

# Hermann Jadlowker

Dramatic Coloratura Tenor

## Hermann Jadlowker (1877-1953) *Dramatic Coloratura Tenor*

### LINER NOTES

Hermann Jadlowker was one of the most unusual tenors of the twentieth century. His recorded voice has a slightly baritonal timbre, but he also was able to produce high notes with ease and exhibit unbelievable agility. His “Ecco ridente in cielo” abounds in trills and runs, while his “Fuor del mar” demonstrates his coloratura singing.

Jadlowker’s voice and skills were unique. How many tenors could sing Lohengrin or Otello one night, Almaviva or Fra Diavolo the next, and do justice to all four of them? Still, now that his singing voice has been silent for some sixty years, it is possible to wonder if he, whose vocal splendors lay in the *bel canto* repertory, sang at the wrong time, an era when Wagner, Strauss and *verismo* were paramount. With the baritonal characteristics of his voice (he might well have been classified as a baritenor today), and incredible virtuoso abilities, he would have been even better in Rossini’s *Otello* than in Verdi’s—or in that composer’s *Ermione* than *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*. But this is not to denigrate his “Ecco ridente in cielo”—one of the all time great tenor records. It is only unfortunate that while he was active, so many of Rossini’s serious operas calling for a baritenor role were out of fashion and had been completely forgotten for close to fifty years.

Still, his recorded legacy leaves us a great deal to be grateful for and admire, including the best recordings ever of arias from Flotow’s *Alessandro Stradella*; Auber’s *La Muette de Portici* and *Fra Diavolo*; Mozart’s *Idomeneo*; and Rossini’s *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*. There is a magnificent duet from *Les Huguenots* with Frieda Hempel, and another from *Die Lustigen Weiber von Windsor* with Josef Mödlinger. Nevertheless, it would have been wonderful to have been able to hear him in other excerpts from French grand opera, where he particularly excelled, such as the Act IV duet from *Les Huguenots*, the Act V duet from *Le Prophète*, or the Act IV duet between Eleazar and the Cardinal in *La Juive*.

Unfortunately, the documentation of German language opera houses, such as Cologne, Karlsruhe, Stuttgart and even Vienna and Berlin is far behind that of their Italian counterparts. Consequently, with the sources at our command, it is impossible to say much about his early career. But we do know that the active repertory in “German” opera houses of the period was huge, and that the average season might include as many as forty to fifty works. Their repertory consisted not only of the best known German composers (Wagner, Mozart, Weber, Goldmark, Flotow, Cornelius, Lortzing, Nicolai), but also of many less familiar names, as well as translations of numerous works of French and Italian origin. Thus, a number of comic operas by Auber, Adam and Halevy actually survived longer in Germany than in France. A leading tenor, such as Jadlowker

soon became, would have been expected to take part in almost everything except the heavier Wagner roles. We can be grateful to the research of the late Charles Jahant, which Charles Mintzer so kindly placed at my disposal, for much of the information about Jadlowker's appearances in these houses, especially Riga.

Jadlowker was born in Riga, Latvia, on 5 July 1877 to a middle class Jewish family. He started what was to be his professional life as a cantor but soon decided that he wanted to sing opera. Typical of the bourgeoisie of that period, his father disapproved of a stage career, and young Hermann ran away to Vienna. He was sent back by the authorities, but the older man finally relented, and Jadlowker studied at the Vienna Conservatory for four years. He obtained an engagement at the Municipal Theatre in Cologne and made a debut there in 1899, most probably in *Nachtlager von Granada*. He only stayed in that city for one season, since his contract (originally for three years) was cancelled. He spent the next season or two in Stettin, then secured an engagement in his native Riga, which was to last for four seasons, with occasional guest appearances in Breslau (a failure) and Karlsruhe (a success, which led to a "permanent" engagement in that city). His Riga debut was on 3 September 1902 as Leopold in *La Juive*. He continued that season with various relatively light roles such as the tenor leads in *La Dame blanche*, *Der Trompeter von Sakkingen* and Nicolai's *Die Lustigen Weiber von Windsor*, Walther in *Tannhäuser*, Almaviva, Froh, Tonio, William Meister, Lenski, Alfredo, Romeo, the Marquis (in *Zar und Zimmermann*), Don Ottavio, Faust, Hoffmann, Tamino, Fra Diavolo, and the like. It is apparent from these roles, some of which were secondary, that he started out as basically a lyric tenor, with an essentially light voice, but an excellent top.

