

MARIA CALLAS'S 100<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

Maria Callas, whose birth name was Maria Cecilia Sophia Anna Kalogeropoulos, was born on 2 December 1923 in New York and died on 16 September 1977 in Paris.

Frequently known as "La Divina", Callas was a huge name in modern opera, an unforgettable soprano who in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century revived the classic roles of "coloratura" (ornamentation of the melody typical of Italian opera) with her lyrical and dramatic versatility.

The daughter of Greek immigrants, Callas developed an interest in singing from an early age. She left the United States in 1937 to study at the Athens Conservatory with the soprano Elvira de Hidalgo. Her extraordinary career began in August 1947 when she sang "La Gioconda" in Verona.

Under the guidance of maestro Tullio Serafin, she performed in Venice, Turin, and Florence. Her first international tour began in 1949, with performances in Buenos Aires and Naples and, in 1950, in Mexico City.

In 1958, she sang at the São Carlos theatre in Lisbon, delighting the Portuguese opera lovers present.

She possessed an inimitable soprano voice, capable of sustaining both lyrical and coloratura performances. More than that, however, she was an intensely dramatic character with an extraordinary stage presence and very high artistic standards.

All these characteristics led her to be considered as an enormous – perhaps the supreme – talent of contemporary opera.

On her retirement in 1974, Callas had sung more than 40 different roles and recorded around 20 complete operas.

At the height of her career, Maria Callas sang Verdi's "La Traviatta" alongside Alfredo Kraus at the São Carlos theatre on 27 March 1958.

The "Violetta" of that "La Traviatta" – of which unfortunately there is no recording – was unforgettable for those who had the privilege of being present for one of the best performances of her sublime career.

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