Rebel & Destouches - Les Éléments (1979)

Jean-Féry Rebel - Les Élémens - Simphonie Nouvelle *1 I - Le Cahos 6:40 2 II - Loure I: La Terrer Et L'eau 2:05 3 III - Chaconne: Le Feu 2:53 4 IV - Ramage: L'air 1:26 5 V - Rossignols 1:34 6 VI - Loure II 1:55 7 VII Tambourins I & II 2:32 8 VIII Sicilienne 1:28 9 IX - Rondeau: Air Pour L'amour 1:09 10 X - Caprice 2:59*
André-Cardinal Destouches - Les Élémens - Opéra-Ballet
11 I - Ouverture 3:15 12 II - Menuet I & II 2:49 13 III - Marches Et Menuet I 2:46 14 IV - Air Pour Les Heures Et Les Zephirs 0:53 15 V - Passepied 1:41 16 VI - Air I Pur Les Nereides 1:33 17 VII - Air II 1:25 18 VIII - Chaconne 5:29
The Academy Of Ancient Music Christopher Hogwood - conductor, harpsichord

Because no complete score survives, Jean-Féry Rebel's flamboyant ballet Les Élémens has been reassembled from extant parts. Musica Antiqua Köln satisfactorily recorded the work on Archiv, in a different sequence and with alternate instrumentation, yet Christopher Hogwood's performance with the Academy of Ancient Music stands as the most polished and convincing rendition. From the opening dissonance of "Le cahos" to the dramatic "Caprice," which anticipates Gluck, Rebel's imagination was at its peak, stimulated as much by eighteenth century scientific speculation as by the orchestral resources at his command. By representing the elements in four distinct styles and gradually disentangling the themes, Rebel depicted the settling of creation into its natural order. The ballet proceeds with several novelties of startling invention, most playing off the elemental scheme. The Academy's colorful and resonant performance is superb, and through Hogwood's efforts, a masterpiece has been revived with extraordinary flair. The paired Les Elémens by André Cardinal Destouches is not as daring as the Rebel. Baroque conventions are maintained in its Overture, which is followed by a suite of charming but modest dances. The Academy plays with the same delicacy and flair it lavished on the previous work and gives this neglected ballet a handsome reading. ---Blair Sanderson, AllMusic Review

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