

NAXOS

# DONIZETTI

## Maria Stuarda

2 CDs

**Polverelli • Piscitelli • Lanza • De Biasio • Alberghini • Cassi**  
**FORM – Orchestra Filarmonica Marchigiana**  
**Coro Lirico Marchigiano ‘V. Bellini’**  
**Riccardo Frizza**



Gaetano  
**DONIZETTI**

(1797–1848)

**Maria Stuarda**

*Tragedia lirica* in Three Acts

Libretto by Giuseppe Bardari

Elisabetta . . . . . Laura Polverelli  
Maria Stuarda . . . . . Maria Pia Piscitelli  
Anna Kennedy . . . . . Giovanna Lanza  
Roberto, conte di Leicester . . . . . Roberto De Biasio  
Talbot . . . . . Simone Alberghini  
Cecil . . . . . Mario Cassi

FORM – Orchestra Filarmonica Marchigiana

Coro Lirico Marchigiano ‘V. Bellini’ (Chorus Master: Davide Crescenzi)

Conductor: Riccardo Frizza

CD 1	60:41	22	Va', preparati furente a soffrir l'estremo fato ( <i>Elisabetta, Cecil, Maria, Leicester, Anna, Talbot, Chorus of Soldiers</i> )	3:06	
<b>Act I</b>			CD 2	55:55	
1	Introduction ( <i>Orchestra</i> )	1:39	<b>Act III</b>		
2	Qui si attenda, ell'è vicina ( <i>Chorus of Courtiers</i> )	2:02	1	E pensi? E tardi? ( <i>Cecil, Elisabetta</i> )	3:55
3	Si, vuol di Francia il Rege ( <i>Elisabetta</i> )	1:01	2	Quella vita a me funesta ( <i>Elisabetta, Cecil, Leicester</i> )	3:39
4	Ah! Quando all'ara scorgemi ( <i>Elisabetta, Talbot, Chorus of Courtiers, Cecil</i> )	3:49	3	Ah! Deh! Per pietà sospendi ( <i>Leicester, Cecil, Elisabetta</i> )	3:44
5	Ah! Dal ciel discenda un raggio ( <i>Elisabetta, Talbot, Chorus of Courtiers, Cecil</i> )	3:40	4	Vanne, indegno: t'appare sul volto ( <i>Elisabetta, Leicester, Cecil</i> )	2:42
6	Fra voi perché non veggio Leicester? ( <i>Elisabetta, Cecil, Leicester</i> )	1:28	5	La perfida insultarmi anche volea ( <i>Maria, Cecil</i> )	3:47
7	Hai nelle giostre, o Talbot, chiesto di me? ( <i>Leicester, Talbot</i> )	2:17	6	Oh mio buon Talbot! ( <i>Maria, Talbot</i> )	4:20
8	Ah! Rimiro il bel sembiante ( <i>Leicester, Talbot</i> )	3:18	7	Quando di luce rosea ( <i>Maria, Talbot</i> )	5:38
9	Se fida tanto colei m'amò ( <i>Leicester, Talbot</i> )	1:30	8	Lascia contenta al carcere ( <i>Talbot, Maria</i> )	2:45
10	Sei tu confuso? ( <i>Elisabetta, Leicester</i> )	3:20	9	Vedeste? ... Vedemmo ... Qual truce apparato! ( <i>Chorus of Mary's Faithful Servants</i> )	6:04
11	Era d'amor l'immagine ( <i>Leicester, Elisabetta</i> )	3:49	10	Anna ... Qui più sommessi favellate ( <i>Chorus of Mary's Faithful Servants, Anna, Maria</i> )	3:44
12	Sul crin la rivale ( <i>Elisabetta, Leicester</i> )	2:03	11	Deh! Tu di un'umile preghiera il suono ( <i>Maria, Chorus of Mary's Faithful Servants, Anna, Talbot</i> )	3:52
<b>Act II</b>			12	Oh colpo! ... È già vicino del tuo morir l'istante ( <i>Chorus of Mary's Faithful Servants, Cecil, Maria</i> )	1:24
13	Allenta il piè, Regina ( <i>Anna, Maria</i> )	3:03	13	Di un cor che more reca il perdono ( <i>Maria, Anna, Talbot, Cecil, Chorus of Mary's Faithful Servants</i> )	3:38
14	Oh nube! Che lieve per l'aria ti aggiri ( <i>Maria, Anna, Chorus of Huntsmen</i> )	3:31	14	Giunge il conte ( <i>Talbot, Maria, Leicester, Cecil, Chorus of Mary's Faithful Servants, Anna</i> )	1:52
15	Nella pace del mesto riposo ( <i>Maria, Anna</i> )	3:15	15	Ah! Se un giorno da queste ritorte ( <i>Maria, Anna, Talbot, Cecil, Leicester, Chorus of Mary's Faithful Servants</i> )	4:49
16	Ah! Non m'inganna la gioia! ( <i>Maria, Leicester</i> )	1:23			
17	Da tutti abbandonata ( <i>Maria, Leicester</i> )	3:45			
18	Ah si! Se il mio cor tremò giammai ( <i>Maria, Leicester</i> )	2:06			
19	Qual loco è questo? ( <i>Elisabetta, Leicester, Cecil, Talbot, Maria</i> )	1:52			
20	È sempre la stessa: superba, orgogliosa ( <i>Elisabetta, Maria, Talbot, Anna, Leicester, Cecil</i> )	4:23			
21	Va' ... lo chiedi, o sciagurata ( <i>Elisabetta, Maria, Leicester, Cecil, Anna, Talbot</i> )	4:17			

