

steel," a sentiment echoed by many other managers. Her many recordings document the range of repertoire she sang and the great artistry she displayed.

Herbert von Karajan, (born April 5, 1908, Salzburg, Austria—died July 16, 1989, Anif, near Salzburg), Austrian-born orchestra and opera conductor, a leading international musical figure of the mid-20th century.

A child prodigy on the piano, Karajan studied at the Mozarteum in Salzburg. He made his professional conducting debut in 1929 at Salzburg, and he was appointed to a conducting position in Ulm, Ger., later that year. He remained in Ulm until 1934, when he was appointed Kapellmeister at Aachen. Karajan was in Aachen until 1941, also occasionally conducting the Berlin State Opera during that period. He fled to Italy in 1944. He helped found the London Philharmonia in 1948, and in 1955 he became music director of the Berlin Philharmonic.

A Nazi Party member from 1933 to 1942, Karajan was exonerated by an Allied tribunal after World War II, but his American debut in 1955 precipitated public protests. He soon became principal conductor for the Vienna State Opera (director, 1956-64) and the Salzburg Festival, an annual music festival with which he was energetically associated throughout his later career. He was also a chief conductor at La Scala, Milan, and a guest conductor at the New York Philharmonic. In 1967 Karajan founded the Salzburg Easter Festival. He conducted the Orchestre de Paris (1969-70) and returned to the Vienna State Opera in 1977. Throughout these associations the Berlin Philharmonic generally remained the centre of his musical activities, though after 1982 a series of disputes caused estrangement between the orchestra members and Karajan. He resigned his position in April 1989, a few months before his death.

# VERDI OTELLO

**DEL MONACO • TEBALDI**



**von KARAJAN**  
**VIENNA PHILHARMONIC**

Verdi's second Shakespearean opera was to be his last dramatic (in the descriptive sense) work, followed only by his sublimely comedic Falstaff. He began to think about an operatic setting of Otello in 1879, and he asked Arrigo Boito to draft a libretto. However, Verdi was not sure that he had the energy to work and fight for what he felt was needed to bring this tragedy to the stage. Boito and Ricordi, Verdi's publisher, gently prodded the composer, and finally, in 1886, Verdi completed the score. Except for the omission of the first act of the play, the libretto follows very closely the plot of Shakespeare's play. The only major addition is the "Credo" for Iago in Act Two. There is no equivalent passage in the original and yet this aria sums up Iago's philosophy. Boito and Verdi considered using the title "Iago" instead of "Otello," but in time felt that the change would not be for the best. The premiere was a great success not only for Verdi and Boito, but also for the entire cast. For the first performances in France, Verdi rewrote part of Act Three, adding a ballet and condensing the finale of the act. The ballet music is played on concerts occasionally, but the other changes are forgotten.

The score to Otello is extremely dramatic and complex. The curtain rises to a tremendous storm, and Otello's entrance, though less than a minute long, sets the tone for this dramatic role. Otello is the heaviest role Verdi wrote, and only in the love duet is he allowed a chance to show his tender side. The second act duet with Iago has the excitement found in the cabalettas of Verdi's earlier operas, but remains an integral part of the dramatic context. Although Iago has several important solo scenes, it is as the manipulator of others that he is most important. He has no extended scene with long lyric phrases with which to show off his vocal talents. He is almost like a narrator keeping the action moving. Desdemona is one of the most placid of Verdi's heroines, but she does try to stand up to Otello in Act Three. The "Willow song" and "Ave Maria" in Act Four are part of one of the great lyric scenes for soprano. The choral and orchestral writing is among of the most

complex that Verdi had yet composed. The repeated use of the "kiss motif" to bind together the opera has been likened to a Wagnerian Leitmotiv, but Verdi uses this device only when Otello is thinking of the kiss, not to foreshadow what will be happening. Otello will continue to be a popular opera as long as a great dramatic tenor is available to sing Otello and a great baritone singing-actor is available to portray Iago.

