

**Francesco Cilèa's *L'Arlesiana* - A survey of the recordings**  
by Ralph Moore

(Parts of this introduction and the reviews below are lifted and adapted from my [review](#) of the 2012 recording below, conducted by Fabrice Bollon.)

Cilèa was doomed to be in the company of others like Mascagni, known as "one-opera-composers". That verdict is fair on neither man, but it has stuck and their other works are rarely performed. This opera, distinguished by the curious fact that the eponymous Arlésienne never makes an appearance – an arresting feature derived from the original short story and play by Daudet - had the considerable advantage of having Enrico Caruso especially requested by the composer for its premiere; this after Caruso had sung Turiddu in Mascagni's *Cavalleria rusticana* in 1897 earlier in the same year as the premiere of this opera, which in turn led to Caruso taking the leading role in 1902 in *Adriana Lecouvreur*, the work for which Cilèa is now chiefly remembered. *L'Arlesiana* was premiered in four acts 1897, but cannot have been considered a complete success despite Caruso's personal triumph, as Cilèa continued to tinker with it, revising it into three acts the following year, then in 1937 adding the prelude.

Despite its attractions, which include more tunes than is sometimes the case in *verismo* operas, *L'Arlesiana* has not received many recordings, yet it has three famous arias which have found permanent places in the concert repertoire: the "Lamento di Federico" for tenor, "Come due tizzi accesi" for baritone, and "Esser madre è un inferno" for mezzo-soprano. Additionally, in 2011, a previously lost aria "Una mattina" from the four-act version was discovered by tenor Giuseppe Fliianoti, who sings it in Act III of the second of his two recordings below. The Prelude to Act III is very jolly, folksy and percussive – and somewhat reminiscent of Bizet's incidental music for the same play – and I do like the way the opera comes full circle with the reprise of the orchestral accompaniment to the opening aria "Come due tizzi" before the tragic dénouement.

As is quite often the case when I survey a second or even supposedly third-rank opera, that process has lent me a new appreciation of its qualities and I find myself wondering why it is so neglected. However, the chances of attending a performance remain slim and perhaps it is best experienced via the medium of recording rather than live. Cilèa might be credited with being one of the co-founders of *verismo* but the story is deeply Romantic; the suicidal (anti-)hero is in many ways a throw-back - a deluded, obsessive melancholic like Werther, doomed by his own psychological fixation; the background of the opera is pastoral, much of the music is predominately long-lined and lyrical, and Rosa is another stock tortured maternal figure comparable with Mamma Lucia. I also happen to think that it is musically very fine and had as soon listen to this as many an opera more entrenched in the repertoire.

Of the nine recordings on CD I have been able to track down, only two are studio productions and the rest are live, but nearly all are generally in very good or at least acceptable sound. For some reason, the roles of Baldassare and Marco below are almost invariably respectively very well and very poorly cast. Too often, Rosa Mamai is allocated to a mezzo who does not have a sufficiently steady line or simply sounds past it. As such, I have not found it too difficult to establish a hierarchy of quality but you may often test that for yourself by listening to samples on YouTube.

## The Recordings

**Arturo Basile – 1955(57?)**; live RAI radio broadcast, stereo – Cetra/Warner Fonit; Membran Orchestra & Chorus - RAI Torino  
 Rosa Mamai - Pia Tassinari (mezzo-soprano)  
 Federico - Ferruccio Tagliavini (tenor)  
 Vivetta - Gianna Galli (soprano)  
 Baldassare - Paolo Silveri (baritone)  
 Metifio - Bruno Carmassi (baritone)  
 Marco - Antonio Zerbini (bass)  
 L'Innocente - Loretta Di Lelio (soprano)

This earliest recording has long been the first choice for the discriminating collector and a 24-bit re-mastering of it has now been re-issued under the super-bargain Documents/Membran label in a very attractive package but unfortunately without a libretto. A recording date of 1951 is indicated but a combination of my own ears and the fact that Gianna Galli, who sings Vivetta, was born in 1935 and, despite having commenced her professional career at a young age, was hardly likely to have been singing that role at sixteen years old, indicates that the recording was in fact made in 1955 or 1957 (as per Galli's own discography) or even as late as 1962 – but that is probably the date of a later LP release; this also explains why it seems to have been made in good, if narrow, stereo – possibly a “dual-channel broadcast”. (Coincidentally, Galli managed the career of Giuseppe Filianoti who sings Federico in two recordings below.)

