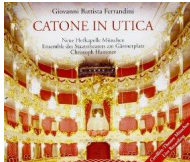


Giovanni Battista Ferrandini - Catone in Utica (Hammer) [2004]

Written by bluesever

Monday, 24 August 2015 15:57 -

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Disc: 1 1. *Catone in Utica, opera: Sinfonia* 2. *Catone in Utica, opera: Act 1. Scena. Perché si mesto* 3. *Catone in Utica, opera: Act 1. Aria. Con sì bel nome in fronte* 4. *Catone in Utica, opera: Act 1. Scena. Poveri affetti miei* 5. *Catone in Utica, opera: Act 1. Aria. Che legge che legge spietata* 6. *Catone in Utica, opera: Act 1. Scena. Dunque Cesare venga* 7. *Catone in Utica, opera: Act 1. Aria. Si sgomenti alle tue pene* 8. *Catone in Utica, opera: Act 1. Scena. Il senato a Catone* 9. *Catone in Utica, opera: Act 1. Aria. Nell' ardire ch'il seno r'accende* 10. *Catone in Utica, opera: Act 1. Scena. Quatro da te diverso* 11. *Catone in Utica, opera: Act 1. Aria. O nel sen di qualche stella* 12. *Catone in Utica, opera: Act 1. Scena. Pur ti riveggo* 13. *Catone in Utica, opera: Act 1. Aria. Chi un dolce amor* 14. *Catone in Utica, opera: Act 1. Recitativ. Vieni, o Prence* 15. *Catone in Utica, opera: Act 1. Aria. E follia se nascondete*
Disc: 2

1. *Catone in Utica, opera: Act 2. Scena. Nelle nove difese* 2. *Catone in Utica, opera: Act 2. Aria. Va ritorna al tuo tiranno* 3. *Catone in Utica, opera: Act 2. Scena. Marzia, posso una volta* 4. *Catone in Utica, opera: Act 2. Aria. So, che pietà* 5. *Catone in Utica, opera: Act 2. Scena. Che veggo* 6. *Catone in Utica, opera: Act 2. Aria. Soffre talor del vento* 7. *Catone in Utica, opera: Act 2. Scena. Tu vedi* 8. *Catone in Utica, opera: Act 2. Aria. Per te spero* 9. *Catone in Utica, opera: Act 2. Scena. Oh Dei, titta se stessa* 10. *Catone in Utica, opera: Act 2. Aria. Salda rupe in mezzo all'onde* 11. *Catone in Utica, opera: Act 2. Scena. Cesare, a me* 12. *Catone in Utica, opera: Act 2. Aria. Se in campo armato*
Disc: 3

1. *Catone in Utica, opera: Act 2. Scena. Ah signor, che facesti?* 2. *Catone in Utica, opera: Act 2. Aria. Dovea svenarti* 3. *Catone in Utica, opera: Act 2. Aria. Sò che godendo vai* 4. *Catone in Utica, opera: Act 2. Scena. Udisti, Arabce?* 5. *Catone in Utica, opera: Act 2. Aria. Se sciogliere non vuoi* 6. *Catone in Utica, opera: Act 2. Aria. Che sia la gelosia* 7. *Catone in Utica, opera: Act 3. Scena. Tutto, amico, ho tentato* 8. *Catone in Utica, opera: Act 3. Aria. La fronda che circonda* 9. *Catone in Utica, opera: Act 3. Aria. Nagui agli affani* 10. *Catone in Utica, opera: Act 3. Scena. Quali in soliti moti* 11. *Catone in Utica, opera: Act 3. Aria. Combattuta da tante* 12. *Catone in Utica, opera: Act 3. Aria. Confusa, smarrita* 13. *Catone in Utica, opera: Act 3. Marchia* 14. *Catone in Utica, opera: Act 3. Scena. Vinceste, inique stelle* 15. *Catone in Utica, opera: Act 3. Aria. Pe darvi alcun pegno* 16. *Catone in Utica, opera: Act 3. Scena. Il vincer, ò compagni* 17. *Catone in Utica, opera: Act 3. Adagio*

Robert Crowe (Cesare), soprano Sandra Moon (Emilia), soprano Simone Schneider (Marzia), soprano Johnny Maldonado (Arbace), alto Kobie van Rensburg (Catone), tenor Florian Simson (Fulvio), tenor Neue Hofkapelle München (on period instruments) Christoph Hammer -

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This live recording on the Oehms Classics label is the first ever for little-known Italian composer Giovanni Battista Ferrandini's mega-obscure 1753 opera *Catone in Utica*. Set to a familiar libretto by Pietro Metastasio and utilized by Vivaldi, Johann Christian Bach, and others, *Catone in Utica* is a rather Handelian Italian opera chosen to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the Residenz-Theater in Munich. *Catone in Utica* was the opera that opened the Residenz-Theater upon its first night back on October 12, 1753. Not many opera houses still stand from that long ago, having fallen to neglect or to warfare; likewise not many opera scores exist as complete entities from that time. That the Staatstheater am Gärtnerplatz, which undertook this production, should have both the house and the work at their disposal is in itself nothing short of a miracle.

Ferrandini's *Catone in Utica* is a competent, but dated, opera that squarely belongs in the middle of the eighteenth century, a time when Europe's crowned heads and moneyed aristocrats preferred their operas on the predictable and anti-dramatic side. As much as one would like to commend the addition of this work to the recorded repertoire, for every bit of excitement that Ferrandini tries to bring to the table there is an equal amount of underwhelming material that runs on for pages. For example, Cesare's aria "Nell' ardire ch'il seno t'accende" is a strident, inflated-sounding piece that, while not wholly bereft of surprising harmonic twists, is in the main rather bland and predictable. Tenor Kobie van Rensburg does a pretty good job overall in the title role, but loses his footing once in awhile, most unfortunately during his big first act aria "Si sgomenti alle tue pene."

Catone in Utica is given as "live," and if so the audience is very quiet indeed. The recording is clear and a bit distant -- some singers are harder to hear as they move around the stage. None of this will bother most listeners who love off-the-wall operas, just don't expect to be sent to heaven as *Catone in Utica* is clearly of this Earth. ---Uncle Dave Lewis, Rovi

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