Haendel - Amadigi di Gaula (2012)

1. Part I 2. Part II 3. Part III   • Mareike Braun (Amadigi) • Stefanie True (Oriana) • Judith Gauthier (Melissa) • Marketa Cukrova (Dardano) • Johanna Ness (Orgando) Göttingen Festival Orchestra Andrew Parrott – conductor   International Händel Festspiele Göttingen May 2012

Concert from the Göttingen Händel International Festival 2012. Händel's 'Amadigi di Gaula' is a magical opera in three acts. The most intimate of Handel's operas, written for a small cast, is based on Amadis de Grèce, a French tragédie-lyrique by André Cardinal Destouches and Antoine Houdar de la Motte. --- worldconcerthall.com

Handel's 1715 opera seria Amadigi di Gaula was one of his earliest and best received works for the London stage. In terms of the conventions of modern stagecraft and the expectations of opera audiences, it's something of a hard sell, though. It has only four characters, and all are high voices -- two sopranos, mezzo, and countertenor (or alto), and a chorus that appears only very briefly in the final number. Handel writes only for one voice at a time, except for two duets and the finale, so he forgoes the dramatic and musical energy that can be generated by the combination of voices, and the result is a sequence of very lovely moments that just don't feel very theatrical. The writing is highly varied and imaginative, so in purely musical terms the piece is fully successful, if the listener can live without the presence of low voices. Handel makes prominent use of wind instruments, so the score is unusually colorful, and at points resembles the Water Music, which he composed only a few years later. Some of the most memorable arias are for the countertenor Dardano, especially the poignant "Pena tiranna," and "Tu mia speranza," with a spectacularly odd accompaniment, which, for no apparent dramatic reason, wonderfully imitates a bagpipe's wheezing drone -- it's a real showstopper. --- Stephen Eddins,

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Written by bluesever
Wednesday, 22 May 2013 16:15 -

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