



Dire et Chanter Les Passions
DCLP



REVUE

INTERNATIONALE



DIRE ET



CHANTER



LES PASSIONS



03 L'Émotion chez Maria Callas

sept 2024

Directeurs de la revue :

Marc JEANNIN et David POULIQUEN

Directeur de publication :

Jean-François BIANCO

Revue à comité de lecture
International peer-reviewed journal

Directeurs de la revue (par ordre alphabétique)

Dr Marc JEANNIN, Université d'Angers & **Dr David POULIQUEN**, DCLP

Directeur de publication

Dr Jean-François BIANCO, Université d'Angers

Direction scientifique (par ordre alphabétique)

Prof. Matteo CASARI	Alma Mater Studiorum, Università di Bologna
Pr Adrian GRAFE	Université d'Artois
Pr Danièle PISTONE	Sorbonne Université

Comité scientifique (par ordre alphabétique)

Prof. Angela ALBANESE	Università degli Studi di Modena e Reggio Emilia
Pr. Carlo ALTINI	Università degli Studi di Modena e Reggio Emilia
Pr Patrick BARBAN	Université du Havre
Pr Marina BONDI	Università degli Studi Modena e Reggio Emilia, Conservatorio di Musica Vecchi Tonelli
Pr Philippe BLAUDEAU	Université d'Angers
Dr Jean-Noël CASTORIO	Université du Havre
Fabio CEPPELLI	Teatro Luciano Pavarotti
Pr Carole CHRISTEN	Université du Havre
Dr Golda COHEN	Université d'Angers
Pr Nobert COL	Université de Bretagne Sud

Pr. Carl GOMBRICH	The London Interdisciplinary School
Simon LEADER	The Leys School
Dr Marie NGO NKANA	Université de Strasbourg
Jean-Yves LE JUGE	Festival de musique baroque de Quelven
Dr Nicola PASQUALICCHIO	Università di Verona
Dr Paul PHILLIPS	Stanford University
Dr Geoffrey RATOUIS	Université d'Angers
Dr Sophie ROCH-VEIRAS	Université Catholique de l'Ouest
Pr Clair ROWDEN	School of Musicologie Cardiff University

Équipe éditoriale

Volet édition :

Marine VASLIN

Lisa FISCHER

Marjorie GRANDIS

Volet graphique-design :

Allison LEGAVRE

Conception et supervision du numéro :

Marc JEANNIN

Webmaster

Dominique RIBALET

Publication périodique

Revue en libre accès disponible sur : www.dclp.eu/revue-dclp



Langues de publication : français, italien, anglais

@ : contact-revue-dclp@dclp.eu

ISSN : 2804-0074

Dépôt légal : février 2021

Présentation de la *Revue internationale Dire et Chanter Les Passions*

La *Revue internationale Dire et Chanter Les Passions* (revue DCLP) est une revue à comité de lecture qui publie des articles rattachés à la thématique principale de l'expression des passions, des émotions, des voix, des talents, des savoir-faire, et des formes artistiques. Elle propose des sujets de réflexion interdisciplinaires selon des angles d'approche divers, sans restrictions théoriques ou méthodologiques. La revue DCLP publie dans le domaine des sciences humaines et sociales, en format numérique et/ou papier, des articles émanant de chercheurs, d'experts, de spécialistes, d'artistes et de personnalités rayonnant dans une sphère nationale et/ou internationale. La revue DCLP publie des numéros thématiques et également des hors-séries, et une rubrique varia. Cela souligne l'engagement résolu de la revue DCLP en faveur du décloisonnement des savoirs et la diffusion des connaissances.

THE CALLAS EFFECT: HOW ONE SOPRANO CHANGED OPERA FOREVER

Diana Elizabeth Martinovich
Singer and author

Maria Callas: The Diva Who Transformed Opera

Maria Callas was an iconic Greek soprano renowned for her captivating stage presence and expressive voice. Called “La Divina” for good reason, Callas helped revive neglected operas like Bellini’s Norma and mastered complicated roles like Violetta in Verdi’s La Traviata. Through her unparalleled artistry and mesmerizing performances, Callas transformed opera from an elitist art form into an emotionally moving experience for mainstream audiences. Callas drastically changed her appearance in the early 1950s, losing over 80 pounds. This transformation turned her into an international celebrity and fashion icon overnight. Her glamorous style and makeup are still emulated today, as evidenced by Angelina Jolie portraying Callas in a recent biopic. Callas’ makeover exemplified her dedication to her craft and desire to convey raw emotion through her voice and physicality.

