three recordings, and this lovely little book. It is just my personal opinion, it has nothing to do with you and it is not important, or at least should not be, for you. I have always loved Rigoletto very much. It was one of the first operas I saw on the stage and it has always been one of the operas I most often listen to. Now, a number of years after the first time I heard it, I have found that my interest in it has grown to another level discovering that Rigoletto is more, much more, than just a feast of wonderful tunes. Now I get exasperated when people dismiss this masterpiece as an inferior work, something for newcomers to opera, something that contains too much melody and is far too popular to be considered as a serious work of art, let alone a masterpiece. And what a nonsense all that is! Not that I am not a newcomer to opera, certainly I am, but I do think Rigoletto will retain the special place in my heart it occupies now even when one day if ever I am no longer an opera neophyte. Anyway, should I be forced to choose only one opera by Verdi, only one opera at all, for my desert island exile, yes, I think I will go with Rigoletto. It has everything and is as close to perfection as possible. And please note, to settle that matter right away: I may start my reflections with the book which I purchased because of the full libretto with an English translation, but which turned out to be so much more than that. This is, of course, Rigoletto: A guide to the opera, by the renowned Verdian expert Charles Osborne and with a foreword by no one else but Tito Gobbi himself. On the dust jacket: But this book is really delightful. The last section is the only disappointment; it is perfunctory in the extreme. Moreover, two of the recordings I will refer to later are not even mentioned and I really think they should have been. Extensive quotations may also be consulted in the postscript to my review on LT. Apart from the wonderfully clear and lucid translation of the libretto, the most wonderful part of the book was the one I did not in the least expect to like: Charles Osborne goes through the whole opera and makes compelling observations in almost every paragraph. Is this really true? Well, I guess Mr Osborne, as a renowned Verdian expert, must know best. He gives a number of examples, and it was striking to read that some notes are a whole octave above what Verdi actually wrote. That seems a lot even for a person like me who has no idea of music theory. But the point remains: Verdi sought fine characterization, not show-off for singers. What a marvellous job he did in this department! Rigoletto is, of course, not perfect. And some characters are absurdly unreal and sometimes very exasperating. Gilda, for example, would hardly have any competition for the title "The stupidest girl in the world", and her all too conscious sacrifice for the man who has raped and left her for the next flirt looks pretty silly to me, to say the least. But one has to remember that Gilda is just a girl 16 years old or so and a virgin at least for Act 1 and part of Act 2 who has been brought up by his father in something very much like total seclusion. So she hardly has any idea of the world and how it works. How about the Duke? How many arias has he got? No idea, but I guess some tender ears are offended by its lightness and What an arrant nonsense! The Duke, after all, is a classic Don Juan: This is the famous recitative and aria that open Act 2: The most reasonable explanation for giving such a rake such a heartfelt music is that he honestly mistakes his lust for love. By the way, is there any difference between them? Well, you are at perfect liberty to dismiss me as an odious cynic, but I believe you would agree with me that the only chance for the Duke to achieve what he wants is to be perfectly sincere. Whether one calls it love or lust is of no consequence at all. The Duke honestly believes his feelings are genuine; he has no idea that after having gone to bed with a certain young lady once or twice all these feelings shall vanish into thin air. The women he seduces may not be very smart, but they have keen instincts and would immediately sense any insincerity. His charm is so devastating and his conquests so successful because he is always percent sincere about his feelings

at least until after the coitus. He made it much more coherent and believable. He made it as finished as any character of the proverbial rake can be. But the real gem in Rigoletto, the real masterpiece inside the masterpiece, is Rigoletto himself. Here is a character of real complexity. He is a bundle of incongruous feelings, passions and obsessions. The part needs not only an exceptional voice, but great acting skills too; it needs a singer-actor possessed of that rare quality of the soul: And on recordings he must act with his voice, which leads to one important caveat. The acting Rigoletto requires is so difficult to reconcile with the singing that those who attempt the Jester, on stage as well as on record, quite often simply leave out the music almost completely. I think Rigoletto must first be sung and then acted. After all, if Verdi wanted lots of sobbing and crying in the famous plead in Act 2, he would not have written such a wonderful music, would he? As I said in the beginning, Rigoletto is by no means a music drama. It is an opera and one with melodic richness and beauty that are hardly matched by any other. Can you imagine that the Milan and London critics in the middle of the nineteenth century complained about lack of melody?! What on earth did they mean? If there ever was an opera with lots of memorable, beautiful and extremely well integrated into the characters and the action melodies, that surely is Rigoletto. So keeping the melodic line will be the first and the strongest criterion in judging the three recordings I have listened to. But I must point out again: Most critics would surely disagree with me. As if I cared! While reflecting on these recordings, I will pay most attention to the part of Rigoletto but will try not to neglect the other principals. In any case, I will not discuss Sparafuciles and Maddalenas. The opera has several wonderful orchestral episodes although its main strength no doubt lies in the vocal parts. So here are three alternatives. Not surprisingly, the newest of them is from the early s. Well, there is no point in beating about the bush. I simply cannot stand this recording. For my own part, the only acceptable things in this recording are Giuseppe di Stefano and Tullio Serafin. And they are not at their best, either. But he sounds tired here, uninspired and bland. Which is regrettable because I think the part of the Duke is perfect for him. Perhaps he just had a few bad days; it happens to everybody from time to time. Tullio Serafin suffers mostly from bad sound. The mono is OK, although in DECCA were already making very nice stereo efforts, but the sound is distinctly poorer than the mono of the famous Tosca with Victor de Sabata two years earlier. All these are minor drawbacks and were it not for Callas and Gobbi they would have fallen into oblivion. In the aforementioned Tosca she is so fine dramatically that I not only endure her ugly voice but even like it. And speaking of timbre, like it or not, hers is far from suitable for the virginal quality essential for Gilda. She ruins the music, rather than creates a character. He may have been the greatest Rigoletto of his time all right, but what he did in this studio recording remains for my own part, I repeat! The problem is not that his voice is not in its best shape and his high notes are shaky. The problem is the histrionics. Matchless inflection of the text, the critics say. Tito Gobbi must have been great to watch on the stage, but on record he kills the music completely. And for me no dramatic inflection of the text can save this. Because Rigoletto is not Otello, after all. In short, a recording which I find very hard to endure and simply impossible to enjoy. This one is much better to endure and even possible to enjoy, to some extent at least. I have always loved the deep and dark voice of Robert Merrill and he is in fine form here, although not as fresh as in his recording with Bjoerling and Peters. Unfortunately, his voice is not powerful and versatile enough for such a monstrous part as Rigoletto. Robert Merrill is a very intelligent singer, he knows his limitations and is very convincing within them. But his pronunciation is good rather than excellent, and his vocal acting is superb but shallow in scope. Overall, he is fine but not moving.

