

Mario del Monaco - Napoli Eterna (2001)

Written by bluesever

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1. *O sole mio* 2. *Torna a Surriento* 3. *'O paese d'o sole* 4. *Dicitencello vuje* 5. *Core 'ngrato* 6. *'Na sera 'e maggio* 7. *Tu, ca nun chiagne* 8. *Addio a Napoli* 9. *Guapparia*

The tenor Mario del Monaco (1915-1982) possessed one of the most thrilling and powerful natural voices, which he used with energy and dramatic intensity, and, at times, unremitting volume. Born in Florence, he studied at the Pesaro Conservatorio before being encouraged by the Italian conductor Tullio Serafin to take part in a competition organised by the Rome Opera School, which he won. After six months Del Monaco left, dissatisfied with the teaching, preferring to learn through recordings.

His formal début was as Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* at the Teatro Puccini, Rome, in 1941, whilst on leave from the army. He then sang Radamès at the Verona Festival in summer 1946, and in the autumn appeared with the visiting San Carlo company from Naples at Covent Garden in London, where he performed Rodolfo in *La bohème*, Cavaradossi in *Tosca* and Canio in *Pagliacci*. While in London he made his first recordings, for EMI, but these remain unpublished.

Continuing to sing in Italy, Del Monaco also appeared on the American continent in Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires and Mexico City, before making his United States début as Radames in San Francisco in 1950. November that year also saw him make his New York appearance in *Manon Lescaut*. He continued to appear at the Metropolitan until 1959, giving a total of 102 performances in all. In 1960 he toured Russia, singing at the Bolshoy Theatre in Moscow. His return to London was in 1962 as *Otello*, a rôle he claimed to have sung on 427 occasions.

Retiring from the stage in 1973, he died near Venice, buried in his *Otello* costume. This

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recording of Aida was Del Monaco's first for Decca, for whom he would record complete operas and recitals over a period of almost twenty years. --- naxos.com

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