The stentorian dramatic tenor of Mario del Monaco was heard throughout the world during the 1950s and 1960s. While often berated by critics for his unsubtle vocal production, del Monaco was a favorite of audiences who appreciated his power and sincerity of approach while tackling the heaviest roles in the Italian tenor repertory. The un-orthodox method of vocal production favored by del Monaco allowed him an overwhelming measure of strength in his middle and upper-middle registers, but lent a metallic buzz to his timbre and precluded his singing softly. Still, critics, following his death, rued his passing as they recalled performances of unsurpassed excitement.

Renata Tebaldi's voice was a very powerful spinto soprano of great beauty. She was able to sustain a long lyric line with little trouble and in the early years of her career she exhibited good control of florid passages. The extreme top of the range was lovely when singing softly, but tended to lose pitch when sung at full volume. Toscanini considered her voice one of the most beautiful in the twentieth century, and early in her career some critics felt that she was slighting the drama. She went through a vocal crisis in the early 1960s, but returned having restudied her voice and added more dramatic roles such as Gioconda and Minnie in *La fanciulla del west* to her repertoire and at the same time becoming a more intense actress. She was very careful about the roles she sang and how often she would sing. Rudolf Bing, manager of the Metropolitan Opera is quoted saying that "Tebaldi has dimples of

# Verdi Otello

## Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra Herbert von Karajan

Soprano Vocals [Desdemona] - Renata Tebaldi  
 Bass Vocals [Othello] - Mario del Monaco  
 Bass-Baritone Vocals [Jago] - Aldo Protti  
 Bass Vocals [Lodovico] - Fernando Corena  
 Bass-Baritone Vocals [Montano] - Tom Krause  
 Mezzo-soprano Vocals [Emilia] - Ana Raquel Satre  
 Tenor Vocals [Cassio] - Nello Romanato  
 Tenor Vocals [Roderigo] - Athos Cesarini  
 Vocals [An Herald] - Libero Arbage  
 Conductor - Herbert von Karajan  
 Orchestra - Wiener Philharmoniker  
 Chorus - Wiener Kinderchor, Wiener Staatsoperchor  
 Chorus Master - Roberto Benaglio  
 Recording Info: Recorded by Decca at the Sofiensaal, Vienna,  
 10-21 May 1961  
 Recording Engineer - James Brown  
 Engineer [Balance Engineer] - Gordon Parry  
 Engineer [Assistant Recording Engineer] - Peter Attwood  
 Producer [Recording Producer] - John Culshaw  
 Producer [Assistant Producer] - Christopher Raeburn, Ray Minshull

### Track 1 - Act I 32:30

A Sail! A Sail!  
 Esultate!  
 Rodrigo, Ebben What do you think?  
 Fire Of Joy!  
 Rodrigo, let's drink!  
 Inaffia The uvula! Trinca, Tracanna  
 Captain, the Faction Al Baluardi awaits you  
 Down with Swords!  
 Already in the Dense Night

### Track 2 - Act II 35:57

Don't worry  
 Vanne! I already see your goal  
 I believe in a God Crude!  
 That is it ...  
 Where you look they shine  
 Of a Man Who Moans Under Your Disdain  
 If Unconscious, Against You, Spouse, I have sinned  
 Desdemona Rea!  
 You?! Back! Run away !!  
 Now And Forever Goodbye  
 Peace, Mr.  
 It was The Night, Cassio Dormia  
 Oh! Monstrous Blame!  
 Yes, Pel Ciel Mamoreo I swear!

### Track 3 - Act III 43:31

The harbor lookout reported the Venetian Galea  
 Go on  
 God you play, O Bridegroom  
 Fixed Extracted  
 God! You could hurt me  
 Cassius Is There!  
 Come; The classroom is deserted  
 And in the meantime, since it never gets tired  
 This is the signal ... Yes, here the Adducci  
 Balabile (Ballet Music)  
 Viva! Hooray!  
 The Doge And The Senate Salute  
 Messere, Son Lieto De Vedervi  
 On the ground! ... Yes ... In the Mud Bruise  
 That innocent One Quiver  
 Flee!

### Track 4 - Act IV 31:52

Was he calmer?  
 My mother had a poor handmaid  
 Crying Singing Landa  
 Hail Mary full of grace  
 (Othello Compare)  
 Did You Say Your Preci Tonight?  
 Open up! Open up!  
 Niun Mi Tema



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