

Puccini - Suor Angelica (2012)



1. Ave Maria, piena di grazia 2. Sorelle in umiltà 3. I desideri sono i fiori dei vivi 4. Suor Angelica! - Madre, Madre, parlate! 5. Il Principe Gualtiero vostro padre 6. Tutto ho offerto alla Vergine 7. Senza mamma, o bimbo, tu sei morto 8. Sorella, o buona sorella 9. Addio, buone sorelle 10. Preludio sinfonico A-dur Kristine Opolais (Angelica) Lioba Braun (Princess) Nadezhda Serdyuk (Sister Monitor) Mojca Erdmann (Sister Genovieffa) WDR Sinfonieorchester Köln Andris Nelsons - conductor

Puccini's 'Suor Angelica' used to be seen as one of the composer's 'problem children'. As the central work of 'Il Trittico', it is sandwiched between two dramatically more effective pieces: a tale of life in a convent and of the suicide of a mother robbed of her child, it simply could not hold its own against its sister works at their world première in New York. Various cuts sanctioned by Puccini testify to his concessions to the conventions of the opera business. Uncut, 'Suor Angelica' lasts just about an hour, and one often hears it in the concert hall today. With its restrained melancholy and mystical ambience, a concert performance does not diminish the impact of the title heroine and her moving fate. On the contrary, when Kristine Opolais sings Angelica – one of our most exciting young Puccini sopranos (fêted at Covent Garden in *Madama Butterfly* and in this role) – even a concert hall audience is moved to tears, as we can read in the reviews of her concert performances with the WDR Symphony Orchestra Köln conducted by her husband, Andris Nelsons. Kristine Opolais's uniquely shaded timbre, her clear sense of line and her subtle characterisation make Angelica a woman of flesh and blood. Andris Nelsons, too, explores the full breadth of Puccini's musical language in this one-acter, from its formulaic sacred elements to its uninhibited outbursts of emotion. This becomes especially clear when Opolais's character meets her adversary, the Princess [Lioba Braun] whose dramatic mezzo offers an extreme authoritarian portrait. Angelica's sisters in the convent offer several of the best women's voices from the WDR Radio Chorus welcome solo opportunities. This superb cast includes the luxurious voices of the dark-toned mezzosoprano Nadezhda Serdyuk as the stern Sister Monitor and of Mojca Erdmann's clear, graceful soprano as Sister Genovieffa, who brings the greatest sympathy for the plight of Angelica. --- prestoclassical.co.uk

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