This has a starry cast: the famous "honey-voiced" Ferruccio Tagliavini, his then wife Pia Tassinari, and the under-recorded baritone Paolo Silveri, who recorded a number of excellent sets for Cetra in the 1950s. Silveri has a beautiful voice and shows off his plangent top notes, even though he is supposed to be an elderly shepherd, and quite upstages the elderly-sounding baritone who is the rival in love to the hero. It is a pleasure to hear Tassinari's firm, centred mezzo-soprano with a developed “chest-voice”; some of the singers of Rosa Mamai below are decidedly a trial. Tagliavini was at the zenith of his career. His tenor was never the most incisive; he excelled in spinning sweet, soft mellow-toned phrases in a manner made famous by his predecessor Gigli and whom he often resembles - but he could summon up considerable heft when required and delivers his big aria sensitively, without histrionics – although perhaps without, too, quite the thrill some tenors generate. Otherwise, the supporting cast is excellent. It includes the lovely silvery-voiced aforementioned soprano Gianna Galli, the smooth-voiced bass Antonio Zerbini as a much better Marco than is too often the case and similarly, Bruno Carmassi is a cut above as Metifio, dark and menacing. Loretta di Lelio (no less than Mrs Franco Corelli) as the supposedly handicapped child who recovers his wits.

The conductor is opera specialist Arturo Basile, whose star was in the ascendant when he died in a car crash aged only 54 and his direction is flawless – as is the playing of the RAI orchestra.

**Charles Rosekrans – 1991**; studio, digital - EMI  
 Orchestra & Chorus - Hungarian State Orchestra  
 Rosa Mamai - Elena Zilio (mezzo-soprano)  
 Federico - Péter Kelen (tenor)  
 Vivetta - Maria Spacagna (soprano)  
 Baldassare - Barry Anderson (baritone)  
 Metifio - Balázs Póka (baritone)  
 Marco - Tamas Clementis (bass)  
 L'Innocente - Katalin Halmi (soprano)

This is the first of the two studio recordings featured in his survey. It benefits from excellent analogue sound but I find Charles Rosekrans' conducting to be too brisk and erratic. The first voice we hear is that of Australian baritone who as an attractively swift, flickering vibrato and an incisive quality, but there is also an element of constriction and throatiness that I find odd. Mezzo-soprano Elena Zilio as a Rosa Mamai has a husky timbre to her voice which is not inappropriate for portraying an older woman and she deploys lower register, but her voice tends to spread on loud, high notes. Péter Kelen as Federico is, to use an uncomplimentary adjective, "average", without the Italianate warmth the verismo idiom requires; his tenor turns hard and strained and some vowels sound wrong. Maria Spacagna as Vivetta is OK but lacks charm. The bass singing Marco and the baritone as Metifio are both decidedly poor, L'Innocente is too feminine and the chorus is weak.

This, however, is the only issue to include a libretto and English translation – though perhaps hardly a sufficiently compelling reason to acquire it; it is generally disappointing.

**Daniele Callegari – 1996**; live, digital - Fonè Records

Orchestra Sinfonica dell Emilia Romagna Arturo Toscanini  
 Coro del Teatro Regio di Parma della Cooperativa Artisti del Coro  
 Rosa Mamai - Susanna Anselmi (mezzo-soprano)  
 Federico - Luca Canonici (tenor)  
 Vivetta - Desirée Rancatore (soprano)  
 Baldassare - Roberto Servile (baritone)  
 Metifio - Michele Porcelli (baritone)  
 Marco - Franco Federici (bass)  
 L'Innocente - Alessandra Palomba (soprano)

Conductor Daniele Callegari has been at the helm of a number of successful opera and recital recordings and performances and here directs a warm, expressive account of the opera. The singing is a mixed bag: the first voice we hear is Roberto Servile, who is a known quantity to collectors; he has a firm, clean baritone of some tonal beauty and sings his opening aria very engagingly. Susanna Anselmi is an authoritative Rosa despite a bit of wobble and Desirée Rancatore is a pert, charming Vivetta, if just a little shrill. Tenor Luca Canonici is a rather crude belter and there is nothing especially ingratiating about his delivery of his aria, as when he reins in his voice it loses centre but the audience is appreciative of his *Lamento*. The bass singing Marco is unsteady. The Metifio is good if unsubtle.