Callas captivated audiences with her expressive, multi-coloured voice and ability to embody her characters. She was a perfectionist, rigorously researching roles and rehearsing details for authentic portrayals. Callas’ moving performances conveyed a "inner truth" that allowed listeners to connect deeply with the music. Critics praised her gift for fusing vocal mastery and visceral emotion.

Through talent, determination, and force of will, Maria Callas revived interest in neglected operas, set a new standard for expressive singing, and broadened opera’s appeal. She lives on as a pioneering artist who transformed opera from a medium focused primarily on vocal acrobatics into a poignant reflection of human experiences and emotions. Callas' timeless recordings and enduring influence have cemented her status as one of the greatest opera singers of all time.

THE UNIQUE TIMBRE AND TEXTURE OF CALLAS' VOICE

Maria Callas possessed a voice unlike any other in opera. Her distinctive timbre and vocal texture were instantly recognizable and conveyed a spectrum of emotions. Callas had a warm, velvety tone in her lower and middle range that could transform in an instant to a brilliant, metallic sound as she ascended to the higher register. This allowed her to embody a wide range of characters, from the tragic heroines of Bellini and Donizetti to the wilful femmes fatales of Verdi. Her voice was extremely agile and capable of subtle inflections, nuances, and shadings that gave depth and meaning to every word.

The unmistakable quality of Callas' voice, combined with her captivating stage presence and intensity, produced a visceral reaction in audiences. Listeners described feeling a jolt of electricity upon first hearing her sing live. The emotional impact was so profound that attendees found themselves moved to tears, filled with elation, or stunned into reverent silence. Callas was a pioneer who helped revive neglected operas through her masterful interpretations and brought a new level of drama, realism, and psychological complexity to established works.

She breathed life into characters in a way no other singer had done before, using vocal colour and phrasing to reveal their deepest passions, conflicts, and desires.

The effect was transcendent. Callas' unique voice and artistry transported audiences into the very heart of opera. Her indelible performances shaped how generations of singers and audiences have come to understand and experience many operatic roles. Callas changed the operatic form itself, raising the bar for emotional truth and intensity of expression. Her legacy lives on for all who discover the power, beauty, and timeless genius of her work.

CALLAS' COMMANDING STAGE PRESENCE AND DRAMATIC SENSIBILITIES

Maria Callas possessed an unparalleled stage presence and understanding of dramatic sensibilities that allowed her to captivate audiences.

Vocal Control and Emotional Nuance

Callas exhibited an extraordinary level of vocal control, using variations in volume, tone, and timing to create emotional nuance. She could sing pianissimo high notes and fortissimo low notes with equal ease. This vocal dexterity, combined with her physical acting abilities, allowed her to embody characters and bring emotional depth to her performances.

Callas had remarkable control over her vocal dynamics, varying her volume, pitch, and pacing to imbue her singing with emotional nuance. She could sing the softest high notes pianissimo and the lowest notes fortissimo with equal facility. This vocal versatility, combined with her acting skills, enabled Callas to inhabit the characters she portrayed and lend pathos to her performances. Callas' ability to navigate the widest ranges of volume and pitch allowed her to mold her voice to the precise emotional needs of the music. She could transition seamlessly from the most delicate, introspective lines to the most passionate, anguished cries. Her phrasing was always shaped by a profound understanding of the psychology behind the lyrics and score, bringing psychological realism to her interpretations. Callas' vocal control was so precise that she could mimic the inflections and tones of speech to create the illusion that her characters were speaking, not singing. This level of vocal mastery, married with Callas' innate dramatic gifts, transformed her performances into intense, emotionally gripping experiences for audiences.

Callas' unforgettable portrayal of Lady Macbeth in Verdi's *Macbeth* exemplified her ability to lend raw emotional intensity and psychological depth to even the most demanding roles. Callas embodied Lady Macbeth's ruthless ambition, desperation, and madness with chilling authenticity. Her Lady Macbeth was a complex, conflicted human being - far removed from the caricature of an evil witch.