## Gaetano Donizetti (1797–1848)

### Maria Stuarda

Gaetano Donizetti was born at Bergamo in 1797, to a poor family. Nonetheless he soon showed musical promise, and at the age of nine became a pupil of the distinguished musician Simone Mayr. When he was eighteen he moved to Bologna for two years of further study with Padre Mattei, who had also taught Rossini. Although Donizetti composed chamber and church music and numerous songs, it is for his operas that he is best remembered.

Donizetti's operatic career divides into four phases. During the first, lasting from 1816 to 1822, he worked as an apprentice composer of operas. The climax of this period was his first fleeting success, the opera *Zoraide di Grenata*. The second phase was principally focused upon Naples and lasted from 1822 until 1830. During this time Donizetti absorbed the influence of Rossini, eventually to arrive at his own mature style with *Anna Bolena*, his first major international success. The third phase of his career, still centered upon Naples, extended from 1831 to 1838. Some of his most famous operas date from this time: *L'elisir d'amore*, *Lucrezia Borgia*, *Maria Stuarda*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Belisario* and *Roberto Devereux*. The final phase was divided between Paris and Vienna, and ended with Donizetti's complete collapse in 1845. It was during this time that a further tranche of masterpieces was first produced: *La fille du régiment*, *La favorite*, *Linda di Chamounix*, *Don Pasquale*, *Maria di Rohan*, and *Dom Sebastien*.

By 1845 Donizetti was the most performed Italian composer in Europe. Despite his professional success, his personal life was tragic. One of his children lived for less than two weeks while another two were still-born. His wife was to die before she was thirty. At the age of 48 Donizetti was completely incapacitated by a neglected venereal illness. Following several months in a sanatorium in Paris, he was brought back to Italy, where he died in his native town of Bergamo, in April 1848.

*Maria Stuarda* was the forty-sixth of Donizetti's seventy operas, and its composition and early performances were beset with numerous difficulties. The

first involved the librettist. Following the production of *Lucrezia Borgia* at La Scala, Milan, in 1833, Donizetti and the leading librettist of the day, Felice Romani, had parted company. Romani had grown tired of the frequently chaotic ways of the opera house, and the cavalier manner in which his work was treated. He ignored all of Donizetti's entreaties to collaborate, and so as the time approached for the delivery of an opera by the summer of 1834 for the San Carlo Opera House in Naples, Donizetti found himself without either a libretto or a librettist. In desperation he engaged Giuseppe Bardari, a professional lawyer in Naples but only an amateur poet, to work with him.

