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**CRI 272**

**VITTORIO GIANNINI**

**THE TAMING OF THE SHREW**

**Opera in Three Acts**

An adaptation of Shakespeare's play, with additional texts from his sonnets and "Romeo and Juliet" by the composer and Dorothy Fee

presented by the

**KANSAS CITY LYRIC THEATER**

**Russell Patterson, musical director**

**Cast of Characters (in order of appearance)**

<b>Lucentio, a young nobleman</b>	<b>Lowell Harris</b>
<b>Tranio, his servant</b>	<b>David Holloway</b>
<b>Baptista, a prosperous merchant</b>	<b>J. B. Davis</b>
<b>Katharina, his eldest daughter</b>	<b>Mary Jennings</b>
<b>Bianca, Katharina's sister</b>	<b>Catherine Christensen</b>
<b>Gremio, suitor of Bianca</b>	<b>Robert Jones</b>
<b>Hortensio, suitor of Bianca</b>	<b>Walter Hook</b>
<b>Biondello, servant of Lucentio</b>	<b>Brian Steele</b>
<b>Petruchio, gentleman of Verona</b>	<b>Adair McGowen</b>
<b>Grumio, his servant</b>	<b>Charles Weedman</b>
<b>A Tailor</b>	<b>Stephen Knott</b>
<b>Curtis, Katharina's servant</b>	<b>William Latimer</b>
<b>Vincentio, Lucentio's father</b>	<b>William Powers</b>
<b>An Actor</b>	<b>Donald Nelson</b>

**THE STORY**

Act. I. Strolling with his servant *Tranio*, the rich, young *Lucentio*, recently come to Padua to round out his education, secretly witnesses a strenuous argument, between the prosperous merchant *Baptista* and his two beautiful daughters and two suitors. *Katharina*, the elder, has such a violent temper that no one will consider marrying her; *Bianca*, the younger, is so gentle and amiable that she, has two suitors *Gremio* and *Hortensio*. *Baptista* declares that he will not permit *Bianca* to marry until *Katharina* has a husband. So *Bianca's* suitors have to find someone who will marry the shrew *Katharina*. Promptly, *Lucentio* also falls in

love with Bianca. He devises a scheme to exchange identity and costume with *Tranio* who will assist his master's wooing while *Lucentio* will try to be hired as a tutor for *Bianca*. *Biondello* then arrives and, in a brisk trio, the masquerade is planned.

*Petruchio*, attended by his servant *Grumio*, arrives in Padua with the purpose of finding a rich wife. His friend *Hortensio* agrees to introduce *Petruchio* to *Baptista* as a suitor for *Katharina*. Then *Petruchio* is to present *Hortensio* in disguise as a music teacher for *Katharina* in order that *Hortensio* can be near his beloved *Bianca*. *Gremio* and *Lucentio* arrive, the latter disguised as a tutor. All are dubious of *Petruchio's* stamina in facing up to the redoubtable Shrew. But in a stirring aria he declares that he has faced wild lions, tempestuous seas, and battles' alarms, and he fears no woman's tongue or tantrum. They all repair to *Baptista's* home. He welcomes them and declares that his daughters will marry only for love. A commotion is heard. *Katharina* has broken the lute over the head of the pretended teacher *Hortensio*. Then follows the wild, explosive, contradictory, dynamic courtship of *Katharina* by the brash, enterprising and resourceful *Petruchio*. Finally he reports to the returning assemblage that he will come back on Sunday to marry *Katharina*, and she vows that she will see him hanged first.

Act II. Scene 1. *Hortensio* and *Lucentio* are ardently wooing *Bianca* when *Petruchio* and *Grumio* burst in, fantastically attired, and screaming for *Katharina*. She appears in a fine rage, boxes *Grumio's* ears, and rips *Petruchio's* doublet. They answer her outburst with a mocking serenade and file out to drink a toast to the bride. In contrast, there is a tender love scene between *Bianca* and *Lucentio*, now disguised as a tutor named *Cambio*. They declare their mutual love and he tells her his true identity.

Scene 2. After scolding the servants and everyone else in earshot, *Katharina* finally is dressed for her wedding but *Petruchio* does not arrive. As all await, *Baptista* receives a message from *Petruchio* advising that he has been detained on business but will be at the church precisely at noon and will not wait one moment thereafter. *Baptista* shouts that there will be no wedding. *Lucentio* knows that *Katharina* must wed before he can marry *Bianca*, so he slyly prevails upon *Baptista* to relent. In a comic ensemble, they all set out for the church just before the hour of noon.

