

Carl Heinrich Graun - Cleopatra e Cesare (1996)

Written by bluesever

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Disc: 2

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Disc: 3

1. Recitativo 2. Aria 3. Recitativo 4. Aria 5. Recitativo 6. Aria 7. Recitativo 8. Aria 9. Recitativo 10. Aria 11. Recitativo 12. Aria

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13. Recitativo 14. Duetto 15. Recitativo 16. Chorus

Cleopatra – Janet Williams - soprano Cesare – Iris Vermillion - mezzo-soprano Cornelia – Lynne Dawson - soprano Tolomeo – Robert Gambill - tenor Arsace – Ralf Popken - contratenor Lentulo – Jeffrey Francis - tenor Achilla – Klaus Häger - barítono Cneo – Elisabeth Scholl - soprano Sesto – Maria-Cristina Kiehr - soprano Rias-Kammerchor Concerto Köln René Jacobs – conductor

The story is the same as that of Handel's opera of the same name. The selection of voices and voice timbres and range is superb. Janet Williams as Cleopatra is stunning, as is Robert Gambill as Tolomeo and Jeffrey Francis as Lentulo. Lynne Dawson sings beautifully though lacking a bit of dramatic clout. Iris Vermillion whose voice is a little rough compensates and gives a spectacular performance with her dramatic authority in the role of Cesare. The orchestral playing and conducting are splendid especially the harpsichord playing which is spectacular. This is one of the all time best opera recordings and will become one of your favorites if you love baroque opera. --- Marcolorenzo (Italy), amazon.com

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Carl Heinrich Graun (7 May 1704, Uebigau-Wahrenbrück – 8 August 1759, Berlin) was a German composer and tenor singer. Along with Johann Adolf Hasse, he is considered to be the most important German composer of Italian opera of his time. Graun was born in Wahrenbrück in Brandenburg. He sang in the chorus of the Dresden opera before moving to Braunschweig, singing there and writing six operas for the company. In 1735 Graun moved to Rheinsberg, after he had written an opera for the crown prince, when marrying Elisabeth Christine in Salzdahlum. He was kapellmeister to Frederick II of Prussia (Frederick the Great) from his ascension to the throne in 1740 until Graun's death nineteen years later in Berlin.

Graun wrote a number of operas. His opera *Cesare e Cleopatra* inaugurated the opening of the Berlin opera house in 1742. Others, such as *Montezuma* (1755), with a libretto by King Frederick. None of his pieces are often performed today, though his passion *Der Tod Jesu* (The Death of Jesus, 1755) was frequently given in Germany for many years after his death. His other works include concertos and trio sonatas.

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