

## Franz Joseph Haydn - La Vera Costanza (Spering) [2013]

Written by bluesever

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*(01) act 1 [1.03'40"] (02) acts 2 & 3 [1.06'13"]* Ana Maria Labin, soprano (La Baronessa Irene) Raffaella Milanese, soprano (Rosina) Hannah Morrison, soprano (Lisetta) Krystian Adam, tenor (Il conte Errico) Colin Balzer, tenor (Il Marchese Ernesto) Jan Kobow, tenor (Masino) Johannes Weisser, baritone (Villotto) Jakob Spering, speaking role (Il piccolo figlio di Rosina) Capella Augustana Andreas Spering – conductor Recorded: August 31, 2013, Schloss Augustusburg, Brühl

It's not that Joseph Haydn wasn't prolific. He wrote more than 100 symphonies and 80 or so string quartets, along with hundreds of other chamber works, piano compositions, and choral pieces. And, while we don't often hear them, he also wrote about 30 operas.

Still, when it came to opera, Haydn had a problem. As he put it, "my misfortune is that I live in the country." In Haydn's case, the "country" meant Esterhaza -- the summer palace of his employers, the Esterhazy family, about 40 miles from Vienna. Prince Nicholas Esterhazy was an opera buff, and the family's private theater was as busy as the opera houses in many major cities. Yet Esterhaza was off the beaten path, so Haydn's operas never got much attention. But maybe that's starting to change. Or at least it is this week, with a production of Haydn's True Fidelity -- La Vera Costanza -- an elegant comedy with a sometimes disturbing undercurrent.

Some have suggested that La Vera Costanza was actually written on a commission from the Imperial Court Opera in Vienna. But more likely, it was composed for the Esterhazys, like so many of Haydn's other operas. However it originated, it was at Esterhaza where the opera's premiere took place, in April of 1779.

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Not long after that, the Esterhaza opera house burned down, taking the score and parts to La Vera Costanza along with it. Haydn then reconstructed the opera -- largely from memory, it seems -- and it was revived in 1785. That performance also took place at Esterhaza -- where, as luck would have it, the family maintained two opera houses. --- worldofopera.org

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