

Biography – GINO QUILICO O.C. C.Q.

Gino Quilico's career spans more than forty-seven years and bears witness to an exceptional journey on the world's greatest opera stages. A true figure of Canadian opera, he has performed in the most prestigious houses, including the Metropolitan Opera of New York, La Scala in Milan, the Royal Opera House in London, the Paris National Opera, the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires, the Vienna Staatsoper, and the Chicago Lyric Opera, to name just a few. His baritone voice, stage charisma, and acting talent have won over loyal audiences across several continents.

Over the course of his career, Mr. Quilico has collaborated with some of the greatest conductors of our time. Among them are Herbert von Karajan, Leonard Bernstein, Seiji Ozawa, George Prêtre, Lorin Maazel, Giuseppe Patané, Anton Coppola, Zubin Mehta, Kent Nagano, and Yannick Nézet-Séguin.

Highlights of his career include his participation in 1991 in the world premiere of John Corigliano's opera *The Ghosts of Versailles*, presented at the Metropolitan Opera on the occasion of the institution's centennial. A few years earlier, in 1987, he made history by sharing the Met stage with his father, the great baritone **Louis Quilico**, in a production of Massenet's *Manon*. This unique moment—the first joint appearance of a father and son at the New York opera—was repeated in 1989 and 1990 in *The Barber of Seville*.

While he built a solid career in the great roles of the operatic repertoire, Gino Quilico also distinguished himself in the world of musical theatre. He performed the role of **Quasimodo** in *Notre-Dame de Paris* by Luc Plamondon and Richard Cocciante, presented at Montreal's Bell Centre, as well as **Jean Valjean** in *Les Misérables* during the celebrations of Quebec City's 400th anniversary.

His discography includes more than **forty recordings**, covering a vast repertoire. In 1995, he received a **Grammy Award** for his performance in Berlioz's *Les Troyens* with the Montreal Symphony Orchestra. In 2003, his album *Noël* earned a **gold record**, confirming his popularity with an audience that extended well beyond opera lovers.

His talent has been recognized internationally at major official events. In 1983, he had the honor of singing before **Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II** at Ottawa's National Arts Centre during the ratification of Canada's new Constitution. Three years later, in 1986, he gave a private recital for **Prince Charles and Princess Diana** at the residence of the Canadian Ambassador in London, the **Honorable R. Roy McMurtry**.

Beyond his performing career, Gino Quilico has been committed to teaching and passing on knowledge. A sought-after pedagogue, he has been a voice professor and guest stage director at the Festival de Música de Santa Catarina in Brazil, where he staged *Carmen* in 2016 and *La Bohème* in 2017. In 2019, he continued this role at the Mediterranean Opera Studio & Festival in Sicily. He has also led international masterclasses in cities such as Boston, Milan, Montreal, Munich, Orlando (Rollins College), Paris, San Francisco, and the University of Toronto, among others—contributing to the training of new generations of singers.

Gino Quilico's commitment extends beyond the musical world. In 1990, he became one of the few Canadians appointed **Goodwill Ambassador** for the **United Nations High Commissioner** for Refugees (UNHCR).

Two years later, in 1992, he was named **Officer of the Order of Canada**, in recognition of his artistic achievements and his contribution to the country's cultural life. More recently, in June 2024, he was elevated to the rank of **Chevalier of the National Order of Quebec**, one of the province's highest distinctions.

Throughout his career, he has taken part in several world opera premieres:

- *Montségur* by Marcel Landowski (Paris and Toulouse Opera, 1985),
- *The Ghosts of Versailles* by John Corigliano (Metropolitan Opera, 1991), and
- *Les Feluettes* by Kevin March, libretto by Michel Marc Bouchard (Opéra de Montréal, 2016).

His ventures into cinema include two feature films produced by Gaumont:

- *La Bohème* by Puccini, in the role of Marcello under the direction of Luigi Comencini, presented in 1988 at the Champs-Élysées in Paris.
- *Orfeo* by Monteverdi, in the title role, directed by Claude Goretta and awarded at the Venice Festival in 1985.

Numerous video and DVD recordings also bear witness to his art, including:

- *The Ghosts of Versailles* conducted by James Levine at the Metropolitan Opera of New York in 1991.
- *The Barber of Seville* with Cecilia Bartoli in 1989.
- *La Bohème* with Luciano Pavarotti in San Francisco in 1989.
- *Carmen* conducted by Zubin Mehta in 1987.

His peers and great personalities have paid tribute to his talent:

- **Luciano Pavarotti** declared in 1990: "Gino is a great talent, a beautiful voice, a true personality, and a fine actor. He will be a Verdi baritone destined for one of the greatest careers of all time."
- **U.S. President Bill Clinton** wrote in 1997: "Dear Gino, thank you so much for the album *Le Secret*. It brings back fond memories of seeing you at the Metropolitan Opera. Hillary and I send you our best wishes."
- **Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney**, in 1987, stated in an official letter: "Canadians and indeed all who appreciate opera can be very proud of your achievements and your contribution to music in Canada and throughout the world."

Today recognized as one of the great baritones of his generation, Gino Quilico continues to play an essential role in promoting opera and Canadian culture. His career, marked by artistic successes and prestigious distinctions, remains a source of inspiration for young artists and a major legacy for international musical heritage.