They had decided upon a subject by the beginning of June, 1834. The opera was composed during the summer months, and the dress rehearsal took place at the end of September, in front of a distinguished audience which included the Queen of Naples. The following day an astounded Donizetti was informed that the King of Naples, desperate to curry popular favour with optimistic musical galas, had decreed that the new opera was to be cancelled as 'the presentation of operas and ballets of tragic arguments should always be prohibited'. The desperate management turned to Donizetti for help in their hour of need and for a consideration he obligingly transformed *Maria Stuarda* into *Buondelmonte*, which received its first performance on 14th October 1834, with the action moved from Tudor England to Renaissance Italy. This hurried revision made little impression.

Donizetti, however, had not lost faith in *Maria Stuarda*, and with the aid of his publisher Ricordi he negotiated for it to be presented at La Scala, Milan, at the end of December 1835. This time the Austrian censors passed the text without any quibbles, but other factors marred the experience. At the beginning of December Donizetti learned of the death of his father, and for the first performance at the end of the month the soprano Maria Malibran only appeared in the title rôle because of the threat of a severe financial penalty, much to the disgust of

the audience. Subsequent performances in the run fared better, but by the seventh the censors suddenly demanded changes. The opera was effectively abandoned, with the final scheduled performances consisting of separate acts of *Maria Stuarda* without Malibran, and of Rossini's *Otello*. *Maria Stuarda* was not to be presented at La Scala again for one hundred and thirty years, although it was heard in the Italian provinces and in Naples once again in 1865.

Modern revivals commenced with a production at the Teatro Donizetti in Bergamo in 1958, but both on this occasion and at a subsequent revival in Stuttgart in 1963 disaster struck once again, with principal singers afflicted with unexpected illnesses. The first English performances took place to great success at the St Pancras Festival in 1966, since when *Maria Stuarda* has been taken into the international repertoire of many leading singers, including Dame Joan Sutherland, Dame Janet Baker, and Beverley Sills, all of whom have recorded it for the gramophone.

The source of Bardari's libretto was the play *Maria Stuart* by the famous German author, Friedrich Schiller. In order to meet the operatic conventions of the day, Bardari slimmed down the original considerably: twenty-one characters became six, but several of the major dramatic scenes of Schiller's play are retained, such as the famous

encounter between the two queens Mary and Elizabeth in the second act. Of all the characters from Schiller, the least changed is Mary, Queen of Scots. Bardari convincingly retains her dignity, character and religious conviction.

Donizetti's great skills as an operatic composer are evident throughout the score, of which, not surprisingly given its chequered history, there are numerous different versions. *Maria Stuarda* is well endowed with expressive and vocally attractive melodies, several of which anticipate Verdi, whose first opera was only four years away at the time of the initial performances in Milan. The opera follows the conventions of the day with its succession of arias, duets and ensembles, which in lesser hands tend to describe emotional reaction rather than dramatic action. Donizetti convincingly demonstrates his mastery of Italian romanticism by creating musical themes and structures which perfectly articulate both the dramatic moment and the emotional sense. Nowhere is this more so than in the confrontation between the two queens, which for impact compares well with Schiller's original, and which served as the model for several other famous operatic encounters, such as those between Aida and Amneris, La Gioconda and Laura, and Adriana Lecouvreur and the Princesse de Bouillon.

## Synopsis

### CD 1

#### Act 1

##### *The Palace of Westminster*

- 1 The opera opens with an orchestral introduction.
- 2 A tournament is being held in honour of the French Ambassador, who has come on behalf of the King of France to ask for Queen Elizabeth's hand in marriage.
- 3 Elizabeth recognizes the political advantages for England in the proposed marriage, which would unite the thrones of England and France.

4 However, she is torn between her duty to her people and her secret love for another man, the Earl of Leicester. Talbot takes advantage of the festivities to plead for mercy for Mary Stuart, but Cecil urges Elizabeth to send Mary to the execution block.

5 Elizabeth prays for guidance: she may be merciful, but also threatens vengeance if, as she suspects, Mary is in love with Leicester.