This is expertly conducted but is not really an option in any sense, in that it is generally indifferently sung, is in any case no longer available from the Italian Fonè Records website and is now hard to find - but you may hear it and watch the video of the performance on YouTube, although sound is poor and hissy and the visuals fuzzy.

**Enrique Diemecke – 1996**; live, digital – Opera Lovers

Orchestre National de Montpellier  
 Chœurs de la Radiotélévision de Riga  
 Rosa Mamai - Viorica Cortez (mezzo-soprano)  
 Federico - Mario Carrara (tenor)  
 Vivetta - Inese Galante (soprano)  
 Baldassare - Stefano Antonucci (baritone)  
 Metifio - Franck Ferrari (baritone)  
 Marco - Fernand Dumont (bass)  
 L'Innocente - Brigitte Desnoues (soprano)

This is another live recording which is available only “semi-officially” from the Canadian Opera Lovers website – but again, you may hear it on YouTube and the sound there isn’t bad, even if there is a bit too much blare and reverberation. It is conducted in a rather “gung-ho” manner which leans more towards the *verismo* than the Romantic idiom. This is a really animated performance from a festival concert and the singing is splendid: Stefano Antonucci is a fine Baldassare, lean and tight of voice with a very attractive timbre, ringing top notes and very forward diction – one of the best on record. We then hear the great Romanian mezzo Viorica Cortez, who alongside Tassinari and Tamar one of the best of the mezzos to tackle the role of Rosa, exploiting her trenchant chest-voice to huge dramatic effect. Even if her vibrato has loosened a little by this stage of her career, hers is still a big impressive voice. Her “Esser madre” is a grand piece of singing, especially when she plunges into her lower register - and the orchestra matches her for drama. Another singer whom I adore and has never had the international recognition she deserves is the Latvian soprano Inessa Galante, whose rounded tone, flawless technique and emotional affect are invariably admirable. She makes a very affecting, rich-voiced Vivetta, far preferable to the twittery sopranos who too often diminish the role; only Latonia Moore in the Queler recording below rivals her. She is wonderful in the Act II love duet. (I shall shortly be producing a retrospective of a selection of her recordings.) Completing a fine roster of principals is the robust tenor Mario Carrara, whose style happily matches his conductor’s. He has a big, baritonal voice and although his *Lamento* hasn’t the subtlety of some, it is a pleasure to hear his uninhibited but unforced delivery of it and it is much appreciated by the audience. His duet, too, with Antonucci, “Vieni con me sui monti” is a highlight; two large, healthy voices really singing out. Unfortunately, Uncle Marco is sung by a labouring bass but his role is small and the Metifio of the sadly short-lived, black-voiced baritone Franck Ferrari is excellent – in fact, the best of any here in this survey. The Riga chorus is lively and well-tuned and they come through well in the balance.

This is a red-blooded performance, lacking the refinement of, for example, Basile’s and Bollon’s versions but it is thoroughly convincing and only confirms my puzzlement that it not more often staged as it clearly worked very well here. It may currently be ordered from Opera Lovers at \$28 to North America and \$32.00 to Europe and the rest of the world.

**Reynald Giovaninetti – 2004;** live composite, digital - Bongiovanni

Orchestra Philharmonia Mediterranea

Coro Francesco Cilèa

Rosa Mamai - Elisabetta Fiorillo (mezzo-soprano)

Federico - Luca Canonici (tenor)

Vivetta - Daria Masiero (soprano)

Baldassare - Stefano Antonucci (baritone)

Metifio - Corrado Cappitta (baritone)

Marco - Lorenzo Muti (bass)

L'Innocente - Alessandra Palomba (soprano)

We first hear the excellent Stefano Antonucci reprising the of Baldassare eight years on from the Diemecke recording. He is a little cloudier of tone but still very good. Otherwise, the singing here is not as good as in that Montpellier performance; indeed, it is certainly not as well cast as several other recordings: Elisabetta Fiorillo is over-fruity and wobbly and I do not care for the pulse in Daria Masiero’s soprano as Vivetta – although she’s not bad. Tenor Luca Canonici also makes a second appearance in a recording eight years on, this time from the Callegari recording, and again I find him adequate but a bit coarse and hoarse compared with more elegant artists such as Tagliavini or Filianoti. As ever, Uncle Marco is really poor and the Metifio has a swallowed, constricted vocal production. This is in excellent live sound, and as I write reasonably priced copies are available on eBay and Amazon but in truth, apart from Antonucci, virtually none of the singing here gives much pleasure and I relegate it to near the bottom of the pile.

