

Cavalli - Il Giasone (2012)

Written by bluesever

Monday, 05 August 2019 14:24 -

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Disc 1 1 *Sinfonia, Part 1* 01:14 2 *Prologue. Questo è il giorno prefisso* 06:32 3 *Sinfonia, Part 2* 01:16 4 Act 1. *Dall'oriente porge* 04:36 5 Act 1. *Delizie, contenti* 07:52 6 Act 1. *Se darbe pungente* 03:10 7 Act 1. *Ferma, Medea, deh ferma* 05:32 8 Act 1. *Fiero amor l'alma tormenta* 01:40 9 Act 1. *Son vago, grazioso* 05:52 10 Act 1. *Voli il tempo, se sa* 02:02 11 Act 1. *O dio Giasone* 01:32 12 Act 1. *Regina, in questo giorno* 04:04 13 Act 1. *I mei segreti amori* 01:17 14 Act 1. *Giasone, è qui la sposa* 06:08 15 Act 1. *Godi, godi, bella coppia* 01:39 16 Act 1. *Isifile infelice* 02:58 17 Act 1. *Dell'antro magico* 05:28

Disc 2

1 Act 2. *Oreste ancor non giunge* 04:05 2 Act 2. *Io pur ti tocco* 11:29 3 Act 2. *Ecco il fatal castello* 01:51 4 Act 2. *Effetti singolari* 02:11 5 Act 2. *Combattimento* 01:02 6 Act 2. *Sei ferito, mio bene?* 01:57 7 Act 2. *Alla nave, alla nave?* 05:26 8 Act 2. *La regina di lenno* 03:12 9 Act 2. *Per ritrovar suo onore* 03:19 10 Act 2. *Soccorso, soccorso* 06:52 11 Act 2. *Scendi, o bella* 05:08 12 Act 2. *O dio ecco Giasone* 06:27 13 Act 2. *Gradite tempeste* 04:36

Disc 3

1 Act 3. *Sinfonia* 00:45 2 Act 3. *Nel boschetto ove odor* 02:45 3 Act 3. *Sotto il tremulo ciel* 03:50 4 Act 3. *Adoriamoci in sogno* 03:38 5 Act 3. *Il porto il lido* 11:05 6 Act 3. *Giason / Besso* 01:05 7 Act 3. *Perch'io torni a languir* 04:27 8 Act 3. *Giotte, giotte* 01:05 9 Act 3. *Fra i notturni perigli* 01:38 10 Act 3. *Perché sospiri* 02:49 11 Act 3. *Di guerriero drappello* 02:12 12 Act 3. *Besso, Besso! Chi mi chiama?* 02:31 13 Act 3. *Tormento, ove mi guidi?* 03:11 14 Act 3. *Non m'affligger così* 03:53 15 Act 3. *Ovunque il piè rivolgo* 02:23 16 Act 3. *Giason qui parla* 09:08 17 Act 3. *Regina, Egeo, amici* 04:55 18 Act 3. *Non ho più core in petto* 02:20 19 Act 3. *Quante son le mie gioie* 03:51 20 Act 3. *Ciaccona* 02:44

Christophe Dumaux - countertenor (Giasone) Katarina Bradic - soprano (Medea) Robin Johannsen, soprano (Isifile) Josef Wagner - bass-baritone (Giove / Besso) Filippo Adami - tenor (Demo) Yaniv D'Or - countertenor (Delfa / Eolo) Angelique Noldus - mezzo-soprano (Amore / Alinda) Andrew Ashwin - bass (Ercolo / Oreste) Emilio Pons - tenor (Egeo / Sole) Symphony Orchestra of Vlaamse Opera Antwerp/Ghent Federico Maria Sardelli - conductor

Cavalli's operas still remain tricky to bring off. Though nowadays few people would think of

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performing an edition as luxuriant and interventionist as Raymond Leppard's for the Glyndebourne Festival, there is still plenty of scope for an editorial hand.

For a start, the operas are generally long, far longer than we nowadays would consider. An urtext can be difficult to establish. So there is a lot of scope for being creative when creating the edition actually being performed. This new recording of Cavalli's *Il Giasone* from Vlaamse Opera is frustratingly silent about what we are actually hearing. The score revision is credited to Alexander Krampe but his article in the CD booklet tells us little about his editorial methods even if there is a lot about his admiration for early copyists.

The recording comes in at 190 minutes. That's rather less than René Jacobs 234 minutes on his 1989 Harmonia Mundi recording. Jacobs recorded a cut edition, so that we are inevitably hearing a version which misses things out. It would be nice to be told what and why.

The other problem is the balance between comedy and tragedy. Venetian opera of this period revelled in the juxtaposition of comic and serious characters. On this disc we do get a good mix of comedy and pathos. *Il Giasone* is itself rather difficult to take, because even the serious characters get mixed up in a plot which could come from a Carry On film. Both *Giasone* (Christoph Dumaux) and *Medea* (Katarina Bradic) are provided with exes, *Isfile* (Robin Johannsen) and *Egeo* (Emilio Pons). Their comings and goings render *Medea's* vengeance and *Giasone's* heroics mere side-shows to the main event, something approaching a four-door Whitehall farce.

To the credit of the original theatre director, the production seems to have kept a balance. On this set there is a nice mix between both fun and pain.

Dumaux makes an excellent lover, creating a nicely erotic atmosphere. As a hero *Giasone* is hopeless; he is completely interested in his latest woman, unreliable and certainly not heroic. Dumaux makes the most of this. That said, I have to admit that the role seems to sit a little oddly for him in terms of tessitura and there are moments when he seems uncomfortable.

As *Medea*, Katarina Bradic successfully moves from infatuated lover to vengeful sorceress. Her duets with Dumaux are notable, particularly their tryst Act 3. She is tremendous in invocation to the spirits at the end of Act 1.

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The most consistent character is Isfile; she is the lover spurned and Robin Johannsen is superb in her tragic scenes such as the opening to Act 2. Filippo Adami makes a lovely Demo, the largest comic character, a stammering dwarf. Adami stammers hilariously but sings Demo's songs like *Con arte con lusinghe* quite delightfully. The rest of the cast, all playing double roles, are well cast though not all sound like period specialists and a little too much vibrato does creep in. The vocal doubling - and the large cast of characters, 14 in all - means that you do need to be on the ball about who is who.

The Symphony Orchestra of Vlaamse Opera accompanies with a small string band (11 players), recorders, cornett and timpani plus a continuo group of viol, two lutes and two harpsichords. Conductor Federico Maria Sardelli keeps things moving and lively yet lets the melodic moments flower.

The advantage, and disadvantage, of this recording is that it is taken from live performances in an opera house. You are not hearing a specialist period performance troupe; these are cast and players of Vlaamse Opera and in that sense, what they achieve here is very impressive. More so, in that the performance has a credible dramatic feel. The scenes tumble over each other, vividly and you can get drawn in.

The track-list on the booklet is not terribly helpful and the plot summary rather short so if you want to enjoy this set to its full then you need to download the libretto (in Italian and English) from the Dynamic website (www.dynamic.it). It takes a little finding, but it is there and is well worth acquiring to be able to follow the set properly.

The set is also available on DVD and frankly, if you can afford it, then I would buy the DVD to get the full benefit of the stage production and actually see what is going on. The CD booklet includes a few photographs of what appears to be an attractive, modern dress production.

At the moment René Jacobs' recording is still the prime recording of this work. This new one, being from a live non-specialist opera house is a little rougher around the edges, but manages to be dramatic and engaging. I would be entirely happy to listen to it, but do consider the DVD.
---Robert Hugill, musicweb-international.com

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