

Handel - Israel in Babylon (2005)

Written by bluesever
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Disc: 1 1. Overture 2. To Israel's God united raise 3. Well have ye done 4. See her awful Domes ascending 5. No more shall Edom's Sons 6. The dreadful gloom of sorrow 7. On our paternal mead 8. The king consents to hear 9. Sing Unto God 10. Cease, ah! cease 11. O thou Almighty pow'r 12. Let thine Ear, O Lord 13. O had we in our great prosperity 14. Humble, patient bear the rod 15. O let us not despair 16. Trust In God 17. See, in the west the ruddy sun 18. Rise, O God, with Glory crown'd

Disc: 2 1. I sing the produce 2. 'Tis mighty wine inspires us 3. The force of wine can elevate 4. 'Tis gen'rous wine 5. In more majestic strains 6. Like the raging ocean's force 7. Applauding crowds around 8. The glorious field is won 9. He speaks, and hostile fury 10. Balmy peace 11. Say O ye men, is there 12. Great and Glorious is the King 13. 'Tis not ye men 14. Around the Fair attending 15. At her feet 16. See the fond youth 17. When beauty's charms inviting 18. Do you allow 'tis woman's pow'ful charms 19. On the charmer fondly gazing 20. Say O ye men, if such 21. Strong the King whom all obey 22. Give to Zorobabel the due reward 23. A Solemn Symphony (from: Overture in D HWV 424) 24. Hark! In a more exalted strain 25. Great is the earth 26. The glorious Sun 27. Unnumber'd evils 28. Ere the orbs 29. O God, 'tis thou art Truth 30. Ask what thou wilt 31. Hear a nation's deep distress 32. Thy suit is granted 33. Safely go in joy and peace 34. When we look back 35. Long by ev'ry adverse motion 36. To thee O God 37. Songs Of Joy 38. To Israel's Guardian

Julia Gooding - soprano (Pharez). Sabine von Blohn - soprano (Israelite I). Jonathan Peter Kenny - countertenor (Israelite II). Joseph Cornwell - tenor (Zorobabel). Adolph Seidel - bas (Darius). Ekkehard Abele - bas (Salathiel). Kantorei Saarlouis Ensemble UnaVolta Joachim Fontaine - conductor

Handel wrote no such work as Israel in Babylon, and this what is known as a pasticcio - a piece assembled from pre-existing material, either by the original composer or by other hands. Handel prepared several pasticcios of his own, though Israel in Babylon was put together after his death by one Edward Toms to a ramshackle anonymous libretto based on the biblical book of Ezra. Serse's famous Ombra Mai Fu also turns up, on its way to becoming "Handel's Largo".

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The performance is fantastic, with thrilling choral work from the Kantorei Saarlouis, expert solo singing Julia Gooding, Jonathan Peter Kenney and Joseph Cornwell, and spirited playing from the Ensemble UnaVolta under Joachim Fontaine. Huge fun, and highly recommended. ---Tim Ashley, theguardian.com

Handel DID NOT write any opera or oratorio called Israel in Babylon. This is a pasticcio oratorio put together by a certain Edward Toms from the known published works of Handel at the time of Handel's death. It seems the London public couldn't get enough of Handel's music at the time of his death, and so several posthumous pasticcios were produced (eg. cf. by his copyist Smith). Among the works quoted in Israel in Babylon are: the Pifa from Messiah (rewritten here as an aria), Music from the Royal Fireworks, parts of some of the Chandos Anthems, the Funeral Anthem for Queen Caroline, Serse (Ombra mai fu), Giulio Cesare, Berenice, Admeto, Ottone and others. Toms has also converted several instrumental works (eg. concertos) (Op 6. No 5 Concerto Grosso), & (Op. 3 No. 2) of Handel into choruses as well, and he newly composed the recitatives, since the key structures were changed. This work is similar in feeling to other arrangements/pasticcios by Handel himself, e.g. Parnasso in Festa (adaption from Athalia) and The Occasional Oratorio (pasticcio). Enjoyable to hear this familiar music in new contexts and well sung. ---Marcolorenzo, amazon.com

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