During 1903, he married Anna Hotz, the daughter of a Riga merchant. It was to be a very happy marriage, which lasted for thirty-seven years, until her death in 1940. He stayed in Riga until 1906, but also appeared in several other German language theatres during that time. An explanatory note might be in order at this point: It was customary in Central Europe for singers to be under contract with one house for periods ranging up to a few years, but they always made guest appearances elsewhere during their "vacations," which apparently could range from one to three or so months. In his third Riga season Jadlowker created his first role, that of the tenor lead in *Die Zauberin* by the local music director Richard Ohnesorg. But by Jadlowker's fourth Riga season, his voice had darkened sufficiently for him to take over Eleazar in *La Juive*. He also performed his first Lohengrin that year, and probably Radames as well.

Since we don't know what roles he was assigned in Cologne and Stettin, we can't be certain whether or not operas he sang later were additions to his repertory. However, it would seem unlikely that he would have sung Eleazar in those cities and then have reverted to Leopold in Riga. By the time he was engaged in Karlsruhe, then the capital of Baden, one of the more important quasi-independent German states, he had performed nearly fifty roles in almost that many works. While in Karlsruhe, where he was from 1906-1909 as a member of the company (he later returned as a guest), he added roles in *William Tell*, *Lakme*, *Der Cid* (presumably that of Cornelius), and *Germania* to his repertory.

It is not clear whether he had fairly long vacations while in Karlsruhe or whether his contract expired at the end of 1909, since he was able to spend the winter and spring of 1910 at the Metropolitan in New York City and on tour. His 22 January Met debut was as Faust, a role he repeated in Philadelphia a few weeks later. He then sang Lohengrin on 11 February, followed the next night by Turiddu opposite Emmy Destinn. There was an act of *Tosca* with Farrar and Scotti during a Gala on 1 March, then a *Freischütz* with Johanna Gadske on 11 March, a *Pagliacci* on 18 March, and finally a complete *Tosca* on the twenty-second. He was part of the touring contingent that April, with appearances in Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Toledo, Detroit, Milwaukee, Chicago (his first U. S. *Bohème* on 21 April), Indianapolis, and Louisville (where he sang both halves of the twin bill on 30 April). This was the year that the Metropolitan Opera (minus its orchestra) went to Paris to perform at the Theatre du Châtelet. It was to be a strikingly brilliant season, conducted by Toscanini, and opening with Caruso in *Aida* on 21 May, Caruso as Canio and Jadlowker as Turiddu in the twin bill two nights later, and Slezak as Otello on the twenty-fifth. Jadlowker sang his first Fenton (*Falstaff*) on 3 June, and after some repeats, concluded with a final Turiddu on 22 June. He then went back to Germany, singing *La Bohème* and *La Dame blanche* in Karlsruhe. That autumn, he returned to the United States, alternating between Boston and New York. His first stop was Boston, where he sang a *Tosca* with Melis on 12 November, then *Faust* with Alice Nielsen on the fourteenth. Down to New York for a *La Bohème* with Farrar on the twenty-first and a *Lohengrin* on the twenty-eighth, then back to Boston for Pinkerton on the thirtieth of November. He repeated Faust and Pinkerton at the Metropolitan on the tenth and fourteenth of December, respectively. The *Faust*, co-starring Farrar, was a matinee performance on the same day that Caruso and Destinn sang the world premiere of Puccini's *La Fanciulla del West*. Eighteen days later, the Met had another world premiere, that of Humperdinck's *Die KönigsKinder* (28 December). With Jadlowker in the latter work were Farrar, Homer, Goritz and Didur. Jadlowker continued to alternate between New York and Boston for much of the rest of the season but did not take part in the spring tour, returning to Germany instead, with guest appearances in Karlsruhe (*Carmen*, *Butterfly*, and *Traviata*), Berlin (*Cavalleria*, *Rom o et Juliette*, *Carmen*) and possibly other cities.

During his third and last Metropolitan season, he took part in three American premieres: *Lobetanz* (Thuille) on 18 November 1911, *Le Donne curiose* (Wolf-Ferrari) on 3 January 1912, and *Versiegelt* (Blech) on 20 January. With him in the *Le Donne curiose* were Farrar, Scotti, and Didur, Toscanini conducting. In spite of the fine cast, the opera was apparently unsuccessful, achieving only four repeats. Still, Jadlowker and Farrar did record a duet from the work for Victor. He also sang Lohengrin, Faust, Rodolfo and Pinkerton that season, the 13 March Pinkerton having been his last performance at the Met, except for a final *Die KönigsKinder* on 16 March. Farrar and Scotti were also in the cast, Toscanini again conducting.

