

Because of her full schedule of opera performances, Nilsson did not sing in many concerts or recitals although early in her career she did sing the Ninth Symphony of Beethoven on several occasions, including one at Bayreuth. She did give some recitals including tours of Australia and Japan as well the major music centers of Europe and North America. Her recital programs concentrated on the German and Scandinavian songs, including some rarely heard pieces by Stenhammar. She often sang "I Could Have Danced All Night" as an encore.

The voice of Birgit Nilsson was like a laser beam that cut through the orchestra, unlike the voice of Kirsten Flagstad or Jessye Norman which are like a wall of sound. It was a large voice with such brilliance that at times it gave the sensation of being sharp of the intended pitch. She was a congenial colleague except for her long-standing difficulties with Franco Corelli regarding the length of the high Cs in Puccini's Turandot and with Herbert von Karjan. Happily all of her important roles have been preserved on recordings. As long as the operas of Wagner are performed, the voice of Birgit Nilsson will be remembered, and no one has sung Puccini's Turandot with more brilliance or security. Her autobiography, *Mina minnesbilder*, was published in 1977 at Stockholm.



BIRGIT NILSSON SINGS GERMAN OPERA

Lohengrin Der Freischütz Fidelio Tannhäuser Oberon Die Walküre

The vocal talents of Birgit Nilsson were first recognized when she began to sing in her church choir. She studied voice with Ragnar Blennow in Bastad and later at the Royal Music Academy Stockholm with Joseph Hislop and Arne Sunnegårdh. She made her opera debut at Stockholm where her first important role was Agatha in *Der Freischütz*, and in 1947 she sang *Lady Macbeth* in Verdi's *Macbeth* there. Her first important international appearance came in 1951 as *Elettra* in Mozart's *Idomeneo* at the Glyndebourne Festival. In 1952, she sang *Donna Anna* in *Don Giovanni* at Florence. Her first important appearances in Wagner operas came in 1953 at Stockholm where she sang *Elisabeth* in *Tannhäuser* and *Isolde* for the first time. This marked the start of the most important Wagnerian career of the second half of the 20th century. The following year she made her Bayreuth debut as *Elsa* in *Lohengrin* and in the same season sang *Ortlinde* in *Die Walküre*. She later appeared there as *Isolde* and as *Brunnhilde*. It was in Munich during the 1954-1955 season that she first sang *Brunnhilde* in Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen* and during the same season she sang her first *Salome*. In 1957, she sang the complete *Ring*

cycle in London. At the Vienna State Opera she was heard as *Elsa*, *Sieglinde*, *Elisabeth*, *Aida*, and *Sent*. In 1957 she sang *Leonore* in Beethoven's *Fidelio* and the following season sang her first *Turandot*. She was also highly regarded for her interpretations of *Elektra* and the *Barak's Wife* in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. Her other important Italian roles were *Tosca*, *Amelia* in *Un ballo in maschera* and *Aida*. She sang at all of the major opera centers of the world including Tokyo, Paris, Buenos Aires, Chicago, San Francisco, and Hamburg. Also she sang *Turandot* in Moscow with the Teatro alla Scala. At the age of 62, a performance of Strauss' *Elektra* was videotaped at the Metropolitan Opera House and broadcast around the world.



continued

BIRGIT NILSSON SINGS GERMAN OPERA

Lohengrin Der Freischütz Fidelio Tannhäuser Oberon Die Walküre

Edward Downes

Orchestra Of The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden

1 Dich Teure Halle 4:52

Composed By - Wagner

2 Ozean Du Ungeheuer 9:25

Composed By - Weber

3 Der Männer Sippe 4:31

Composed By - Wagner

4 Du Bist Der Lenz 2:18

Composed By - Wagner

5 Einsam In Trüben Tagen 5:50

Composed By - Wagner

6 Leise, Leise 8:56

Composed By - Weber

7 Abscheulicher! 7:22

Composed By - Beethoven

Total Time: 43:14

Engineers- James Lock and Kenneth Wilkinson

Producer - John Culshaw

Recorded by Decca 1963 Transferred from a London 4-track tape



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admin@highdeftapetransfers.com
or visit our website:
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