Chapter 4 : Rigoletto recordings

Rigoletto (pronounced [reeÉjoletto]) is an opera in three acts by Giuseppe calendrierdelascience.com Italian libretto was written by Francesco Maria Piave based on the play *Le roi s'amuse* by Victor Hugo.

Certainly, the prospects of a recording medium free of tape hiss and distortion, coupled with a method of reproduction that would not deteriorate upon repeated play, were enticing indeed. But at the same time, many collectors of historic recordings harbored grave misgivings. With all of the focus upon digital technology, many feared that the great recordings of the past would fall by the wayside. As it turned out, these fears were unfounded. In fact the CD era has provided unprecedented access to historic recordings. And in many cases, thanks to the efforts of such artists as Ward Marston and Mark Obert-Thorn, collectors are enjoying a proliferation of vintage recordings, remastered in their best sound ever. Still there have been some notable omissions. One of them was this classic RCA *Rigoletto*. For years operaphiles have been clamoring for it to appear on CD. Nevertheless, while RCA has reissued a considerable number of its operatic recordings, this *Rigoletto* continued to languish in its vaults. The efforts of most of the principal singers, as well as the conductor, have been equaled or bettered on various other recordings. Nevertheless, this *Rigoletto* is indispensable, for it represents the only complete commercial documentation of Leonard Warren in the title role. As I wrote in my review of the Naxos issue of a Met broadcast: Many a baritone has come to grief in this high-lying passage. Leonard Warren, with his expert command of breath control, legato, and dynamic shading, creates an unforgettable moment of extraordinary beauty and grandeur. And it must be emphasized that his interpretation never lacks intensity or commitment. He admirably portrays the contrast between Rigoletto, the acerbic jester, and Rigoletto, the loving father. German soprano Erna Berger, despite being in her 50th year when this recording was made, is one of the more youthful-sounding Gildas. Her performance is long on technical security and attractive tone, but rather short on dramatic insight. Likewise, Jan Peerce, in superb voice, is a hearty and virile Duke of Mantua who offers little in the way of charm or humor. Nan Merriman is a vocally secure and fetching Maddalena. Nevertheless both Preiser and Naxos have used a fine source for their CD issues, with good presence and relatively minimal distortion. Also included as an appendix in both the Preiser and Naxos releases are four excerpts from Verdi operas, recorded in and featuring Warren at the height of his powers. Both the Preiser and Naxos issues are fine representations of this recording. Nevertheless, I would give Naxos the upper hand. The Naxos release offers somewhat better sound than the Preiser, with greater dynamic range, warmth, and presence. While I would hesitate to characterize the sonic differences between the two issues as dramatic, they are certainly sufficient to prefer the Naxos, even if all other considerations were equal. However, given the fact that the Naxos costs less than half of the Preiser, the choice seems clear.

Chapter 5 : Verdi: Rigoletto (page 1 of 14) | Presto Classical

Rigoletto Recording Review Opera News, January 19, , p. 37 by John W. Freeman ne groans inwardly at the thought of another Rigoletto recording-all those traditional defacements, with rarely a fresh glimmer of light shed on the score.

Chapter 6 : Verdi's Rigoletto | calendrierdelascience.com

Still, in the later part of his career, he took on increasingly heavy Verdi roles, making them work through exemplary technique and sheer musical intelligence. In this, his last recording, made scarcely a year before his recent, untimely death, he tackles the most monumental Verdi assignment of all and, on his own terms, magnificently succeeds.

Chapter 7 : Rigoletto discography - Wikipedia

There are several outstanding recordings of Rigoletto. This is one of them, and is not clearly surpassed by any. Its most

distinctive aspects are Moffo's characterization and Solti's distinctive conducting.

Chapter 8 : Rigoletto - Wikipedia

Rigoletto, the jester, is one of the greatest of all baritone parts and most great singers have wanted to have a stab at him. Three of the baritones involved on the four recordings I am discussing have true Italianate voices, warm, rounded, dark-hued and with lots of power.

Chapter 9 : Verdi: Rigoletto

"Rigoletto" â€” Michele Mariotti, conductor; Metropolitan Opera Orchestra and Chorus (DVD of live performance,); Deutsche Grammophon.