

CRITICAL THOUGHTS...

Many operas of the great Italian composers have been enjoyed internationally by successive generations of music lovers; is it not strange, therefore, that a significant proportion of our music commentators can always be relied upon to express dislike of these operas?

Audio cassettes providing short orchestral pieces or opera excerpts are, of course very popular and one such cassette is *LUCIANO PAVAROTTI - VERDI AND DONIZETTI OPERAS*. The notes accompanying this cassette are so typical of the opinions held by many members of the musical establishment that they can well serve as a vehicle by which to express thoughts on the subject.

These notes were written by a Cedric Wallis who, typically, while not daring to "rubbish" an immensely popular composer ensures instead that Verdi's operas receive only qualified praise. For example, he states that *I due Foscari* "contains some expressive music". Only some! Thus implying that most of the score is not expressive, an opinion not held by those of us familiar with the opera. He goes on to state that *Un ballo in maschera* "falls within the period when each new work was treated with respect though not necessarily with critical approval". Thus an oft performed masterpiece is dismissed.