Act III. *Petruchio*, since the wedding, is behaving more violently than *Katharina* ever did, but with such a sunny air of doing it all for her comfort that she has no weapons against him. He has rehearsed his household staff as to their behavior to the new mistress. *Petruchio* and *Katharina* enter the dining-room but, before they can eat, a *Tailor* arrives with garments for *Katharina*, including a stylist cap. *Petruchio* ridicules the cap but *Katharina* vows to have it or none. So, she gets none. Dinner is served and, in a seeming frenzy, *Petruchio* criticizes the food, sends it back to the kitchen, and storms out of the room. Alone, exhausted and half-starved, *Katharina* sings a pensive aria in which she begins to suspect that she has literally met her match. Furtively, *Bianca* and *Lucentio* slip into the room, tell *Katharina* of their secret marriage, and implore her aid. She hides them in an adjoining room just before *Vincenzio*, *Lucentio's* father, arrives, en route to Padua. To complicate matters further, new arrivals are *Baptista*, *Tranio*, *Biondello*, and an *Actor* hired to impersonate *Vincenzio*. Naturally, much confusion ensues. However, in the classic manner of Shakespeare's comedies, disguises are penetrated, paternal forgiveness is accorded, and misunderstandings are swept away. *Katharina* and *Petruchio* drop their play-acting and swear eternal love.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

This classic example of Shakespeare's genius for comedy-drama was first produced about 1595. The original, and adaptations of it, have appeared in many guises. In musical comedy form, it was produced on Broadway as Cole Porter's *KISS ME, KATE*.

VITTORIO GIANNINI was born in Philadelphia in 1903. A brother of the famed soprano Dusolina Giannini, he studied at Milan Conservatory and Juilliard Graduate School. Among his other operas are: *THE SCARLET LETTER*, *THE HARVEST*, *FLORA*, *BEAUTY AND THE BEAST*, and *BLENNERHASSET*;

the last two were commissioned and produced by the Columbia Broadcasting System. A symphony was commissioned for the New York World's Fair of 1939. Other compositions include cantatas, ballets, chamber music, and various concertos. Giannini taught at the Juilliard and Manhattan Schools of Music in New York City.

He died November 28, 1966.

CATHERINE CHRISTENSEN (BIANCA) in less than five years, has performed over 35 major roles including debuts with the opera companies of New York City, San Francisco, Boston, Santa Fe, Cincinnati, San Antonio and New Orleans. She is a member of the Metropolitan Opera Studio.

LOWELL HARRIS, tenor, makes his Lyric Theater debut as Lucentio in *TAMING OF THE SHREW* and Spalanzani in *TALES OF HOFFMANN*. This versatile young singer-actor has appeared on Broadway, in stock, and on TV in addition to his operatic engagements (which have included the Lake George Festival, Goldovsky Opera and North Shore Music Theater). Mr. Harris has done roles in dramatic productions with the American Shakespeare Festival, Bucks County Playhouse, and Falmouth Theater.

J. B. DAVIS (BAPTISTA), has more than 25 bass-baritone roles in his repertoire. He has appeared with the New York City Opera, Little Orchestra Society, and Metropolitan Opera Studio in New York City as well as with opera companies in Dallas, Fort Worth, Seattle, Philadelphia, Houston, Lake George, and Chattanooga. He has toured with the Turnau Opera and Goldovsky Opera Theatre.

MARY JENNINGS (KATHARINA), won critical acclaim for her performances in the title role of the New York revival of *THAIS*. She has appeared in leading roles with opera companies in New York, Philadelphia, San Antonio, New Orleans, Hartford, Seattle, Pittsburgh, and Louisville.

ADAIR MCGOWEN (PETRUCHIO), has appeared on Broadway, in stock companies, and tours both in this country and abroad. A student of Lotte Lehmann and Boris Goldovsky, Mr. McGowen has appeared with opera companies in Houston, Santa Barbara and Louisville.

The KANSAS CITY LYRIC THEATER was founded in 1958. Deliberately modeled along European lines, it was designed to present opera in the language of the audience as "theater with the added dimension of music". It was further intended to provide a training ground for young American singing-actors, generally at the threshold of their professional careers. The company employs no big-name stars; rather it offers coherent annual seasons on a repertory basis, which afford its youthful onstage members experience in a diversity of roles.

During the first 13 years of its existence the Lyric has produced 34 different works — some of them, of course, several times — for a total of nearly 300 performances. Most of these were drawn from the standard literature. But, beginning in 1963, General Manager Russell Patterson has had his company schedule one contemporary American opera each season, along with three from the traditional repertory. *THE TAMING OF THE SHREW* was first produced in 1969, together with *RIGOLETTO*, *LA BOHEME*, and *THE TALES OF HOFFMAN* — a fairly typical Lyric mix — each being given five times in strict rotation over a 4-week period.

While modest in its productions, the company has earned the attention of national press, which has accepted what it sees and hears with genuine admiration and enthusiasm.

RUSSELL PATTERSON, General Manager of the Kansas City Lyric Theater is also its Musical Director and Conductor, a position he has held since the company was founded. During that period, he has supervised 64 different productions and conducted over 250 performances at the Lyric. Mr. Patterson was

awarded a Fulbright Fellowship for study in Germany, where he was associated with the Bavarian State Opera, and subsequently conducted in Germany and The Netherlands, where he received the Conductor's Certificate of The Netherlands Radio Union.

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*(Original Liner Notes from CRI LP Jacket)*