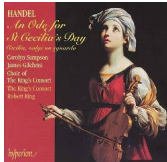


Handel - An Ode for St. Cecilia's Day (2004)

Written by bluesever

Thursday, 24 March 2011 09:49 - Last Updated Wednesday, 11 December 2013 15:16

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1. Overture: *Larghetto, e staccato* - 2. *Allegro* - 3. [Minuet] 4. Recitative: *From harmony, from heav'nly harmony* 5. Aria: *When Nature underneath a heap* 6. Chorus: *From harmony, from heav'nly harmony* 7. Aria: *What passion cannot music raise and quell!* 8. Aria and Chorus: *The trumpet's loud clangour* 9. March 10. Aria: *The soft complaining flute* 11. Aria: *Sharp violins proclaim* 12. Aria: *But oh! What art can teach* 13. Aria: *Orpheus could lead the savage race* 14. *Accompagnato*: *But bright Cecilia rais'd the wonder higher* 15. Solo and Chorus: *As from the pow'r of sacred lays* 16. Recitative: *Cecilia, volgi unsguardo* 17. Aria: *La Virtute e un vero nume* 18. Recitative: *Tu, armonica Cecilia* 19. Aria: *Splenda l'alba in oriente* 20. Recitative: *Carco sempre di gloria* 21. Aria: *Sei cara, sei bella* - 22. *Un puro ardor* - 23. *Sei cara* 24. Recitative: *E ben degna di lode* 25. Duetto: *Tra amplessi innocent* Carolyn Sampson - Soprano James Gilchrist - Tenor Rachel Brown - Flute Jonathan Cohen – Cello Matthew Halls – Organ Lynda Sayce – Lute Crispian Steele-Perkins - Trumpet King's Consort Robert King – Conductor

This is a splendid new recording of one of Handel's better works, the Ode for St. Cecilia's Day under the direction of the indomitable Robert King who continues to record the vast majority of the baroque repertoire although his pace has slightly slowed down in recent years. An interesting addition to the repertoire is the rather unknown cantata, 'Cecilia volgi un sguardo' that takes us into the realm of Italian music that was one of Handel's stronger points in his early years.

The ode opens with an overture that is marked *Larghetto e staccato* then develops into a wonderful *Allegro* that leads into the opening recitatives. Notable parts include the rousing chorus 'From harmony, from heav'nly harmony' and the lovely March that arrives promptly in the middle of the work. James Gilchrist and Carolyn Sampson are excellent soloists and the wonderful rush to the finish that concludes the work is surely a testament to the King's Consort prowess.

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I was not so enthused at the prospect of listening to a half hour cantata in Italian but must say that I enjoyed 'Cecilia' which includes some fine solo parts, again exquisitely sung by both soloists. However the music rarely rises above the inspired although it does make for a pleasant listen. Hyperion's presentation is as usual, exquisite with a stunning cover painting and detailed notes by Anthony Hicks. If you don't have this work in your collection, then this is the ideal version to own. --- Gerald Fenech, classical.net

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