6 Leicester enters and Elizabeth entrusts him with a ring, asking him to tell the French ambassador that she will accept the hand of the French king in marriage, but reserves the right to change her mind. She then departs, together with her courtiers.

**7** Leicester and Talbot stay behind and talk privately. Talbot tells Leicester that he has been to Fotheringay Castle and has seen Mary Stuart. After confirming that he can trust Leicester, Talbot gives him a letter and a portrait sent by Mary.

**8** Leicester sings of the beauty of Mary, and of his adoration of her.

**9** Leicester declares that he would like to free her from captivity, even if it may mean his own death.

**10** Talbot leaves, and as Leicester is preparing to depart, he meets Queen Elizabeth. She notices his confusion and asks him if he has received a message from Mary Stuart. Leicester gives her the letter from Mary, in which Mary requests a meeting with Elizabeth. Elizabeth reflects on how Mary's position has changed since she claimed the three crowns of Scotland, France and England. She asks Leicester if he is in love with Mary, as the Court suspects.

**11** Leicester describes Mary's beauty in passionate words.

**12** Elizabeth agrees to meet with Mary, but aside, while Leicester pleads for her to show pity to Mary, she sings that having failed to secure the English crown from her, Mary is now seeking to deprive her (Elizabeth) of the one she loves. The act ends with Elizabeth exulting that Mary has been brought low.

## Act 2

### *The grounds of Fotheringay Castle*

**13** In the grounds of Fotheringay Castle Mary is rejoicing in the beauty of the flowers and the breeze, accompanied by Anna, her lady-in-waiting.

**14** Mary sings of her sorrow at her enforced exile from her beloved France. Sounds of a hunt are heard and Mary realizes that Queen Elizabeth is hunting in the castle grounds.

**15** Mary becomes apprehensive at the thought of an encounter with Elizabeth: although she has asked to do so, she does not feel that she has the strength to meet her.

**16** As Mary is about to leave, she is overjoyed to see Leicester. She asks him if she will be set free. Leicester confirms that Elizabeth is coming to see her under the pretext of the hunt, and suggests that Mary must be submissive toward her.

**17** Mary laments her situation: only Leicester's love has any meaning for her. Leicester responds by urging her not to despair, and holds out the hope that Elizabeth may spare her. Mary is not convinced. Leicester swears vengeance should Elizabeth prove deaf to Mary's pleas.

**18** Mary is appalled at the thought of Leicester risking his life for her sake. She leaves and Leicester goes to receive Elizabeth.

**19** Elizabeth enters. She is disconcerted at the thought of having to meet Mary. Once more Cecil urges her to execute Mary, while Leicester urges her to comfort Mary. Elizabeth is secretly angry that Leicester can only think of Mary, who now enters.

**20** Overcoming her reluctance to speak to Elizabeth, Mary kneels at her feet and asks for her forgiveness and pity.

**21** Elizabeth repulses her and taunts her, accusing her of treachery. Leicester tries to console Mary and pleads for Elizabeth to show some mercy to Mary. Elizabeth now turns her scorn on him. Overcome with anger, Mary insults Elizabeth, calling her the 'wanton daughter of Anne Boleyn' and worse.

**22** Elizabeth calls for guards to arrest Mary and in great anger tells her to prepare for death. Mary rejoices at what she sees as her triumph over Elizabeth, while Talbot, Leicester and Anna express horror at the inevitable consequence of Mary's outburst. Cecil, however, glories in Mary's fate.

*Scene 1: The Palace of Westminster (as for Act 1)*

**1** Elizabeth hesitates over signing Mary's death warrant, although urged to do so by Cecil. He tells her that England would applaud her if Mary was executed. Duly encouraged, Elizabeth decides to sign the warrant.

**2** But Elizabeth still holds back, frightened by the loss of tranquillity which she fears Mary's death will incur for her. Cecil seeks to encourage her to be bold and to sign the document.

**3** Leicester enters and Elizabeth hurriedly signs Mary's death warrant, in the face of Leicester's entreaties for mercy. Elizabeth, supported by Cecil, not only rejects his pleas but tells him that he must witness Mary's execution.