**Friedemann Layer – 2005**; live, digital - Accord

Orchestre National de Montpellier

Chorus - L'Opéra National de Montpellier

Rosa Mamai - Marianne Cornetti (mezzo-soprano)

Federico - Giuseppe Gipali (tenor)

Vivetta - Angela Maria Blasi (soprano)

Baldassare - Ambrogio Maestri (baritone)

Metifio - Michael Chioldi (baritone)

Marco - Enrico Lordi (bass)

L'Innocente - Gaële Le Roi (soprano)

Given its location, I first wrongly assumed that this was a kind of revival of the concert performance in Montpellier nine years earlier, but this is a staged production with an entirely different cast and another conductor. It uses a slightly fuller version of the three-act edition with a little more music in the Act III festival dance scene and some orchestral transitions between scenes which are often cut - but not, of course, the new "lost" aria, as that had not yet been unearthed.

The cast is generally excellent. Starting with Rosa. I dislike Marianne Cornetti's performance of the role for *Queler* two years later – see below – but here she is much better, as her vibrato is more under control and hence nowhere near as obtrusive, even though it still pulses excessively on loud, high notes. Ambrogio Maestri (who has notably been the Falstaff *du jour* from the 2000 onwards) here he sings an excellent Baldassare – although some databases were not updated and the booklet still credits the role to Stefano Antonucci who was a regular in the role and was perhaps initially slated for it until Maestri took over. The confusion persists because their voices are indeed very similar – indeed virtually indistinguishable. Giuseppe Gipali is robust and impassioned as Federico, strong and sweet of tone, very similar to Canonici and Carrara but, I suggest, a degree even better. His delivery of his *Lamento* is admirably vocalised but hardly as inward or anguished as some more sensitive exponents. I very much like Angela Maria Blasi, as she is no twitterer but a full-voiced lyric soprano who makes a stronger, more positive character of Vivetta than usual. Gaële Le Roi makes a suitably boyish L'Innocente – many are too "bosomy". Another small but welcome bonus is that for once Marco is not undercast: Enrico Lordi has a pleasant, avuncular bass and even if I am not keen on baritone Michael Chioldi's laboured Metifio, that is also a small role.

The sound quality is excellent – very clear and well balanced - as is the conducting, vibrant chorus and responsive orchestral playing. Layer really keeps things moving in an opera which has been criticised for lulls in dramatic tension and that helps it greatly. I happily admit that this confounded my somewhat pessimistic expectations; if you can find it you will not be disappointed.

**Eve Queler – 2007**; live, digital - Celestial Audio; Premiere Opera; download as per below

Opera Orchestra of New York

New York City Choral Society

Rosa Mamai - Marianne Cornetti (mezzo-soprano)

Federico - Giuseppe Filianoti (tenor)

Vivetta - Latonia Moore (soprano)

Baldassare - Weston Hurt (baritone)

Metifio - Ihn-Kyu Lee (baritone)

Marco - Mark Risinger (bass)

L'Innocente - Colette Boudreaux (soprano)

This in-house recording in Carnegie Hall was a welcome surprise. There is very little coughing and the sound is really pleasing. After the brief but first tender, then dramatic Prelude, we first hear Weston Hurt as Baldassare, making a sensitive and beautifully sung job of the opening aria; he is a smooth, mellow vocal presence throughout this performance. However, I am not happy with mezzo-soprano Marianne Cornetti's Rosa. I recall her being an awful Princess Eboli in a production of *Don Carlo* at Covent Garden in 2009 and here her strident, over-ample vibrato is to my ears almost perpetually irksome and a blot on the set except when she is singing softly, as per the start of her big aria "Esser una madre" - but as soon as she puts any pressure on the voice...urgh; she was much better for later two years earlier in Montpellier. As compensation, Latonia Moore is a lovely, full, vibrant Vivetta with a fine trill; her love duet with tenor Giuseppe Filianoti concluding Act II is especially moving and the role seems to suit just where the best of her voice lies. Filianoti is ringing and penetrative of tone and he sings his big aria with great passion, earning prolonged and tumultuous applause, the repeated cries of "Bis!" earning the encore which he sings almost as well but mostly misses his second top B; indeed, in general, just occasionally a high note is pinched but he is, I think, in considerably better voice than in his second recording five years later under Bollon - but see below for the background to his vocal trials. Baritone Ihn-Kyu Lee is fine as Metifio, but bass Marco Risinger as Marco is much less impressive, having a swallowed, throaty timbre and unsteady emission. The orchestra and chorus are excellent and Eve Queler directs both *con gusto* and with sensitivity.