Callas imbued Lady Macbeth's famous sleepwalking scene with profound anguish and torment. Her sleepwalking monologue was an emotional tour de force that left audiences stunned. Callas sang the eerie, unaccompanied melody with such psychological acuity and tortured longing that listeners could almost see Lady Macbeth's haunted visions and feel her agony. Callas' Lady Macbeth was a tragic figure – driven to madness by her own ambition and guilt.

Callas brought a level of passion and emotional intensity to the role that had never been matched. Her dramatic portrayal paved the way for future singers to approach Lady Macbeth as a complex, conflicted character rather than an archetypal villainess. Callas' chilling intensity and ability to harness her powerful soprano voice to express Lady Macbeth's disintegration

made her performance legendary. Callas transformed Verdi's *Macbeth* into a psychologically rich portrait of human frailty and the corrosive effects of sin and guilt on the soul. Her Lady Macbeth stands as one of the towering achievements of 20th century opera¹.

Physicality and Theatricality

On stage, Callas used exaggerated physical gestures and facial expressions to convey the emotional experience of her characters. Her movements were choreographed and theatrical, captivating audiences with her emotive performance. Callas transformed opera into a total theatrical experience, breaking free of the park and bark style of opera performance popular at the time. Callas would use her entire body to convey emotion, employing wide arm gestures, dramatic facial contortions, and exaggerated postures that communicated the inner turmoil of her characters. She would often throw herself to the floor or collapse in emotional anguish, drawing the audience into the performance through her powerful physicality. Her movements were calculated yet impulsive, creating an illusion of spontaneous emotional expression on stage. Callas demanded the audience's full attention through her theatrical and dramatic physical performance, drawing them into the story through her body language and facial expressions.

Callas' portrayal of the tempestuous diva Tosca in Puccini's opera of the same name showcased her physicality and theatricality. Callas threw herself into the role with abandon, capturing Tosca's fierce temperament, passionate nature, and intense jealousy. In Act I, Callas' Tosca confronts the police chief Scarpia with blazing fury over his treatment of her lover Cavaradossi. Callas would scream Tosca's lines at the top of her powerful soprano range, spit out the words with venom, and throw herself around the stage in a display of hysteria and rage. In Act II, Callas' portrayal of Tosca's despair and desperation after learning of Cavaradossi's torture was shattering. Callas collapsed to the floor in anguished sobs, clutching at the curtains and furniture in a dramatic portrayal of grief. Her emotional outpouring left audiences in tears. The climax of the opera comes in Act III with Tosca's dramatic confrontation and killing of Scarpia. Callas hurled herself at Scarpia with unrestrained fury, stabbing the air with her knife in an explosive display of physical and vocal intensity. Her Tosca was a force of nature – wild, tempestuous, and uncontrollable – conveying the character's passionate temperament through every gesture and expression².

Callas' visceral, physical portrayal of Tosca exemplified her approach to opera performance, transforming the art form through emotional truth, psychological depth, and dramatic theatricality.

Use of Colour and Costume

Callas paid close attention to the use of colour and costume on stage to enhance the theatrical experience for audiences. She favoured bold colours that would contrast dramatically with the hues of other performers and the backdrop of the set. Callas believed the colours a character wears can communicate symbolism and psychological states, expressing aspects of the plot and character development. As such, she collaborated closely with directors and costume designers to create outfits that evoked the emotional truth of her characters.

¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D0etVFzquWw>

² G. Puccini. *Tosca* with Maria Callas and Tito Gobbi. Private video collection.

For example, as Lady Macbeth, Callas insisted on wearing a red gown for key scenes to symbolize the blood on her hands from the murders she orchestrated. The vivid red colour stood out starkly against the grey and brown tones of the rest of the set, capturing the audience's attention and conveying Lady Macbeth's increasingly unhinged and tormented mental state³.

Callas also sought costumes that would allow her maximum mobility and range of motion to enhance her dramatic physicality and theatricality on stage. She preferred gowns with slits, plunging necklines, and other design features that gave her garments dramatic flow and movement when she gestured expressively or collapsed to the floor in emotional anguish. The fluidity of her costumes complemented Callas' exaggerated physical performance, creating a symbiotic relationship between her vocal expression, body language, and outward appearance.⁴

Through her innovative use of colour and costume, Callas set a new standard for psychological and symbolic realism in opera performance, transforming the visual experience of the art form in ways that deepened the emotional and dramatic impact of her portrayals.⁵

Interpretation and Nuance

Callas had an unparalleled ability to interpret music and lyrics to uncover depths of meaning. She studied scores meticulously to understand composers' intentions and bring psychological complexity to her characters. Callas said, "I try to interpret the role, not emulate other singers. I never listen to other singers' recordings. I learn the music and the libretto and try to understand what the composer and librettist had in mind. Then, I create my own interpretation⁶." Her interpretations were revelatory, allowing audiences to experience familiar operas in new ways.

