

G.F. Handel – Athalia (Hogwood) [1990]

Written by bluesever

Sunday, 17 October 2010 12:02 - Last Updated Tuesday, 10 December 2013 11:09

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CD1 1. Athalia / Act 1 – Sinfonia 2. Athalia / Act 1 - "Blooming virgins, spotless train" 3. Athalia / Act 1 - "The rising world Jehovah crown'd" 4. Athalia / Act 1 - "Tyrants would in impious throngs" 5. Athalia / Act 1 - "When he is in his wrath reveal'd" 6. Athalia / Act 1 - "Your sacred songs awhile forbear" 7. Athalia / Act 1 - "What scenes of horror round me rise!"

[play](#)

8. Athalia / Act 1 - "The gods, who chosen blessings shed"

[play](#)

9. Athalia / Act 1 - "Cheer her, O Baal" 10. Athalia / Act 1 - "Gentle airs, melodious strains!"

11. Athalia / Act 1 - "Softest sounds no more can ease me" 12. Athalia / Act 1 - "The traitor if you there descry...My Josabeth!" 13. Athalia / Act 1 - "Faithful cares in vain extended" 14. Athalia / Act 1 - "Gloomy tyrants, we disdain"

CD2

1. Athalia / Act 2 - "The mighty pow'r" 2. Athalia / Act 2 - "Through the land so lovely blooming" 3. Athalia / Act 2 - "Ah, canst thou but prove me!" 4. Athalia / Act 2 - "Will God, whose mercies ever flow" 5. Athalia / Act 2 - "My vengeance awakes me" 6. Athalia / Act 2 - "My spirits fail, I faint, I die!" 7. Athalia / Act 2 - "Cease thy anguish, smile once more" 8. Athalia / Act 2 - "The clouded scene begins to clear" 9. Athalia / Act 3 - "What sacred horrors shake my breast!" 10. Athalia / Act 3 - "Unfold, great seer, what heav'n imparts" 11. Athalia / Act 3 - "Let harmony breathe soft around" 12. Athalia / Act 3 - "With firm united hearts" 13. Athalia / Act 3 - "Soothing tyrant, falsely smiling" 14. Athalia / Act 3 - "Around let acclamations ring" 15. Athalia / Act 3 - "Oppression, no longer I dread thee" 16. Athalia / Act 3 - "Hark! His thunders round me roll"

[play](#)

17. Athalia / Act 3 - "To darkness eternal"

[play](#)

18. Athalia / Act 3 - "Now, Josabeth, thy fears are o'er!" 19. Athalia / Act 3 - "Give glory to his awful name"

Athalia - Joan Sutherland Josabeth - Emma Kirkby Joas - Aled Jones Joad - James Bowman Mathan - Anthony Rolfe-Johnson Abner - David Thomas The Academy of Ancient Music Christopher Hogwood, 1987

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This reissue of a classic Hogwood recording from 1985 brings to a new generation a rare rendition of one of Handel's earlier oratorios. It also introduces for a new generation the sound of Dame Joan Sutherland who, though at the end of her illustrious career, seems better cast as Athalia than in some of her other better known Handel parts. Here we have the Baalite queen Athalia (Sutherland), together with the apostate priest Mathan (a sublime Anthony Rolfe-Johnston), opposed by the high priest Joad (James Bowman), his wife Josabeth (Emma Kirkby) and their 'son' Joas (Aled Jones). Into the mix throw the Jewish army captain Abner (David Thomas) and you can be certain of excellent singing and interpretation of the texts. All is backed up by the very good all-male choir of New College Oxford.

One of only two recordings currently in circulation (Martini's one on Naxos has many faults), Gramophone are to be congratulated for pressing this to be reissued. The highlights are all of Emma Kirkby's arias, not to mention the contribution of Aled Jones about whom the BBC made a film at the time of this recording, and who included some of the footage of the original concert performance before Hogwood took to the studio.

A Handel completist would not wish to be without this issue - the casual admirer of good singing will find themselves drawn in to another world.

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