This is the standard three-act version. Were it not for my objection to the pulse in Cornetti's mezzo, this would for me be an outright winner. However, this recording can be hard to track down; fortunately, you may both hear and download it here: <https://parterre.com/2018/12/13/the-good-shepherd/>

**Fabrice Bollon – 2012**; studio, digital – cpo  
 Philharmonisches Orchester Freiburg  
 Opernchor und Kinderchor des Theater Freiburg; Camerata Vocale Freiburg  
 Federico - Giuseppe Filianoti (tenor)  
 Rosa Mamai - Iano Tamar (soprano)  
 Vivetta - Mirella Bunoaica (soprano)  
 Baldassare - Francesco Landolfi (baritone)  
 Metifio - Juan Orozco (baritone)  
 Marco - Jin Seok Lee (bass)  
 L'Innocente - Kyoung-Eun Lee (soprano)

I [reviewed](#) this in 2014.

Given that the EMI recording is not compelling, this is the only studio-made recording really to challenge the old Cetra favourite and its cast is almost as good. Neither Tagliavini nor Filianoti brings to Federico the ideal combination of tenorial heft and delicacy which the role's creator, Enrico Caruso was no doubt able to offer, but I suspect that in the case of the former, his determined delicacy was a conscious artistic choice, whereas Filianoti is somewhat handicapped by a rather grainy, cloudy tone. He lacks the ringing top notes demanded at the climax of his celebrated aria, "Il lamento di Federico" and eschews the top B made so thrilling by the likes of Björling in recital albums – but then, Tagliavini, too, avoids that. It is perhaps germane that in the interim of his two recordings Filianoti most unfortunately developed thyroid cancer, and the subsequent operation paralysed one vocal cord. Nonetheless – and very much to his credit - he worked very hard and miraculously mostly regained his voice, even if some degree of impairment was surely inevitable. He is a committed, intelligent artist whose timbre frequently reminds me of the American tenor Neil Shicoff; he sings the role of Federico convincingly within his vocal limitations.

However, for me the vocal standout is Georgian Iano Tamar as Rosa Mamai. Her dusky-coloured dramatic soprano falcon is ideally suited to a role which may be sung by any soprano with a gutsy lower register, yet her voice reminds me most of Agnes Baltsa. The aria "Esser una madre è un inferno" was famously recorded for Columbia in 1935 by just such a soprano in Claudia Muzio. Tamar matches both Muzio and Pia Tassinari for gorgeous tone and trenchant emotion. Apparently, roles such as Eboli, Kundry, Elektra and Santuzza – a kind of younger Rosa Mamai – are all within her repertoire and one can hear why. I look forward to hearing her again, live or recorded. Her performance represents a great advantage over the wobbly Cornetti's two recordings of that role.

Almost as good are baritone Francesca Landolfi and soprano Mirela Bunoaica. She has a plangent voice-type familiar to us in her compatriots Angela Gheorghiu and Ileana Cotrubas. His vibrant, flexible baritone always falls gratefully on the ear, even if he cannot bring to his opening aria "Come due tizzi accesi" the same expressive nuances given to it by Tito Gobbi in another famous account and comparisons with Simon Keenlyside's account are in the British baritone's favour for sheer beauty of sound. I also wonder why Bollon chooses to rush the running figures in the introduction to that aria.

The supporting roles are more than adequately sung, although Kyoung-Eun Lee's soprano is rather too fruity to depict a boy convincingly.

The Freiburg orchestra is warm and expressive although the extra freedom of Basile's conducting gives the RAI recording the edge over Fabrice Bollon. Within a tightly constructed plot there is much lovely music here, from the tuneful overture, through the dramatic ensembles and showpiece arias, to the impassioned Intermezzo, to the thud of the bass drum as Federico hits the earth.

An additional point of interest in this recording is although it follows the revised three-act edition it imports into the Act III duet between Federico and Vivetta the lost aria, "Una mattina", discovered in the composer's manuscript by the tenor singing it. Its orchestration was reconstructed by Mario Guido Scappucci and is pleasant enough in its lyrical, ecstatic manner but nothing very memorable and is here slightly marred by a strained top A.