Callas demonstrated that the female voice could be a vehicle for power and emotional intensity equal to any male voice. She expanded the technical and dramatic possibilities for all opera singers who came after her. Through her vocal mastery, physicality, and interpretive genius, Callas transformed opera into a total theatrical experience and cemented her status as one of the greatest opera singers of all time. Her effect on opera was profound and permanent.

Callas' performance as Floria Tosca in Puccini's opera *Tosca*⁷ exemplified her expansive interpretations that unlocked psychological depth and emotional intensity. Callas portrayed Tosca as a passionate, impulsive woman driven to the extremes of jealousy, desperation, and vengefulness. In Act I, Callas imbued Tosca's love for Cavaradossi with consuming fire, expressing Tosca's obsessive jealousy of his relationship with the painter's model. Callas sang Tosca's music with a brazen edge that hinted at the violence simmering just below the surface of Tosca's outwardly proper demeanour. In Act II, Callas' dramatic performance underscored Tosca's terror as she witnesses Scarpia threaten and torture Cavaradossi. Callas portrayed Tosca's rage, grief, and determination with raw intensity, conveying the turmoil of emotions that drives Tosca to kill Scarpia in revenge. In Act III, Callas sang Tosca's final aria with plaintive vulnerability, expressing the complex mix of regret, remorse and longing that fills Tosca's final moments with Cavaradossi before their deaths. Callas' interpretation exposed

³ Edwards, Anne. (2001). *Callas: Her Life, Her Loves, Her Music*.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Bret, David. *Maria Callas: The Tigress and the Lamb*. Robson-Parkwest, 1998.

⁷ [\(325\) Maria Callas and Tito Gobbi at Covent Garden, 9.02.1964-Tosca, prod Franco Zeffirelli, atto II. - YouTube](#)

Tosca's essential humanity beneath the character's violent actions and jealously possessive nature⁸.

Through her nuanced portrayal, Callas transformed Tosca from a one-dimensional jealous lover into a complex, multi-faceted woman whose humanity and passion shine through despite her fatal flaws. Callas' interpretation unlocked new emotional depths in Puccini's music and drama, enriching audiences' understanding and appreciation of the opera.

EXPRESSING RAW EMOTION THROUGH HER SINGING

Maria Callas was renowned for her expressive and emotive singing. Through her voice, she conveyed raw emotion and passion that resonated with audiences.

Vocal intensity and emotional interpretation

Callas was able to elicit profound emotions from listeners through her intense vocal interpretations and her perceptive understanding of the characters she portrayed. She injected great intensity and emotion into her singing by using dynamics, timbre, phrasing, and accentuation to interpret meaning⁹. Her voice was described as “penetrating”, and she was adept at using vocal colours and shadings to convey emotion¹⁰.

Callas brought psychological depth and emotional authenticity to her portrayals that was unprecedented. She keenly understood the motivations and emotions of the characters she played and was able to translate that into her singing through subtle vocal inflections, nuances, and shadings. Audiences found her interpretations deeply moving due to their psychological realism and emotional honesty. Through the intensity and conviction in her singing, Callas was able to forge an emotional connection with audiences and draw them into the drama.

In her performance as Lady Macbeth in Verdi's *Macbeth*, Callas displayed tremendous vocal intensity and emotional interpretation. Her voice took on a harsh and cruel edge as she portrayed Lady Macbeth's cold-blooded ambition and lust for power. Callas imbued the role with psychological complexity, showing Lady Macbeth's inner turmoil and moments of guilt and madness. In the sleepwalking scene in Act II, Callas' voice was filled with anguish and desperation as she sang of Lady Macbeth's futile attempts to wash the blood from her hands, conveying the depths of her character's psychological decline. Callas' raw, intense portrayal of Lady Macbeth's disintegration brought new psychological depth to the role and set a new standard for dramatic soprano performances in opera. Her vocal power, emotional conviction and perceptive interpretation transformed Lady Macbeth from a stock villainess into a complex, conflicted woman haunted by her own ruthlessness¹¹.