In April of 1912 Jadlowker returned to Karlsruhe for more guest appearances in his usual repertory. However, the city most closely associated with Jadlowker was Berlin, where he was the leading tenor at the Hofoper (later Staatsoper) from that year until 1919. Unfortunately, not enough is known about his appearances in that city since the only published chronology is limited to new productions. What is known, however, is that Jadlowker sang a *Der Barbier von Bagdad* in June, then took part in a new production of *La Traviata* on 18 September. Two days

earlier, a major new opera house had opened in Stuttgart. To mark the occasion, Richard Strauss composed his *Ariadne auf Naxos* for that city and selected Jadlowker for the role of Bacchus. The world premiere took place on 25 October, with the composer conducting, and Maria Jeritza, Margarete Siems and Sigrid Onegin also in the cast. Jadlowker soon returned to Berlin, where he took part in an important new production of Auber's *La Muette de Portici* (4 November 1912) with Adelaide Andrejewa-Skilondz and Paul Knüpfer, then the Berlin premiere of *Ariadne* on 17 February 1913. There is reportedly a letter from Strauss to Jadlowker, imploring him to sing Bacchus again, since no one else was as fine a singer. Later that year, on 11 October 1912 Jadlowker sang the Berlin premiere of Verdi's *Don Carlos* by the local company (it had been given earlier, in French, by the forces from Monte Carlo) with Lily Hafgren, Margarethe Arndt-Ober, Cornelis Bronsgeest and Paul Knüpfer.

Some time before the war, when the Russian czar visited Germany, probably Berlin, a special performance of *Lohengrin* was arranged in his honor. There is an often told story of how Kaiser Wilhelm, boasted of Jadlowker's performance to Nicolai and introduced "his" *Lohengrin* to the czar, to which the Russian replied, "Maybe your *Lohengrin*, but my subject".

During the war, there was an *Africaine* on 1 April 1916, and an *Otello* (probably his first) on 15 December of that year. His partners in both these operas included Claire Dux and Joseph Schwarz, with Barbara Kemp as Selika. During the 1916-17 season, Jadlowker made some guest appearances in Holland, including a *Lohengrin* in Den Haag on 1 December and a *Fidelio* in Amsterdam on 28 April 1917.

The 1917-18 season in Berlin lasted from August to June, with Jadlowker singing Eleazar, Bacchus, an unidentified role in *Rappelkopf* (Blech), Don Jos , Faust, Hoffmann and Otello. Next season (apparently his last, with the exception of some guest appearances, at what was now the Staatsoper), his roles included Florestan, Lionel, Der Evangelimann, Manrico, Almaviva, and the Prince in *Königskinder*. He stayed on in Berlin for a few more years, singing primarily operetta and concerts. He also made guest appearances elsewhere in Germany and central Europe, including Cologne, Königsberg, Budapest, Hamburg, Prague, Lodz, Lvev (then Lemberg). Still very little is known about his career during these years.

Jadlowker returned to Riga in 1929, and was chosen as chief chasan of the main synagogue in his native city. He also became a professor of singing at the Riga Conservatory from 1936 to 1938. He managed to see the handwriting on the wall, and, since he already had relatives in Palestine, decided to go there, escaping Europe just before the war. He became a professor of singing at the Jerusalem Conservatory but left to go to Tel Aviv after his wife died in 1940. He opened a voice studio in that city, reportedly sang a performance of Verdi's *Ballo in Maschera* in 1943, and was involved in an attempt to found the Palestine opera. While the project didn't materialize, Jadlowker continued singing in charity concerts and teaching until his death on 13 May 1953.

## A NOTE ON THE RECORDINGS

Hermann Jadlowker's first recordings were made for the Odeon Company in Berlin during the period of 1907 through 1911. Unfortunately, company ledgers are no longer extant for specific dating. While in America, Jadlowker made a small group of records for the Victor Talking Machine Company in February and March, 1912. The exact dates of these recordings are included in our table of contents listing when applicable. It is possible that this began a long term agreement, as in December of the same year he made the first of a lengthy group of discs for Victor's and HMV's German affiliate, the *Grammophon Company*.