Unfortunately, no libretto is included but the recorded sound is excellent. This studio recording clearly benefits in immediacy from having been prepared via the preceding concert performances. I wonder that this work has not been successfully revived more often. This recording may not eclipse the vintage Basile account but it makes a strong case for a comparatively neglected work.

**Francesco Cilluffo – 2013**; live, digital - Dynamic  
Orchestra Filarmonica Marchigiana  
Coro Lirico Marchigiano V. Bellini  
Rosa Mamai - Annunziata Vestri (mezzo-soprano)  
Federico - Dmitry Golovnin (tenor)  
Vivetta - Mariangela Sicilia (soprano)  
Baldassarre - Stefano Antonucci (baritone)  
Metifio - Valeriu Caradja (baritone)  
Marco - Christian Saitta (bass)  
L'Innocente - Riccardo Angelo Strano (counter-tenor)

This recording has already been reviewed by MusicWeb colleagues in all three of the forms in which it has been issued – CD ([review](#)), DVD ([review](#)) and Blu-ray ([review](#)).

The sound is first-rate but GF remarks of the soloists that they are “hardly in the premier league”, that “the balance between singers and orchestra can also be a problem” and regarding the tenor, “his voice is rather small-scale or he is placed too far from the microphones.” The orchestra can dominate and it is true that the Russian Dmitry Golovnin does not have the most ingratiating tone; it is instantly identifiable as “un-Italianate” – indeed, sometimes hard and grainy in its upper regions, without the requisite “Mediterranean warmth” or amplitude. Having said that, his Italian is good and he sings *Il Lamento* with considerable artistry and emotion, earning sustained audience applause – and although the performance uses the standard, shortened three-act edition, he gets the new aria, too, which he sings nicely but earns no applause, presumably because the audience didn't recognise it.

Annunziata Vestri is pleasingly free of the unsteadiness which afflicts too many Rosas above and sings with verve and intelligence; I like her warm mezzo and the way she dips into her strong lower register; in many ways she is as good as since Pia Tassinari. Likewise, Mariangela Sicilia makes an engaging Vivetta; she has an even, rounded timbre even if she isn't as individual or virtuosic as Inessa Galante, Latonia Moore, Angela Maria Blasi or Mirella Bunoaica. I note that baritone Stefano Antonucci appears yet a third time as Baldassare in a recording, seventeen years after the first and it must be said that while he is still pleasing, his vibrato here has since loosened, he has lost some of the ease up top and low notes are weaker; his first, younger assumption of the role in 1996 is his best. For once, we have a Marco who is not an embarrassment, although that's a small part, and Valeriu Caradja's biting, incisive Metifio is fine, too. The chorus, however, comes across as rather feeble with some strangulated tenors and squawky sopranos. It makes a change to have a countertenor in the role of L'Innocente, making him more credible.

The conducting and orchestral playing are very good as is almost invariably the case now with modern festival productions. In the end, however, it is just a little bland; I want a more idiomatic tenor in the principal role and more vividly characterised rather than just amiable singing.

### Recommendations

There is no doubt in my mind that the two best-sung-all-round recordings are the vintage Basile recording from the mid-50s and the two live performances from Montpellier in 1996 and 2005 respectively. The first is essentially a studio production without distractions (being a radio broadcast); its sound is very acceptable for its age and it is beautifully played and conducted. The first of the two from Montpellier is in decent live sound and may be ordered from Canada; it offers a much more visceral experience, even if it isn't sonically ideal; the second is in really excellent digital sound with virtually no extraneous noise.

However, if you want a modern version in best sound, there are options. I cannot recommend the EMI analogue studio recording, but the cpo digital studio issue conducted by Bollon has much to offer, even if Filianoti's Federico is not quite as impressive as his earlier live recording under Queler but Cornetti is nowhere near as good there as she was in Montpellier. I happily recommend the Layer recording just as readily, especially as Cornetti is at her best, the recording is well-cast all-round, and is the most complete version - even if it does not include the re-discovered tenor aria; the problem is that it is hard to obtain.

Studio stereo: Basile 1957(?)

Studio digital: Bollon 2012

Live digital: Diemecke 1996, Layer 2005\*

\*first choice – if you can find it...