Attention to textual meaning and subtext

Callas had an almost fanatical devotion to understanding the meaning behind the words in the operas she performed. She studied scores meticulously to determine the emotional

⁸ G. Puccini. *Tosca* with Maria Callas and Tito Gobbi. Private video collection.

⁹ Balteş, Felicia Rodica, Avram, Julia, Miclea, Mircea, Andrei C. Miu. (June 2011). *Emotions induced by operatic music: Psychophysiological effects of music, plot, and acting: A scientist's tribute to Maria Callas*

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Wang, Angie. (2021). “5 Minutes That Will Make You Love Maria Callas”. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/06/arts/music/opera-classical-music-maria-callas.html>

subtext and find ways to convey hidden meanings through her vocal interpretation. Her attention to detail and textual fidelity meant that every musical phrase and vocal inflection had dramatic intention and meaning. Audiences were struck by how even the smallest details of her performances were imbued with emotion and purpose.

Callas demonstrated that opera singing at its finest could be a profoundly moving artistic experience. Through the intensity, passion, and psychological depth she brought to her performances, she was able to touch audiences in a way that transcended the technical aspects of singing. Callas showed the world the power of opera as an emotional and dramatic art form. Her emotionally penetrating and theatrically convincing portrayals changed how audiences understood and experienced opera.

CALLAS' ATTENTION TO TEXT AND MUSICALITY

Maria Callas' interpretive genius was evident in her meticulous attention to textual meaning and musicality. Callas studied scores intensely to determine the composer's intentions, then conveyed profound insights through her vocals.

Callas scrutinized librettos and scores to interpret each work's essence. She aimed to make the music sound the way it felt to her through phrasing, dynamics, and vocal colour. Callas grasped how music and text intertwined, fusing them into a cohesive interpretation¹². Her thorough preparation and understanding of the composer's purpose allowed her to translate dramatic subtleties into her performance.

Callas' mastery of technique, including a wide vocal range and agility, gave her artistic freedom. She employed variations in tempo, rhythm, pitch, and volume to shape lyrical phrases and heighten musicality. Callas stretched the limits of traditional bel canto style with her expressive use of chest voice, vocal breaks, and glottal attacks. Her dramatic instincts led her to take rhythmic liberties at times, which some critics viewed as excessive. However, these unconventional flourishes allowed Callas to achieve penetrating emotional insights and visceral audience reactions. Callas' meticulous study of scores and creative interpretations revolutionized operatic standards. She demonstrated that the relationship between music and drama was symbiotic, not subordinate.

Callas' genius in fusing vocal mastery and penetrating insight into dramatic subtext allowed her to become, as critic John Ardoin wrote, "the Bible of opera [...] the standard by which all existing and future divas must shape themselves"¹³. Through her consummate artistry, Callas broadened definitions of great operatic singing. She revealed hidden depths in familiar works and brought new vitality to the genre.

Callas' dedication to understanding composer's intent and ability to translate insight into sound revolutionized operatic interpretation. Her synthesis of technical mastery, musicality, and dramatic instinct allowed Callas to achieve unprecedented expressive freedom and move audiences with the power of her vocal interpretations. Callas demonstrated that opera could achieve the intensity and verisimilitude of spoken drama, raising standards for generations of singers.

¹² Necula, Maria-Cristina. (2020). *Maria Callas and the Longinus Sublime*.
<https://www.csmusic.net/content/articles/maria-callas-and-the-longinus-sublime/>

¹³ Ardoin, John. (1974). *Callas: The Art and the Life - The Great Years*.

THE ROLE OF SENSORY PERCEPTIONS IN CALLAS' PERFORMANCES

Maria Callas was renowned for her captivating performances and the emotional depth she brought to her roles. A key factor in her ability to move audiences was her masterful use of sensory perceptions.

Vocal Production and Voice Technique

Callas' vocal production and voice technique were truly remarkable, setting her apart as one of the greatest sopranos in history. Her meticulous control over her vocal instrument allowed her to deliver performances that were both technically flawless and emotionally captivating.

With a wide vocal range and agility, Callas possessed the ability to effortlessly navigate the intricacies of a wide variety of repertoire. Her voice resonated with a captivating richness, allowing her to effortlessly convey the depth and complexity of the characters she portrayed on stage. Whether she was performing the delicate passages of a bel canto aria or the powerful climaxes of a dramatic scene, Callas' vocal production was always exquisite.

