

Regine Crespin chante Airs d'Opéra Français (1961)

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1. Gounod - *Reina de Saba* - *Plus grand dans son obscurité* 2. Gounod – *Sapho* - *O my lyre immortelle* 3. Reyer – *Sigurd* - *Salut, splendeur du jour* 4. Halevy - *La Juive* - *Il va venir*
5. Gounod – *Faust* - *Il était un roi de Thulé* 6. Massenet - *Marie Maddeleine* - *O mes soeurs*
7. Massenet – *Werther* - *Air des lettres* Régine Crespin, Soprano Orchestre Symphonique
Jésus Etcheverry – conductor

What does a French dramatic soprano sound like and when did you last hear one? Many people will be familiar with the historic recordings of French opéra-comique from the 1950s and with the recordings of Ninon Vallin and Georges Thill. But the 19th century French dramatic repertoire is less familiar and its interpreters even rarer. This recital disc by the French soprano Régine Crespin is a welcome opportunity to hear a French dramatic soprano in appropriate repertoire. And dramatic Crespin was, being justly famous for her performances of Kundry, Sieglinde and the Marschallin as well as her roles in the French and Italian repertoire. It is one of life's ironies that some of her best known recordings are of the German repertoire.

The seven items date from 1961 and come from Crespin's second LP recording. Crespin had a love-hate relationship with recording, describing the microphone as *mon cher cauchemar* (nightmare). In her autobiography she describes the 1961 recording session as follows: 'It seemed to me [...] that you couldn't hear me at all! I ended up yelling as loud as I could throughout the sessions: it was a fight between me and "it"'. --- Robert Hugill, musicweb-international.com

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