**4** Elizabeth urges Leicester to prepare himself for Mary's death; Leicester is duly horrified at Elizabeth's decision, while Cecil commends her for her regal act.

*Scene 2: Mary's private room in Fotheringay Castle*

**5** Mary recalls Elizabeth's hatred of her, and worries for Leicester's safety. Cecil and Talbot enter with Mary's death warrant. Cecil offers her the comfort of an Anglican priest, which Mary rejects with disdain. Cecil departs.

**6** Mary seeks comfort from Talbot, who tells her that Leicester has been commanded by Elizabeth to witness Mary's execution. Mary recalls her troubled history, imagining that she sees the phantoms of Darnley and Rizzio, before Talbot reveals to her that he has come as a Catholic priest to hear Mary's final confession.

**7** Mary thankfully pours out her soul, recalling happier times before her current predicament. Talbot urges her to confess all her sins before offering her forgiveness, which Mary gratefully receives.

**8** Talbot promises Mary joy in the after-life while Mary protests her innocence of sin. Supported by Talbot she leaves, clutching a crucifix.

*Scene 3: The Hall next to the place of execution at Fotheringay Castle.*

**9** Mary's faithful servants are gathered together in the room next to the execution chamber. They express horror at the sight of the instruments of death, and fear that Mary's death will bring shame to England.

**10** Anna begs them not to make Mary's misery greater, and they promise to be silent as Mary enters, accompanied by Talbot. Mary salutes them, saying that she is going to a better life.

**11** Mary prays to God for forgiveness, and is joined in her supplications by Anna, Talbot and her servants.

**12** The first cannon shot, which signals the imminence of her death, is heard. Cecil enters and asks Mary if she has a final wish. Mary replies with the request that Anna be permitted to accompany her to the execution block, to which Cecil agrees.

**13** Encouraged by Cecil's mercy, Mary offers her forgiveness to Elizabeth, with the wish that she may be happy on the English throne.

**14** Leicester enters in a state of great distress. The second, and final, cannon shot is heard. While Mary seeks to restrain Leicester, he curses Cecil.

**15** Mary summons Leicester to her side, and expresses the hope that her death will not lead to divine vengeance. Leicester, Talbot, Anna and Mary's servants express admiration at her fortitude, while Cecil considers the peace that Mary's death will bring to England. Sustained by Talbot, Mary walks through to the execution room, while Leicester averts his gaze.



### **Laura Polverelli**

Born in Siena, the mezzo-soprano Laura Polverelli has appeared in many theatres since winning a number of competitions, including the Neue Stimmen and Toti dal Monte. Her United States début in 1996 at the Seattle Opera in the title rôle of *La Cenerentola* was acclaimed by the public and critics alike. She sings mostly Handel, Mozart and Rossini and has recorded rare works by Vivaldi.



### **Maria Pia Piscitelli**

Born in Giovinazzo, Bari, where she undertook her musical studies, in 1988 Maria Pia Piscitelli won the A.S.L.I.C.O. competition in Milan and made her début at the Teatro Olimpico di Vicenza as the protagonist of Cavalli's *La Calisto*, recorded on CD. In 1990 she was a finalist in the Maria Callas International Contest and in 1991 she won the Schwetzingen Gioachino Rossini International Competition. Her career has taken her to houses throughout Europe and the Americas and in Japan, with leading rôles in operas from Mozart to Prokofiev.



