

## Handel - Alessandro (2012)

Written by bluesever

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1.Overture 5:16 Act 1 2."E tanto ancor s'indugia a superare questo vil muro?" 1:02  
3.Sinfonia e Recitativo: "Ossidraca superba" - Recitativo - "Oh smisurato ardire!" - Sinfonia del crollo del muro 1:58 4.Recitativo: "Grazie all'eterno Giove" 0:59 5.Aria: "Fra le stragi e fra le morti" 4:13 6.Recitativo accompagnato: "Che vidi! - Che mirai?" 1:40 7.Recitativo: "Ecco Tassile, il re dell'Indi" 0:57 8.Aria: "Quanto dolce amor saria se non fosse gelosia" 4:39 9.Recitativo: "Ne' trofei d'Alessandro trionfa ancor quest'alma" 0:27 10.Aria: "Lusinghe più care" 5:12 11.Recitativo: "Sventurato ch'io sono!" 0:55 12.Aria: "Vibra, cortese Amor, un'altro strale" 7:24 13.Solo e coro: "Fra le guerre e le vittorie fama eterna il ciel mi dà" 1:23 14.Recitativo: "Apprestasti, oh Cleone, i sacrifici a Giove" 0:31 15.Recitativo: "Dalla vittoria alla bellezza in braccio passa un felice vincitor" 1:22 16.Aria: "No, più soffrir non voglio" 3:53 17.Recitativo accompagnato: "Vilipese bellezze" 1:30 18.Recitativo: "Pur ti ritrovo; e perché mai partisti?" 1:08 19.Aria: "Men fedele, men costante finge il labbro, e non il cor" 5:40 20.Recitativo: "Sì, lusingando ei parla, e par che m'ami" 0:30 21.Aria: "Un lusinghiero dolce pensiero" 6:42 22.Recitativo: "Tu, che Rossane adori" 0:57 23.Aria: "Pregi son d'un alma grande l'amicizia" 3:57 24.Recitativo: "Sempre del suo valor, fido seguace sarò" 0:25 25.Aria: "A sprone, a fren leggiero un nobile destriero contento ubbidirà" 2:15 26.Sinfonia 1:23 27.Recitativo: "Al magnanimo, al forte, al vincitore" 0:42 28.Sinfonia 0:48 29.Recitativo accompagnato: "Primo motor delle superne sfere" 0:57 30.Recitativo: "Figlio del Re degl'immortali Numi" 1:34 31.Duetto: "Placa l'alma, quieti il petto!" 2:13 32.Recitativo: "Fra gli uomini e fra i Numi" 0:38 33.Aria: "Da un breve riposo di stato amoroso" 4:38

### Act 2

1.Recitativo ed Arioso: "Solitudine amate in cui sfogarmi lice una fiamma infelice" 2:50 2."Aure, fonti, ombre gradite" 3:40 3."Recitativo ed Arioso: Eccola in preda al sonno" 3:33 4.Aria: "Vano amore, lusinga, diletto" 4:53 5.Recitativo: "Tiranna passion, lasciami in pace!" 2:45 6.Aria: "Sempre fido e disprezzato" 4:47 7.Recitativo: "Pur troppo veggio d'Alessandro il core alla rival rivolto" 0:28 8.Aria: "Che tirannia d'Amor!" 6:46 9.Recitativo: "Qui aspetto l'incostante" 2:42 10.Aria: "Alla sua gabbia d'oro suol ritornar talor quell'augellin" 6:43 11.Recitativo: "Vince al fin la beltà - Recitativo: Vincitor generoso" 1:25 12.Aria: "Risolvo abbandonar la bella che mi sprezza" 3:09 13.Recitativo: "Finto sereno è d'Alessandro in volto" 0:35 14.Aria: "La cervetta nei lacci avvolta" 4:45 15.Sinfonia - Recitativo: "Dopo il sublime onor delle gran geste" 3:33 16.Recitativo: "Oh Dei! che infausta nuova!" - Recitativo: "Recitativo: Sire, il popol già vinto l'armi ripiglia" 2:03 17.Aria: "Il cor mio, ch'è già per te tutto amore e tutto fé" 6:04 18.Recitativo: "Svanisci oh reo timore di tormentosa gelosia!" 0:24 19.Aria: "Dica il falso, dica il vero" 4:49

### Act 3

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1.Arioso: "Sfortunato è il mio valore" 1:57 2.Recitativo: "L'adulator s'appressa" - Recitativo: "Renditi, o mori!" 1:55 3.Aria: "Sarò qual vento, che nell'incendio spira" 2:38 4.Recitativo - "La resa libertà dunque, oh Rossane, a lasciarne t'alletta?" 0:54 5.Aria: "Sì, m'è caro imitar quel bel fiore" 3:26 6.Recitativo: "Sento un'interna inusitata gioja" 0:41 7.Aria: "Brilla nell'alma" 5:23 8.Recitativo: "Qual tormento crudel soffrir non fanno ambo assalendo un core ambizione e amore!" 1:24 9.Aria: "L'amor, che per te sento" 4:27 10.Recitativo: "Sì generoso affetto degno è d'amor" - Recitativo: "E qual fisso pensier sospende, oh Sire, l'eccelsa mente?" 1:55 11.Aria: "Pupille amate" 2:23 12.Recitativo: "Numi eterni" 0:32 13.Aria: "Tempesta e calma sento nell'alma" 4:15 14."D'uom fiero nel soglio si domi l'orgoglio" 0:32 15.Recitativo: "Chi oserà traditore assalire Alessandro?" 1:08 16.Aria: "Prove sono di grandezza" 3:34 17."Spegni, oh supremo Regnator de' Numi, dell'orrida civil guerra la face! - Si festeggi il bel giorno di mia tranquillità!" 2:57 18.Duetto: "In generoso onor, bella, ti cede il cor..." 1:48 19."Cara, la tua beltà in me sol regnerà..." 2:10 20."Amico arrida il Ciel al nostro amor fedel" 1:39