As a matter of war reparations, the German *Grammophon Company* became an entity in 1921 (*Deutsche Grammonphon*), HMV then establishing Electrola as its and Victor's German affiliate. Jadlowker seems to have temporarily concluded his recording activities around 1918. He began again about 1921 with the newly independent *Deutsche Grammonphon* concern. Their records were issued outside of Germany with the *Polydor* label (and also for a brief period in the U.S. as *Opera Disc*). Jadlowker's last records were an electrical group made for *Deutsche Grammonphon/Polydor* in the 1927 period.

Of the acoustical lieder selections, there is no mention of the pianist other than Bruno Seilder-Winkler's name appearing on the labels in a few instances. As he was the Gramophone Company's staff pianist and conductor for a period of years, he would likely be the unidentified accompanist as well. One Herr Steinberger is credited at the keyboard on one of the electrical Polydors. All having been made within a few days of each other (judging by the matrix numbers), probably the same accompanist was used for all sessions.

© Lawrence F. Holdridge, 1998

## TRACK LISTING

CD 1 (75:29)

1. IDOMENEO: **Noch tönt mir ein Meer im Busen {Fuor del mar}** (Mozart) 4:27  
*1917; Gramophone (1151m) 042527*
2. COSÌ FAN TUTTE: **Wie schön ist die Liebe {Un aura amorosa}** (Mozart) 4:07  
*1916; Gramophone (968m) 042536*
3. DON GIOVANNI: **Träne vom Freunde getrocknet {Il mio tesoro}** (Mozart) 3:33  
*1908; Odeon (xxB4057) 76024*
4. DON GIOVANNI: **Bande der Freundschaft {Dalla sua pace}** (Mozart) 4:10  
*1908; Odeon (xB4063) 5067*
5. DIE ENTFÜHRUNG AUS DEM SERAIL: **Ich baue ganz auf deine Stärke** (Mozart) 5:56  
*1909; Odeon (xB4566/7) 99363/4*
6. DIE ZAUBERFLÖTE: **Dies Bildnis ist bezaubernd schön** (Mozart) 3:55  
*7 March 1912; unpublished on Victor (C 11679-1) 2-042007*
7. Die LUSTIGEN WEIBER VON WINDSOR: **Was begehst... Bin ich erhört** (Nicolai) 5:57  
with Josef Mödlinger, bass *1909; Odeon (xB4573/4) 99370/1*
8. ALESSANDRO STRADELLA: **Tief in den Abruzzen** (Flotow) 2:07  
*1908; Odeon (xB3837) 99088*
9. LA MUETTE DE PORTICI: **O seht, wie herrlich strahlt der Morgen {Amis, la matinée est belle}** (Auber) 3:37  
*23 September 1913; Gramophone (1181s) 042436*
10. LA MUETTE DE PORTICI: **Du einz'ger Tröster {Du pauvre seul}** (Auber) 4:31  
*20 October 1913; Gramophone (1215s) 042437*
11. JOSEPH: **Ach, mir lächelt umsonst {Vainement Pharaon-Champs paternels}** (Méhul) 2:53  
*ca. 1924; Polydor (413as) 72744*
12. JOSEPH: **Ich war ein Jüngling noch an Jahren {A peine au sortir de l'enfance}** (Méhul) 4:34  
*ca. 1924; Polydor (414as) 72743*
13. ST. PAULUS: **Sei getreu bis in den Tod** (Mendelssohn) 4:16  
*ca. 1919; Gramophone (1242m) 042522*
14. ROMÉO ET JULIETTE: **L'amour! Oui, son ardeur a troublé... Ah, lève-toi soleil** (Gounod) 3:59  
*7 March 1912; Victor (C 11681-1) 76025*
15. FRA DIAVOLO: **Meine Freunde sind hier {J'ai revu nos amis}** (Auber) 5:27  
*23 September 1913; Gramophone (1179s) 042435*
16. LES HUGENOTS: **Ihr Wangenpaar {Plus blanche}** (Meyerbeer) 3:57  
*ca. 1911-1912; Odeon (xxB5395) 76925*
17. LES HUGENOTS: **Wer uns Vertrauen gab... Ach, war'ich so wie and're Frauen {Pareille loyauté vaut son prix... Si j'étais coquette}** (Meyerbeer) 8:03  
with Frieda Hempel, soprano *1910; Odeon (xxB5185-2/4-1) 76902/76903*

CD 2 (76:36)

1. IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA: **Ecco ridente in cielo** (Rossini) 4:15  
*26 September 1912; Gramophone (253al) 052385*
2. LA TRAVIATA: **Lunge da lei...De' miei bollenti spiriti** (Verdi) 3:41  
*7 March 1912; Victor (C 11684-1) 76024*
3. DON CARLOS: **Io l'ho perduta** (Verdi) 3:38  
*23 October 1913; Gramophone (131991/2r) 2-52856*
4. IL TROVATORE: **Ah sì, ben mio** (Verdi) 3:25  
*1915; Gramophone (792m) 042482*
5. LE DONNE CURIOSE: **Se in voi contanto forte fosse l'amor...Il cor nel contento** (Wolf-Ferrari) 4:22  
with Geraldine Farrar, soprano  
*21 February 1912; Victor (C 11607-2) 88359*
6. PRODANÁ NOVESTA: **Es muss gelingen {Jak mozna verit}** (Smetana) 3:14  
*1916; Gramophone (18616L) 4-42635*
7. DUBROVSKY: **O gib mir Vergessenheit {O, dai men zabvenye, rodnaya}** (Napravnik) 3:44  
*ca. 1924; Polydor (410as) 85268*

8. DIE KÖNIGIN VON SABA: **Magische Töne** (Goldmark) 3:30  
*ca.1919; Gramophone (1247m) 042569*
9. DIE KÖNIGSKINDER: **Ei, ist das schwer, ein Bettler zu sein** (Humperdinck)  
4:21  
*31 May 1912; Gramophone (618m) 042354*
10. **"STÄNDCHEN," op. 17/2** (R. Strauss; text by Schack) 2:35  
*1917-1918; Gramophone (19071L) 4-42629*
11. **"MORGEN," op. 27/4** (R. Strauss; text by J. H. Mackay) 3:04  
*1915; Gramophone (17372L) 4-42587*
12. **"ICH TRAGE MEINE MINNE," op. 32/1** (R. Strauss; text by Henckell) 2:18  
*1918; Gramophone (19147L) 4-42630*
13. **"SERENADA DON-ZHVANA,"** (Tchaikowsky; text by Tolstoy) 2:49  
*ca. 1924; Polydor (983ar) 70640*
14. **"KEIN WORT DIR, DER FREUDE ODER KLANGE," op. 28/5** (Tchaikowsky; text  
by Apukhtin) 2:30  
*ca. 1924; Polydor (982ar) 70640*
15. **"WARUM?," op. 6/5** (Tchaikowsky; text by L. May) 2:24  
*ca. 1924; Polydor (984ar) 70645*
16. **"O, DU MONDHELLE NACHT," op. 73/3** (Tchaikowsky; text by D. M. Rathaus)  
2:14  
*ca. 1924; Polydor (987ar) 70645*
17. **"WIEGENLIED," op. 1/5** (Gretchaninov; text by Lermontov) 2:33  
*ca. 1924; Polydor (986ar) 70634*
18. **"HEIMAT," op. 1/4** (Gretchaninov; text by Tolstoy) 1:46  
*ca. 1924; Polydor (985ar) 70634*
19. **"PUR DICESTI,"** (Lotti; text by Anonymous) 3:42  
*1927; Polydor (419bm) 66666*
20. **"VITTORIA MIO CORE,"** (Carissimi; text by Benigni) 2:56  
*1927; Polydor (421bm) 66633*
21. **"DER MOND STEHT ÜBER DEN BERGE [STÄNDCHEN]," op. 106/1** (Brahms; text  
by F. Kugler) 2:08  
*1927; Polydor (437be) 66821*
22. **"VON EWIGER LIEBE," op. 43/1** (Brahms; text by Hoffmann von Fallersleben)  
4:38  
*1927; Polydor (436be) 66821*
23. **"E CANTA IL GRILLO [Stornello],"** (Billi) 3:31  
*1927; Polydor (429bm) 66667*
24. **STORNELLATA MARINARA** (Cimara- Pesci) 3:18  
*1927; Polydor (430bm) 66667*

CD1: All with orchestral accompaniment except Track 13 with organ and cello  
accompaniment.

Languages: All in German except: French [14]

CD2: Tracks 1-9 with orchestra accompaniment; Tracks 10-24 with piano accompaniment;  
Tracks 19-24 were recorded electrically in 1927

Languages: All in German except: Italian [1-5; 19-20; and 23-24]

Producer: Lawrence F. Holdridge  
Audio Conservation: Ward Marston

Marston would like to thank J. Neil Forster, Dr. Janice Holdridge, Stanley Henig, John  
Humbley, Peter Lack, Jim Peters, William Shaman, and Joe Waters for their help in the  
production of this CD release.