One of the hallmarks of Callas' vocal technique was her masterful use of vocal colour and tone. She had the remarkable ability to shape her voice to fit the emotional nuances of the music she was performing. From the ethereal sweetness of her pianissimos to the intense power of her dramatic crescendos, Callas' vocal coloration added an extra layer of depth and emotion to her performances.

In addition to her control over vocal colour and tone, Callas also employed variations in volume and vibrato to great effect. She understood that volume could be used as a powerful tool to evoke different emotions in the listener. Whether she needed to convey vulnerability, passion, or anger, Callas knew exactly how to adjust her volume to create the desired effect. Her judicious use of vibrato added warmth and richness to her voice, enhancing the emotional impact of her performances.

Callas' vocal agility was truly awe-inspiring. She effortlessly executed intricate vocal runs and melismatic passages with precision and clarity. Her ability to navigate through vocal leaps and trills with ease showcased her technical mastery and added an element of virtuosity to her performances. Beyond her technical prowess, Callas' voice technique was also characterized by her keen attention to detail. She paid careful attention to every aspect of her vocal production, ensuring that each note was perfectly placed and articulated. Her dedication to honing her technique allowed her to achieve a level of vocal control that was unparalleled.

Breath Control

Callas employed precise breath control techniques to achieve her remarkable vocal effects. She understood the importance of proper breathing to support vocal production and emotion. Callas employed subtle variations in her breathing to manipulate dynamics, pace, and phrasing.

For pianissimos and soft passages, Callas took small, controlled breaths to allow the tone to resonate freely. This careful breathing technique gave her soft singing an ethereal, floating quality. In contrast, for dramatic climaxes Callas took fuller, deeper breaths to build the diaphragmatic support needed for powerful high notes and longer phrases. Her mastery of breath support allowed her to navigate challenging passages with ease and infuse them with intensity and passion. Callas also used breathing to manipulate pacing in her performances. She employed rhetorical pauses of varying lengths for dramatic emphasis. By varying the time

between breaths, Callas was able to heighten suspense and build anticipation in her audiences. Overall, Callas' precise breath control added an extra degree of nuance and expressiveness to her singing. Her ability to manipulate dynamics, pacing, and phrasing through subtle differences in her breathing further enhanced the emotional depth and intensity of her vocal interpretations. Callas' mastery of breath techniques illustrates the profound impact that proper breathing can have on vocal production and performance quality¹⁴.

Callas' remarkable vocal production and technique stemmed from her meticulous control over all aspects of her vocal instrument, including her vocal agility, use of vocal colour, dynamics, vibrato, and precise breath control. These technical skills, combined with her instinctive grasp of text and music, allowed Callas to elevate opera singing to new heights of expressive freedom and emotional intensity.

Physicality

Callas understood that opera is a visual as well as aural art form. Her physical performance was integral to conveying meaning and drawing the audience into the drama. She used graceful yet powerful gestures, poignant facial expressions, and fluid movements to embody her characters fully. Witnesses described her performances as mesmerizing and even transformational.

Gesture and Movement

Callas employed purposeful gestures and movements to convey meaning and emotion. Even the smallest movements, such as a turn of the head or lift of an eyebrow, took on profound significance in Callas' hands. Her gestures were economical yet evocative. For instance, in Act 1 of *La Traviata* when Violetta learns of Alfredo's love, Callas portrayed Violetta's joy and hopefulness through graceful, flowing movements. She extended her arms upward as if to receive Alfredo's love and lifted her head regally as if basking in newfound happiness. In contrast, during Violetta's confrontation with Germont in Act 2, Callas' gestures became more angular and contained. She held her arms tightly at her sides and gestured sharply with her hands as she argued for her right to love Alfredo. These contained, angular movements mirrored Violetta's growing defiance and frustration. Callas also used fluid movements to portray Violetta's physical and emotional decline in Act 3. She moved slowly and deliberately, often pausing to gather strength. Her gradual slowing of pace and shrinking physicality paralleled Violetta's deteriorating health and sense of impending mortality¹⁵.

