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one of the most beautiful and
gifted Italian sopranos of her
generation, Carteri made her
professional debut at eighteen, as Elsa
in Lohengrin at the Baths of Caracalla in
Rome in 1949. Within the next few seasons,
Carteri made house debuts at most of
the principal Italian venues, including
La Scala, Arena di Verona, La Fenice,
Teatro di San Carlo and Maggio Musicale
Fiorentino, as well as at Covent Garden,
Paris Opéra and the Salzburg Festival.
Celebrated for her elegance, impeccable
technique and sympathetic stage presence,
Carteri sang repertoire that ranged from
Desdemona, Violetta, Alice Ford, Liù,
Magda in La rondine, Blanche in Dialogues
des Carmélites and Mathilde in Guillaume
Tell to leading roles in new works such as
Pizzetti’s Calzare d’argento and Castelnuovo-
Tedesco’s Mercante di Venezia. Carteri’s
facility in coloratura allowed her to handle
bel canto showpieces such as La donna del
lago, I Capuleti e I Montecchi and Linda di
Chamounix; her gift for vividly expressed
pathos made her unforgettable as Gluck’s
Euridice and Natasha Rostova in Prokofiev’s
War and Peace.

Carteri made her U.S. debut in 1954,
as Mimi at San Francisco Opera, where
her other roles in her two seasons with the
company were Susanna, Zerlina, Micaëla,
Massenet’s Manon, Marguerite in Faust and
Donna Gabriella in Cherubini’s Hôtelier
Portugaise. Mimi was also the role of Car-
teri’s 1954 debut at Lyric Opera of Chicago,
where she returned for Marguerite in Faust
and Adina L’Elisir d’amore in 1955.

At the peak of her career, Carteri sang
opposite the greatest stars of her era; she
was Liù to Birgit Nilsson’s Turandot, Zerlina
to Cesare Siepi’s Don Giovanni, Silvia to
Giulietta Simionato’s Zanetto, Marguerite
to Jussi Bjoerling’s Faust and Nannetta to
the Falstaff of Mariano Stabile and the Alice
of Renata Tebaldi. Carteri was a favorite
colleague of the best stage directors and
conductors in Europe, including Gior-
gio Strehler, Margherita Wallman, Tullio
Serafin, Carlo Maria Giulini, Herbert von
Karajan, Victor de Sabata and Artur Rodz-
inski. Her recordings include L’Elisir d’amore
and Falstaff under Serafin, La traviata with
Pierre Monteux and the Brahms German
Requiem (in Italian) with Bruno Walter. At
the composer Francis Poulenc’s request,
Carteri sang his Gloria at the Théâtre des
Champs-Elysées in 1961 and joined conduc-
tor Georges Prêtre and Orchestre National
de France for the piece’s first recording the
same year — a performance of the piece in
which Carteri was never surpassed.

Carteri, who married Italian industri-
alist Franco Grosoli in 1959, retired from
singing in 1966 to devote her time to her
family.

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Editor’s Note: Rosanna was Jussi’s Mimi
in his final performances of La bohème in
March, 1960, in London. ‘Although com-
munication between the two of them was
limited (‘My English wasn’t so good, nor was
his Italian,’ Carteri recalled), she retained
pleasant memories of their collaboration.
I still remember his kindness to me,’ she
recently wrote. ‘Although many years have
passed by, those evenings in Covent Garden
are still fairly clear in my memory. To sing
with Jussi Björling has been a very important
experience for me because he was an artist
of a very high level and a singer with a mag-
nificent voice.’” Anna-Lisa Björling, Andrew