Countertenor Vocals – Max Emanuel Cencic, Vasily Khoroshev, Xavier Sabata Soprano Vocals – Julia Lezhneva, Karina Gauvin Tenor Vocals – Juan Sancho Bass Vocals – In-Sung Sim Chorus – The City Of Athens Choir Orchestra – Armonia Atenea Conductor – George Petrou

Let's be clear: this was a performance of the highest order. From the first five notes of the overture, the sixteen-member orchestra Armonia Aténéa led by George Petrou ravished the audience of the Salle Pleyel with Handel's full splendour. One of the most remarkable emerging talents of the new generation of Baroque conductors, the energetic yet sensible George Petrou simply knew how to create instant Handelian magic. And standing out from all of the brilliant and engaging performers on stage, 23-year-old soprano Julia Lezhneva brought the house down, stealing the show from her colleagues and probably going down in opera history through her stunning, flawless interpretation of Rosanna.

Handel wrote Alessandro in 1726 to regain the affection of Georgian London, so he imported a new Italian soprano, Faustina Bordoni, who had to share billing with established prima donna Francesca Cuzzoni. His favorite singer, the castrato Senesino, was a third superstar, taking the title role. The opera was meant to overawe the London audience with its vocal fireworks and its flouting of the rigid Baroque convention of da capo arias and recitatives, replacing it with recitativo accompagnato and duets and trios.

There are only three historical characters in the plot: Alexander the Great (Alessandro), Rosanna and Clito. All other characters are the fruit of Handel's imagination, which focused most of all on the possibilities for sentimental intrigue that have to come out of a love triangle. Max Emanuel Cencic, excellent in the role of Alessandro, brought to light the multiple facets of

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his character with rare delicacy and a fine sense of theatrical nuance and irony. As primo uomo he always maintains the audience's rapt attention, never losing expressivity, and he sang all eight of his arias with perfect agility and conviction.

Cencic's highlight was the aria of love, despair and disappointment "Vano amore", perfectly suited to his sensibility and his ease in the low range. His every attack was clear, his legatos flawless, and every note was rounded and transported with subtle vocal and theatrical abilities – his coloratura has great flexibility from high to the low and his ornamentation was executed with elegant velocity that never went over the top. With exquisite musicality and a fine sense of harmony, Cencic added new sparkles to the initial emotion in every repeat and instinctively knew how to hold the audience's attention.

Rosanna was sung by breathtaking young soprano Julia Lezhneva, whose unusually crystal and pure coloratura, perfect articulation, extraordinary vocal volume, rare precision and powerful projection earned her huge, well deserved applause after every aria. I don't remember a voice with such a power to cut through the orchestra, which could be heard clearly even in the most distant corner of the opera house. The audience was completely under the spell of the purity of her timbre and her almost inhuman, effortless coloraturas. Her charismatic presence and extraordinary vocal ease (above all in the high register) gave the whole evening a "star is born" feeling. The most memorable aria of the piece was "Lusinghe più care", which Lezhneva sang with stunning ease and the agility of a nightingale, without any visible sign of effort... or indeed of breathing.

Her rival soprano Laura Aikin, singing Lisaura (Alessandro's other lover), kept pace with prima donna Lezhneva by painting this second character with elegiac tones, while the second countertenor, Xavier Sabata, confirmed that he is the one of the most interesting emerging countertenors, who we will also be seeing much of in the future. His legatos were executed with great flexibility and fine intonation, every time receiving deserved applause. Clito's role was sung by bass Pavel Kudinov with seductive timbre, and Cleone (to whom Handel gave only one aria) was sung by the third countertenor, the young and talented Vasily Khoroshev.

What distinguished this memorable performance was the involvement and interconnection of all the musicians. Their efforts were not in vain – the audience was howling with delight at the end.  
---Vesna Gerintes, bachtrack.com

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Handel's opera 'Alessandro', first performed at the King's Theatre, Haymarket in London on 5 May 1726, was one of the composer's most successful works for the stage. This opera displays Handel at the pinnacle of his career and enjoyed repeated performances over a period of several years.

However, in modern times, 'Alessandro' has remained one of Handel's least performed operas. Alexander's heroic exploits only provide a background to the amorous dalliances, in which the eponymous hero cuts a pretty poor figure. Admittedly, the singer of the role is faced with eight arias in which he is forced to perform the most heroic deeds: the castrato Senesino was at this time the undisputed star of Handel's operatic enterprise - a hard act to follow. There are, however, further aspects to explain this neglect. Faustina Bordoni gave her first ever, long-anticipated performance in London in the première of 'Alessandro'. She rapidly became Handel's regular diva, Francesca Cuzzoni's rival. The two singers were already familiar with each other from their time in Italy, where they had shared numerous operatic stages, but Handel, who was under permanent threat of bankruptcy, used the rivalry between the two singers in an ingenious advertising campaign. The cat-fight between the divas was substantially hyped up in the press as each singer attempted to outdo the other in progressively more dazzling ornamentation. This explains why 'Alessandro' is so seldom performed. Basically, this work demands the three best singers in the world. Once these exceptional talents have been assembled, the opera is transformed into a string of the most beautiful pearls, strung perhaps on a slightly shallow plot, which however retains a certain charm. ---prestomusic.com

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