In every role, Callas imbued even the smallest movement or gesture with deep significance. Her fluid yet purposeful physicality helped bring her multidimensional characters to life, allowing Callas to capture the full range of human emotion through both voice and body. Callas' mastery of physical expression illustrates how fully embodied performance can elevate opera singing to a higher artistic form.

Collaboration

Callas recognized that opera is a collaborative endeavour. She worked closely with conductors, directors, and fellow singers to create a cohesive production. By coordinating blocking,

¹⁴ Dellenbaugh, Ginger. (2021). *Maria Callas's Lyric and Coloratura Arias*

¹⁵ LeVine, Robert. (2010). *Maria Callas: A Musical Biography*. Amadeus.

entrances, exits, and interactions with others on stage, she fashioned a seamless experience for the audience. Callas insisted on authenticity and truth in all elements of a performance¹⁶.

Timing and Nuance

Callas exercised meticulous control over the pacing, rhythm, and subtle details in her performances. She understood that the emotional impact depended greatly on the timing and nuance of each vocal or physical expression. By calibrating the delivery of each syllable and gesture, she was able to convey the depth and complexity of human emotions. Her sensitivity to nuance and flawless sense of timing resulted in breathtaking dramatic effect.

In conclusion, Maria Callas triumphed in captivating audiences through her masterful synthesis of vocal mastery, physicality, collaboration, timing, and nuance. She transformed opera into a profoundly moving experience by engaging all the senses and transporting listeners into the drama. Callas demonstrated that the emotive power of opera relies not just on a beautiful voice but on a consummate artist in full command of her expressive gifts¹⁷.

THE INFLUENCE OF CALLAS ON MODERN OPERA SINGERS

Maria Callas demonstrated a mastery of emotive expression through her singing that influenced subsequent generations of opera singers. Her captivating and moving performances showed singers the power of conveying raw emotion and passion.

Vocal Technique and Expression

Callas exhibited flawless vocal technique combined with an ability to connect emotionally with audiences. She employed expressive devices like vocal shading, dynamic contrast, and timbre changes to infuse her singing with feeling. Callas demonstrated how singers could use their voices, not just as instruments, but as a means of intimate expression.

Modern opera singers have followed Callas' lead, focusing on vocal mastery to serve the emotional interpretation of a role. Great singers of our time, like Angela Gheorghiu and Anna Netrebko, have demonstrated comparable levels of vocal mastery and passion in their performances.

Physicality and Theatricality

Callas did not just sing beautifully; she embodied her roles. Her theatricality and physicality brought an operatic character to life. Callas might crouch, extend her arms, or make exaggerated facial expressions to match the emotion of the music.

Modern opera singers understand that to achieve a moving performance, they must, like Callas, commit fully to the physical aspects of a role. Singers now see opera as a complete theatrical and musical experience, where voice and body are inextricably linked. Just as Callas enraptured audiences with her dramatic physical performances, modern singers use physical movement and expression to connect with audiences on an emotional level.

Maria Callas demonstrated the power of opera to move audiences through masterful singing, emotive expression, and complete role embodiment. Her captivating and impassioned style influenced generations of opera singers and shaped modern expectations of what opera

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

can achieve. Callas showed the world how opera, at its best, transforms a singer's voice into a conduit for human emotion and passion.

THE ENDURING LEGACY OF MARIA CALLAS' VOICE AND EMOTIONS IN THE ART OF SINGING

Maria Callas' legendary singing invokes intense emotions in listeners and has secured her status as one of the greatest opera singers of all time. Her masterful vocal technique, captivating stage presence, and ability to connect deeply with audiences through her emotive interpretations of roles have established a lasting legacy.

Callas possessed an unparalleled gift for channelling the inner lives of the characters she portrayed. She explored the depths of human emotion through her singing, from sorrow and despair to passion and joy. Her performances were visceral and raw, exposing vulnerability and truth. Critics praised her ability to interpret characters and bring psychological realism to her roles.

Callas studied roles meticulously, developing a profound understanding of each character's motivations and emotional journey. She was known for her diligent preparation and dedication to fully embodying the emotional lives of her characters. This dedication allowed her to create complex, nuanced performances that moved audiences. Callas conveyed emotion through the subtlety and variety of her vocal shadings, as well as her expressive phrasing and dynamics. She was a master of coaxing emotion from both her instrument and her audiences. The emotional authenticity that Callas brought to her performances was groundbreaking. She pushed the boundaries of traditional operatic singing and acting, bringing a raw vulnerability and realism to the stage. Her emotive, psychologically complex portrayals of characters helped redefine opera as an art form. Callas demonstrated that opera could be a vehicle for expressing the depth and nuance of human emotion.

