

Audio Encyclopedia

There can be no better introduction to this volume than a message to Thomas Edison by Arthur Sullivan recorded on 5 October 1888:

Dear Mr. Edison:

For myself, I can only say that I am astonished and somewhat terrified at the results of this evening's experiment. Astonished at the wonderful power you have developed and terrified at the thought that so much hideous and bad music may be put on record forever. But all the same, I think that this is the most wonderful invention that I have ever experienced and I congratulate you with all my heart on this wonderful discovery.

Arthur Sullivan

Examining the earliest extended recordings of opera is one of few ways we can know performance practice of earlier generations and appreciate the artists of the day beyond isolated arias and ensembles. The technical problems of recovering accurate sound from those sources are daunting. Such projects as Ward Marston's restoration of the Pathé complete French operas are invaluable, but suffer from requiring great time and skill. As a result, they are too costly for many students and researchers and are too few to cover the spectrum of our operatic heritage fully. In time, all of the recordings captured here may be restored more fully, obviating the need for this disc for the devoted collector. Until then, lesser skills and more modest equipment have been used to ensure that these treasures are not lost.

From which we came

The first opera sets

Bizet	CARMEN	1908
Gounod	FAUST	1908 - 1918
Leoncavallo	PAGLIACCI	1907 - 1918 - 1927
Puccini	LA BOHEME	1918
Puccini	MADAMA BUTTERFLY	1922
Rossini	IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA	1919
Verdi	AIDA	1912
Verdi	RIGOLETTO	1912 - 1916 - 1917 - 1918
Verdi	LA TRAVIATA	1912 - 1915
Verdi	IL TROVATORE	1912
Wagner	DER RING DES NIBELUNGEN	? - 1928
Wagner	TANNHÄUSER - act II	1909
Wagner	TRISTAN UND ISOLDE - act III	1927/1928
Wagner	DIE WALKÜRE - act I	1913
Gilbert & Sullivan	The Mikado	1917
	HMS Pinafore	1922
	Princess Ida	1924
	Ruddigore	1922
<i>Kurzopera</i> La Boheme, Carmen, Der Freischütz, Lohengrin, Martha (1927-1930)		

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