

## Maria Callas – Mad Scenes 1958 (Remastered 1997)

Written by bluesever

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### Maria Callas – Mad Scenes 1958



1. Gaetano Donizetti - Anna Bolena  
*Piangete voi?...Al dolce guidami castel nation*
2. Ambroise Thomas - Hamlet  
*A vos jeux mes amis (Mad Scene)*
3. Vincenzo Bellini - Il Pirata  
*Oh! s'io potessi*

Philharmonia Orchestra

Nicola Rescigno – conductor

Mad scenes in opera go back almost to the genre's invention; for composers concerned with realism, madness was a logical excuse for characters to break into florid song. The early 19th century, however, was the heyday of the mad scene, with bel canto heroines inevitably losing their minds and executing dizzying flights of coloratura. Maria Callas's collection of three such scenes bypasses the most famous--Donizetti's 'Lucia'--in favor of that composer's 'Anna Bolena,' Imogene in Bellini's 'Il Pirata,' and Ophelia from Thomas's 'Hamlet.' Callas never made complete studio recordings of these roles, though live portrayals of the Donizetti and Bellini are available.

This is more than just a collection of opera highlights; each scene is an extended dramatic tableau in which Callas enacts a series of shifting moods as a tragic situation unfurls. They are more, too, than simple representations of madness, as Anna, for example, goes from insanity to calm acceptance of fate, back to hallucination, and finally to righteous anger. Callas imbues these roles with her unique dramatic power, and she is in excellent voice as well; this is as technically fluent and dazzling a recording as she ever made. Though Anna, Ophelia, and

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Imogene may be mad and defeated, Callas emerges triumphant. ---arkivmusic.com

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