

Giacomo Puccini - Puccini Discoveries (2004)

Written by bluesever

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01. *Prelude for Orchestra*
02. *Scherzo for String Quartet in A minor* [play](#)
03. *Manon Lescaut, Act 3 Prelude*
04. *Cantata "Cessato il suon dell'armi"*
05. *Scossa elettrica*
06. *Corazzata Sicilia*
07. *Inno di Roma*
08. *Ecce sacerdos magnus*
09. *Salve Regina* [play](#)
10. *Adagietto*
11. *Requiem*
12. *Vexilla regis*
13. *Mottetto per San Paolino*
14. *Turandot - Act 3 Finale*

Joseph Calleja (Tenor)
Domenico Balzani (Baritone)
Alberto Mastromarino (Baritone)
Maria Fontosh (Soprano)
Chiara Taigi (Soprano)
Mario Luperi (Bass)
Carlo Bosi (Tenor)
Bülent Bezdüz (Tenor)
Eva Urbanová (Soprano)
Dario Volonté (Tenor)

Verdi Grand Symphonic Orchestra Milan
Verdi Chorus Milan
Riccardo Chailly – director

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To appreciate Puccini, the production notes tell us, you should know the full Puccini, and this compilation of never before heard and/or little known compositions cover the gamut, from orchestral works to choral pieces, to songs and band music, the latter of which I found least enjoyable, but still interesting. However, taken as a whole, this is a worthwhile addition to one's library. The orchestral pieces, perhaps, are the most enjoyable, reflecting my own bias for the rich sounds and emotional resonance that a full orchestra can emote. You will likely enjoy tracks 1-4. These can be enjoyed standing along as most orchestral works can. However, that is to take nothing away from the truly fine singing and orchestral work when combined in one package such as is done in track 4, where tenor Joseph Calleja, teams with the orchestra (Orchestra Sinfonica de Milano Giuseppe Verdi)) and full chorus (the Coro de Milano Giuseppe Verdi) in "Cantata `Cessato il suon dell'armi". The result is a rousing blend of solo singing, clear performance and powerful interconnected accompaniment by chorus and orchestra. Some selections make you want to sit and listen and meditate as tracks 8 -12 with kudos to soprano Chiara Taiga in track 9, and the reverence displayed in the composition of track 10's "Adagetto", and very Verdi like Requiem connection in track 11's "Requiem"; other tracks make you feel like working around the house, or in my case, writing a review, with the cats outside and CD on full blast. The CD contains eight truly wonderful world premieres, including the Berio "Turandot" Finale (which I found annoying) and my favorite the moody, flowing "Adagetto".

–OperaOnline.us

This is a very enjoyable and important collection of generally lesser known Puccini works. The conducting and performances are mostly excellent. For the historically curious, the liner notes provide chronological summaries of the the music, giving details of each piece. These notes would be much more useful if the recording actually followed the same sequence! For some strange reason, the compositions are programmed in random order, except for the first and the last. That puzzlement alone is my reason for four stars. Otherwise, wonderful. –Patrick Maschka

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