### **Roberto De Biasio**

Born in Sicily, Roberto de Biasio studied in Naples, graduating in flute, and at Cassino University in modern literature. He had his vocal training with Mara Naddei, then with Malcolm King and Dennis O'Neill, and made his début in *Candide* in Trento. He sang *Un ballo in maschera* in the first performance at the Tirana Opera Theatre and at Poly Theatre in Beijing, with appearances in Petrassi's *La morte dell'aria* at La Fenice in Venice and *La Bohème* in Pordenone. He sang in the world première of Liberovici's *Titania la Rossa* in Piacenza, and *Pulcinella* in a tour of Spain and Portugal, and made his début as Pinkerton in a first centenary performance in Kyoto. He made his début in Bergamo as Edgardo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, followed by Leicester in *Maria Stuarda* at the Sferisterio in Macerata, Gennaro in *Lucrezia Borgia* in Bergamo, and appearances in *Lucia di Lammermoor* in Tokyo, Osaka and Lecce, *La Traviata*, *Macbeth*, *Oberto conte di San Bonifacio* and *Nabucco* in Parma, *Attila* in Modena and Piacenza, *Roberto Devereux* and *La rondine* in Trieste, and *Nabucco* at La Fenice.





### **Giovanna Lanza**

Giovanna Lanza was trained at the Trapani Conservatory, dedicating herself first to chamber works and eighteenth-century vocal repertoire. She triumphed in various competitions and worked with the Accademia della Scala and the Ravenna Festival in Sarti's *Giulio Sabino*, going on to appear in opera houses in Italy and throughout Europe in rôles ranging from Maddalena in *Rigoletto* and Dorabella in *Così fan tutte* to Vespetta in Albinoni's *Pimpinone* and Die Aufseherin in Strauss's *Elektra*. She collaborates regularly with Claudio Scimone and I Solisti Veneti.



### **Simone Alberghini**

Born in Bologna, the bass-baritone Simone Alberghini has interpreted mostly the great rôles of the Italian repertoire. Since his début at Turin's Teatro Regio in *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* (1993), and in the wake of his victory at the prestigious Operalia competition in 1994, he has appeared in the most important theatres in Europe and America, including Milan's La Scala, New York's Metropolitan, Berlin's Staatsoper Unter den Linden, the Opéra of Avignon, Los Angeles Opera, the Vienna State Opera, Rome Opera, the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, the Turin Teatro Regio and Pesaro Rossini Opera Festival. He has collaborated with renowned conductors, including Riccardo Muti, Vladimir Jurowski, Seiji Ozawa, Zubin Mehta, Giuseppe Sinopoli, Riccardo Chailly, and Michael Tilson Thomas, and with famous orchestras, among them the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the Dresden Staatskapelle, and the London Symphony Orchestra. Among his recordings noteworthy are *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* for BMG (Lorenzo), and *Tancredi* for FONITCETRA.



### **Mario Cassi**

Mario Cassi made his operatic début with Musica per Roma's Laboratorio "Voci in Musica" Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte* and Signor Lupo in Henze's *Pollicino*. He has been the winner of several important international competitions, including the 2002 Toti Dal Monte and Viotti (special Prize Cesare Bardelli), the Plácido Domingo Competition, Operalia 2003 (Zarzuela Prize), and the Spiros Argiris 2004 (second prize). He continues under the guidance of Bruno de Simone and Alessandra Rossi De Simone. His career has brought collaboration with leading conductors and directors, and his operatic repertoire ranges from Handel, Porpora and Mozart to the contemporary, with special attention to Italian belcanto works. In addition to appearances throughout Italy, he made his début at Lausanne in 2005 in Salieri's *La grotta di Trifonio*, also recorded with Les Talens Lyriques, and in 2006 sang Achilla in Handel's *Giulio Cesare* at the Paris Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, with Figaro in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* in Liège, among other appearances in 2007, continuing with Valentino in *Faust* in Valencia and Mercurio in *La Calisto* in Paris.



### **Riccardo Frizza**

Riccardo Frizza was born in Brescia in 1971 and studied at the Academy of Music in Milan, in Pescara and in Verona, from 1996 to 1999, furthering his studies with Gianluigi Gelmetti at the Chigiana Academy in Siena. In 1998 he won the International Competition of the South Bohemia State Philharmonic Conductors (Czech Republic) and from 1994 to 2000 was conductor in residence with the Brescia Symphony Orchestra. He made his operatic debut with Donizetti's *Convenienze e inconvenienze teatrali*, going on to direct repertoire from Mozart, Rossini, Donizetti and Verdi to Martin. He has been a guest at the Rossini Opera Festival in Pesaro, the Spoleto Festival dei Due Mondi and major festivals in Martina Franca, Parma, Verona, Brescia, and Stresa, with guest engagements in Fano, Busseto, Bergamo, Rome, Bologna, Turin, Genoa and Florence. His career has brought appearances throughout Europe and as far afield as Tokyo and Osaka, with a parallel career in the concert hall and recording studio.

