

Purcell - The Prophetess • The Fairy Queen (Savall) [2009]

Written by bluesever

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1. *Prophetess, or The History of Dioclesian, semi-opera, Z. 627: First Musick* 2. *Prophetess, or The History of Dioclesian, semi-opera, Z. 627: Second Musick* 3. *Prophetess, or The History of Dioclesian, semi-opera, Z. 627: Symphony for Trumpets & Violins* 4. *Prophetess, or The History of Dioclesian, semi-opera, Z. 627: Retornella* 5. *Prophetess, or The History of Dioclesian, semi-opera, Z. 627: Dance of the Furies: Soft music - Dance* 6. *Prophetess, or The History of Dioclesian, semi-opera, Z. 627: The Chair Dance* 7. *Prophetess, or The History of Dioclesian, semi-opera, Z. 627: Retornella* 8. *The Fairy Queen, semi-opera, Z. 629: First Act Suite: First Music: Prelude (1)* 9. *The Fairy Queen, semi-opera, Z. 629: First Act Suite: Hornpipe (2)* 10. *The Fairy Queen, semi-opera, Z. 629: First Act Suite: Second Music: Air (3)* 11. *The Fairy Queen, semi-opera, Z. 629: First Act Suite: Rondeau (4)* 12. *The Fairy Queen, semi-opera, Z. 629: First Act Suite: Overture (5)* 13. *The Fairy Queen, semi-opera, Z. 629: First Act Suite: First Act Tune: Jig (8)* 14. *The Fairy Queen, semi-opera, Z. 629: Second Act Suite: A Prelude (9)* 15. *The Fairy Queen, semi-opera, Z. 629: Second Act Suite: A Bird's Prelude (10)* 16. *The Fairy Queen, semi-opera, Z. 629: Second Act Suite: Echo (12)* 17. *The Fairy Queen, semi-opera, Z. 629: Second Act Suite: A Fairies Dances (13)* 18. *The Fairy Queen, semi-opera, Z. 629: Second Act Suite: A Dance of the Followers of Night (18)* 19. *The Fairy Queen, semi-opera, Z. 629: Second Act Suite: Second Act Tune: Air (19)* 20. *The Fairy Queen, semi-opera, Z. 629: Third Act Suite: Prelude "Love's a Sweet Passion" (20)* 21. *The Fairy Queen, semi-opera, Z. 629: Third Act Suite: Overture: Symphony while the swans come forward (21)* 22. *The Fairy Queen, semi-opera, Z. 629: Third Act Suite: Dance for the Fairies (22)* 23. *The Fairy Queen, semi-opera, Z. 629: Third Act Suite: Dance for the Green men (23)* 24. *The Fairy Queen, semi-opera, Z. 629: Third Act Suite: A dance for the Haymakers (27)* 25. *The Fairy Queen, semi-opera, Z. 629: Third Act Suite: Third Act tune: hornpipe (29)* 26. *The Fairy Queen, semi-opera, Z. 629: Fourth Act Suite: Symphony: Prelude, Canzona, Largo, Allegro, Adagio, Adagio (30)* 27. *The Fairy Queen, semi-opera, Z. 629: Fourth Act Suite: Entry of Phoebus (33)* 28. *The Fairy Queen, semi-opera, Z. 629: Fourth Act Suite: Fourth Act Tune: Air (40)* 29. *The Fairy Queen, semi-opera, Z. 629: Fifth Act Suite: Prelude (41)* 30. *The Fairy Queen, semi-opera, Z. 629: Fifth Act Suite: Entry Dance (44)* 31. *The Fairy Queen, semi-opera, Z. 629: Fifth Act Suite: Symphony (45)* 32. *The Fairy Queen, semi-opera, Z. 629: Fifth Act Suite: Monkey's Dance (49)* 33. *The Fairy Queen, semi-opera, Z. 629: Fifth Act Suite: Chaconne: Dance for the Chinese Man and Woman (57)* 34. *The Fairy Queen, semi-opera, Z. 629: Fifth Act Suite: Fifth Act Tune (59)* Le Concert des Nations Jordi Savall - conductor

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Purcell's Fairy Queen and Dioclesian (called "The Prophetess" here) were two examples of semi-opera, a genre that flourished in England in the late 17th and early 18th centuries before Handel blew up the spot with Italian opera. As opposed to conventional opera, the semi-opera variety wasn't through composed, with arias, recitatives, etc, but rather had instrumental music throughout to accompany action onstage such as dances, and to provide segues between acts and scenes. (The characters generally spoke their parts, with an occasional air or song.)

In this recording, Jordi Savall gives these unique, at times Lully-esque scores his customary imaginative and colorful treatment with his orchestra le Concert des Nations. The performance standard here is very high, highlighted by rich, dark bass lines, a stellar violin section, and impeccable intonation in the winds and brass. This group's comparatively well known reading of the Handel Water Music is in a similar vein stylistically, so if you're familiar with that and like it, this would be a good choice. Also note that the same recording is now available on Savall's Alia Vox label-- considering that the Astree release is out of print, seekers may want to try this first. ---Andrew G. Waid, amazon.com

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