

Audio Encyclopedia

OPERA RUSSE



Auber	<i>Fra Diavolo</i> - Boris Khaikin Sergei Lemeshev, Elena Gribova, P. Volvov, A. Sokolov, V. Gorbunov, N. Gusyelnikova, U. Fanlin
Beethoven	<i>Fidelio</i> - Alexander Melik-Pashayev Galina Vishnevskaya, Georgi Nelepp, Alexei Ivanov, Nikolai Shchegolkov, Victor Nechipailo
Bizet	<i>Carmen</i> - Vassily Nebolsin Valentina Borisenko, Giorgi Nelepp, Elizaveta Shumskaya, Alexei P. Ivanov <i>Les pêcheurs des perles</i> - O. Bron Nadezhda. Kazantseva, Sergei Lemeshev, V. Zakharov, T. Antonenko
Delibes	<i>Lakme</i> - Alexander Orlov Nadezhda Kazantseva, Sergei Lemeshev, Alexei Korolev, Anna Maliuta, Hugo Titz
Gluck	<i>Orpheus and Eurydice</i> - Samuel Samosud Ivan Kozlovsky, Elizaveta Shumskaya, Galina Sakharova, Tatiana Talakhadze
Gounod	<i>Faust</i> - Vassily Nebolsin Ivan Kozlovsky, Elizaveta Shumskaya, Mark Reizen, Ivan Burlak, Elena Gribova, Ivan Skobtsov <i>Romeo et Juliette</i> - Vassily Nebolsin Sergei Lemeshev, Irina Maslennikova, Ivan Burlak, Maksim Mikhailov
Leoncavallo	<i>Pagliacci</i> - Samuel Samosud Dimitir Uzunov, A. Yakovenko, Pavel Lisitsian, V. Zakharov, Genadi Pishchayev
Massenet	<i>Werther</i> - Samuel Samosud Ivan Kozlovsky, Maria Maksakova, Maria Zvezdina, Vladimir Malishev, V. Zakharov
Mozart	<i>Le nozze di Figaro</i> - Kurt Sanderling Georgi Abramov, Nadezhda Kazantseva, N. Rozhdestvenskaya, V. Sakharov, N. Alexandriyskaya
Puccini	<i>La Boheme</i> - Samuel Samosud Irena Maslennikova, Sergei Lemeshev, Galina Sakharova, Pavel Lisitsian, Genadi Pishchayev <i>Madama Butterfly</i> - O. Bron Elizaveta Shumskaya, Ivan Kozlovsky, Elena Gribova, Pavel Lisitsian
Rossini	<i>Il barbiere di Siviglia</i> - Samuel Samosud Ivan Burlak, Vera Firsova, Ivan Kozlovsky, Vladimir Malishev, Mark Reizen <i>La Cenerentola</i> - O. Bron Zara Dolukhanova, Anatoly Orfenov, Evgeni Belov, Gennadi Troitsky, K. Polyava <i>L'italiana in Algeri</i> - Samuel Samosud Zara Dolukhanova, A. Nikitin, Georgi Abramov, V. Zakharov, G. Sakharova, Anna Matyushina
Verdi	<i>Aida</i> - Alexander Melik-Pashayev Natalia Sokolova, Georgy Nelepp, Vera Davydova, Pavel Lisitsian, Ivan Petrov, Igor Mikhailov <i>Falstaff</i> - Alexander Melik-Pashayev Viktor Nechipailo, Galina Vishnevskaya, Vladimir Valaitis, Irina Arkhipova, Valentina Levko <i>Rigoletto</i> - Samuel Samosud Andrei Ivanov Ivan Kozlovsky, Irina Maslennikova, V. Gavryushov, Veronika Borisenko, I. Petrov <i>La Traviata</i> - Alexander Orlov Elizaveta Shumskaya, Ivan Kozlovsky, Pavel Lisitsian, E. Gribova <i>Requiem</i> - Alexander Melik-Pashayev Galina Vishnevskaya, Irina Arkhipova, Vladimir Ivanovsky, Ivan Petrov
Wagner	<i>Lohengrin</i> - Samuel Samosud Ivan Kozlovsky, Elizaveta Shumskaya, Eugeniya Smolenskaya, I. Bogdanov, Gennadi Troitsky

The Soviet government chose to make its complete recordings of foreign operas in Russian. This ensured a larger national audience, and a greater responsiveness from the performers. This fact alone places these recordings outside the pale for original language purists; but no apologies are required for the artistry involved. The Soviet Union had, at its disposal, some operatic talent of legendary quality when these operas were committed to disk, back in the second- third of the last century. We may blink as Kozlovsky's Orfeo grieves for the loss of his Heradicha, and momentarily wonder whatever became of Eurydice; but there is no denying the extraordinary breath control, musical intellect and sensitivity of the tenor. Pavel Lisitsian's Amonasro pleads, rants and consoles in Russian – but it is nonetheless a classic voice in a great interpretation, and a rare souvenir of one of the greatest Verdian baritones of the last hundred years.

The casts assembled for these recordings were generally taken from the ranks of the Bolshoi veterans. They repeatedly performed together many of the works recorded here, giving their ensemble work and musical interchanges a feeling of group nuance often missed in these days of singers who hop a jet, record two arias, and leave again without even knowing what unseen colleagues will be in the finished project.

The quality of the individual singing, though, is highly variable. Soviet era operatic professionals had little say regarding how much they sang, and what they sang on successive nights; or even where. Singers continued in prominent operatic roles long after their voices faded, especially if they were good character actors with personal followings. Some, in addition, played the political game to stay artistically on top; and a couple, at least, have been fingered, rightly or wrongly, as KGB informants. As a result of all this, bright young operatic voices seldom achieved exposure on record. There is little sense of inexperience from the artists we hear on these releases; worn voices are another matter.

Still, at their best, these recordings offer the thrill of great voices and conducting, exciting ensemble work, and unique interpretations.

Audio Encyclopedia