



Rosanna Carteri, 89, Gifted Italian Soprano Who Partnered an Era's Greatest Stars, has Died

Rosanna and Jussi, *La bohème*, Covent Garden, 1960

ROSANNA CARTERI

Verona, Italy, December 4, 1930—Monte Carlo, Monaco, October 25, 2020

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 Mimì 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 *Hôtellerie Portugaise*. Mimì was also the role of Carteri's 1954 debut at Lyric Opera of Chicago,

Partnered an Era'

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 Björling'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 Giorgio Strehler, Margherita Wallman, Tullio Serafin, Carlo Maria Giulini, Herbert von Karajan, Victor de Sabata and Artur Rodzinski. 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-Élysées in 1961 and joined conductor 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 industrialist 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 Mimì in his final performances of *La bohème* in March, 1960, in London. "Although communication 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 magnificent voice.'" Anna-Lisa Björling, Andrew Farkas: Jussi, Amadeus Press, 1996, p. 329.