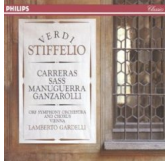


Giuseppe Verdi – Stiffelio (Gardelli) [2005]



CD1 1. Verdi: *Stiffelio* - Overture ORF Symphony Orchestra 9:59 2. Verdi: *Stiffelio* / Act 1 - "Oh santo libre" José Carreras 2:30 3. Verdi: *Stiffelio* / Act 1 - "Di qua varcando"/"Son quanti giorni?" José Carreras 2:12 4. Verdi: *Stiffelio* / Act 1 - "Colla cenere disperso" José Carreras 2:24 5. Verdi: *Stiffelio* / Act 1 - "Viva Stiffelio!" José Carreras 3:21 6. Verdi: *Stiffelio* / Act 1 - "Non ha per me un accento" José Carreras 1:55 7. Verdi: *Stiffelio* / Act 1 - "Vidi dovunque gemere" José Carreras 4:04 8. Verdi: *Stiffelio* / Act 1 - "Ah! v'appare in fronte scritto" José Carreras 2:15 9. Verdi: *Stiffelio* / Act 1 - Tosto ei disse!" Sylvia Sass 3:46 10. Verdi: *Stiffelio* / Act 1 - "Verrà! Dovrò risponder!" Sylvia Sass 1:31 11. Verdi: *Stiffelio* / Act 1 - "Dite che il fallo a tergere" Sylvia Sass 1:09 12. Verdi: *Stiffelio* / Act 1 - "Ed io pure in faccia agli uomini" Sylvia Sass 3:05 13. Verdi: *Stiffelio* / Act 1 - "Or meco venite" Sylvia Sass 3:09 14. Verdi: *Stiffelio* / Act 1 - "M'evitan" Wladimiro Ganzarolli 0:51 15. Verdi: *Stiffelio* / Act 1 - "Plaudiam" José Carreras 3:17 16. Verdi: *Stiffelio* / Act 1 - "Cugino, pensaste al sermone?" José Carreras 2:05 17. Verdi: *Stiffelio* / Act 1 - "Oh qual m'invade ed agita" José Carreras 3:02 18. Verdi: *Stiffelio* / Act 1 - "No! volete" José Carreras 2:49 CD2 1. Verdi: *Stiffelio* / Act 2 - "Oh cielo! dove son io" Sylvia Sass 3:41 2. Verdi: *Stiffelio* / Act 2 - "Ah, dagli scanni eterei" Sylvia Sass 3:42 3. Verdi: *Stiffelio* / Act 2 - "Perder dunque voi volete" Sylvia Sass 2:40 4. Verdi: *Stiffelio* / Act 2 - "Io resto"... "Qual rumore" José Carreras 3:06 5. Verdi: *Stiffelio* / Act 2 - "Santo è il loco" José Carreras 2:20 6. Verdi: *Stiffelio* / Act 2 - "Ah no, è impossibile" José Carreras 3:08 7. Verdi: *Stiffelio* / Act 2 - "Dessa non è" José Carreras 5:06 8. Verdi: *Stiffelio* / Act 3 - "Ei Fugge" Matteo Manuguerra 2:45 9. Verdi: *Stiffelio* / Act 3 - "Lina, pensai che un angelo"/"Ah, si finisca" Matteo Manuguerra 3:43 10. Verdi: *Stiffelio* / Act 3 - "In questo tetto uno di noi morrà" Matteo Manuguerra 2:15 11. Verdi: *Stiffelio* / Act 3 - "Dite ai fratei che al tempio"... "Inevitabil fu questo colloquio" José Carreras 2:43 12. Verdi: *Stiffelio* / Act 3 - "Opposto è il calle" José Carreras 4:53 13. Verdi: *Stiffelio* / Act 3 - "Non allo sposo volgomi"... "Egli un patto proponeva" José Carreras 4:03 14. Verdi: *Stiffelio* / Act 3 - "Ah, sì, voliamo al tempio" José Carreras 2:18 15. Verdi: *Stiffelio* / Act 3 - "Non punirmi, Signor" Sylvia Sass 4:48 16. Verdi: *Stiffelio* / Act 3 - "Stiffelio!" "Eccomi" José Carreras 3:36

Stiffelio - José Carreras (tenor) Lina - Sylvia Sass (Soprano) Stankar - Matteo Manuguerra (Baritone) Jorg - Wladimiro Ganzarolli (Bass) Raffaele - Ezio Di Cesare (Tenor) Dorotea - Maria Venuti (Mezzo Soprano) Federico - Thomas Moser (Tenor) Austrian Radio Symphony Orchestra, Austrian Radio Chorus Lamberto Gardelli – conductor

This is the third re-issue (in Europe anyway) on CD of the only existing studio recording of Stiffelio. Luckily it is a rather good one as its live competitors are not recordings for eternity. Neither Limarilli in 1968 nor Del Monaco (at his coarsest in 1972) have much sense of style, let alone a knack for true Verdi-phrasing. Not that José Carreras is flawless.

At the time of recording (June 1979) he was at the height of his powers; a mere two years before early deterioration first slowly but soon rather quickly set in many years before his bout with illness. No, he doesn't sob like Del Monaco and he keeps a firm line unless Limarilli but he pushes his voice without mercy in a role a shade too heavy. Less charitable souls would call it yelling from time to time as he sings as if he's permanently overexcited. Maybe it wouldn't matter less if there would be flashes of insight, memorable phrases with an unexpected pianissimo here and there but it remains most of the time a very beautiful voice rolling along rather musically. One regrets that Philips didn't ask Carlo Bergonzi to record the role. True by 1979 there was no way the 55-year old tenor could have hidden the permanent flatness above the stave but even in his 1983 Oberto-recording he gave every other tenor an object lesson in noble Verdi-phrasing.

The female lead is sung by another early burn-out: Sylvia Sass; the difference with Carreras in this recording being twofold. First the 28-year old soprano is in splendid voice and contrary to the tenor there are no warning signs she is singing a role less suited to her means and secondly she brings the role of Lina to live with appropriate musical means. Though never making an ugly sound she phrases deliciously in her aria and her duets with baritone and tenor convincingly portraying the anguish and hopes in great flights of sound or mere whispers. Matteo Manuguerra is a distinguished Stankar. His is not the most beautiful or smooth voice but the voice has character and the unmistakeable brown sound of the true Italian Verdi baritone. The voice is homogeneous and manly though he too can be a little bland in his phrasing. The big aria could have done with a little more anguish and the cabaletta with a little more fury. Giulio Fioravanti on the Del Monaco-recording has a slightly better grasp on the agonies of Lina's father. By the time of the recording Vladimiro Ganzarolli, once one of the great hopes of La Scala, was already reduced to a small bit player but he has still voice enough to be an impressive Jorg. Ezio Di Cesare sings well in probably the most ungrateful Verdi-tenor-part; neither a comprimario nor a title role.

The sound is still fine and the Vienna Radio Orchestra doesn't have to feel inferior to their more famous Wiener Symphoniker-brethren. Lamberto Gardelli was for many years a stalwart in the conducting business of less known Verdi-operas. And more than once he was reviled as being pedestrian (Carlo Rizzi nowadays suffers the same fate most of the time). Well, I cannot hear anything pedestrian in his sure-footed approach; his respect for Verdi's markings and his

assisting his singers without unduly hurrying them for effect. All in all, a satisfying recording of an opera that grows more and more on you the more you play it. And once you know this once almost forgotten score, you'll be eager to see a production as a Stiffelio-performance (I saw productions in Amsterdam and Liège) is immensely rewarding in the theatre. ---Jan Neckers, operatoday.com

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