Through her masterful and deeply emotive singing, Callas revolutionized opera and established a new standard of psychological realism and emotional authenticity in performance that endures today. Her timeless artistry and peerless ability to connect with audiences through the emotions of song have secured her status as a legend who shaped the operatic canon. Callas' emotive legacy lives on for new generations to discover.

CONCLUSION

As you have seen, Maria Callas was more than just a talented soprano with an impressive vocal range and technique. Through her passionate and moving performances, she transformed opera into an art form that was deeply emotional and sensual. Callas had an almost preternatural ability to convey raw human emotion and make audiences feel what her characters felt. Her distinctive voice, dramatic instincts, and physicality allowed her to become her characters completely. Callas demonstrated that opera could be a mesmerizing theatrical experience and not just a showcase of vocal skills. She expanded the expressive possibilities of opera and gave audiences a glimpse into the inner lives of the characters in a way they had never seen before. Callas' effect on opera was nothing short of revolutionary. Though her career was cut short, her impact lives on whenever an opera singer strives to embody a

character and move an audience. Maria Callas breathed new life into opera, and for that we will remain forever in her debt.

REFERENCES

- Christie, Caroline. (January 2019). Makeup artist James Kaliardos discusses the surprisingly emotional video. <https://www.documentjournal.com/2019/01/watch-marisa-tomei-transforminto-opera-diva-maria-callas/>
- Thompson, Mary Pat. (October,2023). Angelina Jolie transforms into opera star Maria Callas for new biopic: See 1st look photos [Angelina Jolie transforms into opera star Maria Callas for new biopic: See 1st look photos - ABC News \(go.com\)](https://www.abcnews.com/news/2023/10/angelina-jolie-transforms-into-opera-star-maria-callas-for-new-biopic-see-1st-look-photos-abc-news-go-com/)
- Cruz, Francisco Filipe. (September 2017). Maria Callas December 2, 1923 – September 16, 1977. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/maria-callas-december-2-1923-september-16-1977-francisco-filipe-cruz>
- Sun Eidsheim, Nina. (2017). Maria Callas's Waistline and the Organology of Voice. <https://academic.oup.com/oq/article-abstract/33/34/249/4004732?redirectedFrom=fulltext>
- Serranus, Jason Victor. (January 2, 2012). The Enduring Legacy of Maria Callas. <https://www.sfcv.org/articles/feature/enduring-legacy-maria-callas>
- Neary, Lynn. (February 15, 2010). Maria Callas: Voice Of Perfect Imperfection. <https://www.npr.org/2010/02/15/123612228/maria-callas-voice-of-perfect-imperfection>
- Painting, Kevin. (July 2017). Maria Callas-The Voice. <https://berggasse19.org/maria-callasthe-voice/>
- Encyclopedia Britannica. (2023). Maria Callas. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Maria-Callas>
- Edwards, Anne. (2001). Callas: Her Life, Her Loves, Her Music.
- Edwards, Anne. (2011). MARIA CALLAS: An Intimate Biography.
- Necula, Maria-Cristina. (December 2020). Maria Callas and the Longinus Sublime. <https://www.csmusic.net/content/articles/maria-callas-and-the-longinus-sublime/> Bret, David. (1998). Maria Callas: The Tigress and the Lamb.
- Seletsky, Dr. Robert E. (2004). The Performance Practice of Maria Callas – Interpretation and Instinct. <https://divinarecords.com/articles/performance-practice/>
- Baltes, Felicia Rodica, Avram, Julia, Miclea, Mircea, Andrei C. Miu. (June 2011). Emotions induced by operatic music: Psychophysiological effects of music, plot, and acting: A scientist's tribute to Maria Callas. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0278262611000212>
- Wang, Angie. (2021). 5 Minutes That Will Make You Love Maria Callas. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/06/arts/music/opera-classical-music-mariacallas.html>
- Ardoin, John. (1974). Callas: The Art and the Life - The Great Years.
- Dellenbaugh, Ginger. (2021). Maria Callas's Lyric and Coloratura Arias.
- LeVine, Robert. (2010). Maria Callas: A Musical Biography (Amadeus).