

THE OLD GUARD STILL STANDING

At the turn of the century, a few older artists, mostly in retirement, succumbed to the charms of the primitive phonograph. Perhaps they felt that they would somehow survive death, both their own and of the old romantic style of the 70's and 80's. In so doing, they preserved a performance style and a mode of singing which has become extinct.

STARS OF THE NEW CENTURY

At the same time, a generation mostly born during the 1870's was coming to the fore. Among those, a few would look back at their predecessors, others would try to adapt themselves to the new requirements of verismo. Titta Ruffo was possibly the best representative of this trend towards more power, more passion, more excitement, more realism. But Ruffo and his best contemporaries never abandoned the fundamentals of good singing in a frenzied search for dramatic truth. It would take one or two decades before his imitators helped to turn Italy, in the words of Ernest Newman, from the land of *belcanto* into a haunt of *mal'aria*.

VERISMO - MA NON TROPPO

Most commentators agree on a decline of vocal art in Italy peaking in the period 1920-1930. Many attribute it to the dramatic priorities of *verismo* imposing themselves upon the standards of *belcanto*. Yet, baritones were comparatively much less affected by *verismo* than tenors or sopranos. Franci and Formichi did not sing in the manner of Battistini or Kaschmann but certainly not to the extent Eugenia Burzio and Aureliano Pertile were different from Adelina Patti and Alessandro Bonci. And there were always islands of resistance: Urbano and Stabile, for example.

A NEW AND SOBERER GENERATION

In the late 30's and especially after World War II, a soberer approach began to prevail. In part, this was due to the resurgence of Mozart and, later on, of baroque music. The more sedate tastes of the Anglo-Saxon market also played a part. But possibly the greatest factor of change was the crescendo of cross-pollination of nationalities in the ever-growing number of Summer festivals. The result was felt in all national schools of singing, which tended to move towards a common European and North American style.

STANDING AT THE SIDE

Opera houses do not run on scarce and expensive stars alone. For day-to-day operation, they rely on a number of singers of less fame though often of outstanding merit. The Italians call them *artisti di fianco*, those who stay at the side, supposedly of the stars. Some people call them journeymen. But happy is the time which has journeymen as qualified as these *baritoni di fianco*.

Audio Encyclopedia

Si può ?



Historic Italian Baritones

This disc aims at a systematic survey of Italian baritones from the first half of the twentieth century. Fifty baritones were selected and are examined in depth. Singers are grouped by affinity, under headings which illustrate the development of the art during the period.

THE OLD GUARD STILL STANDING

Antonio Cotogni ♦ Giuseppe Kashmann ♦ Antonio Magini-Coletti ♦ Giuseppe Campanari ♦ Mattia Battistini ♦ Giuseppe Pacini ♦ Mario Ancona

STARS OF THE NEW CENTURY

Antonio Scotti ♦ G. Mario Sammarco ♦ Eugenio Giraldoni ♦ Riccardo Stracciari ♦ Giuseppe De Luca ♦ Titta Ruffo ♦ Pasquale Amato ♦ Carlo Galeffi ♦ Giuseppe Danise

VERISMO - MA NON TROPPO

Domenico Viglione-Borghese ♦ Enrico Molinari ♦ Cesare Formichi ♦ Umberto Urbano ♦ Apollo Granforte ♦ Luigi Montesanto ♦ Giacomo Rimini ♦ Mariano Stabile ♦ Benvenuto Franci ♦ Mario Basiola ♦ Giovanni Inghilleri ♦ Carlo Morelli ♦ Armando Borgioli

A NEW AND SOBERER GENERATION

Carlo Tagliabue ♦ Ugo Savarese ♦ Tito Gobbi ♦ Gino Bechi ♦ Paolo Silveri ♦ Enzo Mascherini ♦ Giuseppe Valdengo ♦ Giuseppe Taddei ♦ Sesto Bruscantini

STANDING AT THE SIDE

Giuseppe Bellantoni ♦ Enrico Nani ♦ Ernesto Badini ♦ Francesco Cigada ♦ Taurino Parvis ♦ Aristide Baracchi ♦ Emilio Ghirardini ♦ Gaetano Viviani ♦ Gino Vanelli ♦ Antenore Reali ♦ Afro Poli ♦ Ettore Nava ♦ Raffaele De' Falchi

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