

Featured Artist for February 2008

Maria Callas

FVC18

I have chosen **Maria Callas**, one of the most famous opera sopranos ever. **Callas** is a legend not only of the operatic world, but she is also one of those rare artists who have transcended their chosen field and become a true superstar. Although her voice was not considered truly beautiful in comparison to other great singers she had an innate musicality, a tremendous stage presence, and that indefinable uniqueness and magic that all great performers possess. Her producer at EMI, Walter Legge stated that **Callas** possessed that most essential ingredient for a great singer: 'an instantly recognizable voice' and this is certainly true. The power and emotion that she conveys always moves me whenever I hear her sing.

Recommended Listening

If you are not familiar with **Maria Callas**, or indeed opera at all, here are some of my favourite arias that you might like to try from the CD.

Casta Diva – from the opera **Norma** by **Vincenzo Bellini**

O Mio Babbino Caro – from the opera **Gianni Schicchi** by **Giacomo Puccini**

Vissi d'arte – from the opera **Tosca** by **Giacomo Puccini**

Habanera – from the opera **Carmen** by **Georges Bizet**

Ebben? ne andrò lontana – from the opera **La Wally** by **Alfredo Catalani**

Mini-Bio

Maria Callas (December 2, 1923 – September 16, 1977) was an American-born Greek soprano and perhaps the best-known opera singer of the post-World War II period. She combined an impeccable bel canto technique with great dramatic gifts, making her the most famous singing actress of the era. An extremely versatile singer, her repertoire ranged from classical opera seria, such as **Spontini's La Vestale**, and the bel canto operas of **Donizetti** and **Bellini**, to late **Verdi** and the verismo operas of **Puccini**.

Sean Kennedy
3 February 2008