### **Coro Lirico Marchigiano 'Vincenzo Bellini'**

The Ancona Bellini Chorus was founded in 1887 and until the Second World War was the permanent chorus of the Teatro delle Muse. Composed now principally of young conservatory graduates of the region, it is directed by Davide Crescenzi, and collaborates with the principal theatres of the region, in particular with the Macerata Opera Festival and at the theatres in Jesi, Fermo, Camerino, Ascoli Piceno, Fabriano, Teramo, and, since its re-opening in 2002, with the Teatro delle Muse in Ancona. The chorus also appears in concerts with the Orchestra Filarmonica Marchigiana and plays a significant part in the musical life of the region.

### **FORM – Orchestra Filarmonica Marchigiana**

The Marchigiana Philharmonic Orchestra was founded in 1985 and is now managed by the Marche Regional Orchestra Foundation. It is one of the thirteen Italian orchestras recognised by the Ministry of Culture, with Donato Renzetti as Principal Conductor and Artistic Director. The orchestra gives an annual season of concerts in the region and collaborates in principal operatic performances, working with distinguished soloists and conductors, and paying particular attention to past composers associated with the region, notably Pergolesi, Rossini and Spontini, and to contemporaries. There have been regular performances in Switzerland and Austria, and recordings by the orchestra include Pergolesi's *La serva padrona* and *Stabat Mater*, Richard Strauss's *Guntram*, Rossini *Overtures*, Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*, and Verdi's *Oberto Conte di San Bonifacio* and *Preludes and Overtures*. In 2003 a DVD of Donizetti's *L'elisir d'amore* was released, and in 2004 recordings of Mahler's *Symphony No. 9* and a DVD of Offenbach's *Les contes d'Hoffmann*.





Also available:



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In Donizetti's opera *Maria Stuarda* the rôles of the doomed queen and her cousin, Elizabeth I, have been taken by some of the greatest divas, from Malibran to Gruberova and Tosi to Baltsa, each revelling in the high drama of their tragically linked fates. "Contributing greatly to the success of the work, the young Maestro Riccardo Frizza revealed himself as a deep and sensitive interpreter of this score, managing to capture all the nuances of Donizetti's music ... Laura Polverelli portrayed with elegance and pride the character of Elizabeth, her furies, doubts and jealousies; Maria Pia Piscitelli was a wonderful Maria Stuarda, passionate, sorrowful, proud, dignified when sentenced to death, recalling her past sins yet conscious of her innocence." (MusiCultura)



Gaetano  
**DONIZETTI**  
(1797–1848)  
**Maria Stuarda**

Recorded by



Elisabetta ..... Laura Polverelli  
 Maria Stuarda ..... Maria Pia Piscitelli  
 Anna Kennedy ..... Giovanna Lanza  
 Roberto, conte di Leicester ..... Roberto De Biasio  
 Talbot ..... Simone Alberghini  
 Cecil ..... Mario Cassi

**FORM – Orchestra Filarmonica Marchigiana**  
**Coro Lirico Marchigiano 'V. Bellini' (Chorus Master: Davide Crescenzi)**  
**Riccardo Frizza**

CD 1 **1–22** Acts I and II 60:41 • CD 2 **1–15** Act III 55:55

A full track list can be found on page 3 of the booklet  
 The Italian libretto may be accessed at [www.naxos.com/libretti/660261.htm](http://www.naxos.com/libretti/660261.htm)  
 Recorded live at the Sferisterio Opera Festival, Macerata, Italy, 3 August 2007  
 in collaboration with Comune di Bergamo  
 Producer: Alberto Dellepiane • Engineer & Editor: Rino Trasi  
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DDD

Playing Time  
116:36



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