

Verdi – Opera Choruses (Abbado) [1975]

Written by bluesever

Wednesday, 21 August 2013 16:28 -

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1. *Gli arredi festivi* - Nabucco 2. *Va, pensiero, sull'ali dorate* – Nabucco 3. *Vedi, le fosche notturne* - *Il Trovatore* 4. *Fuoco di gioia* – *Otello* 5. *Si ridesti il leon di Castiglia* – *Ernani* 6. *Gloria all'Egitto* – *Aida* 7. *Patria Oppressa!* – *Macbeth* 8. *Gerusalem - I Lombardi Alla Prima Crociata* 9. *O Signore, dal tetto natio* - *I Lombardi Alla Prima Crociata* 10. *Spuntato ecco il dì d'esultanza* - *Don Carlo* Coro e Orchestra del Teatro Alla Scala di Milano Claudio Abbado – conductor

There's plenty of impressive swagger here, and you can take consistent vocal excellence (precision of ensemble and superb diction) for granted with this classic compilation of Verdi opera choruses with La Scala forces under Claudio Abbado. Most of the expected favorites are here, including "Va', pensiero" from Nabucco, and "Gloria all'Egitto" from Aida, given (as usual on compilations like this) senza the ballet music, which is a pity. Another undoubted highlight here is "Spuntato ecco il dì d'esultanza" from Don Carlos, and to complete this vividly engineered collection, there's also the "Dies irae", "Tuba mirum", and "Sanctus" from the Requiem. Further welcome inclusions are extracts from I Lombardi and Un ballo in maschera, with Ernani represented by the one-and-a-half minutes of "Si ridesti il Leon di Castiglia".

Principally, this finely produced disc is a warm tribute to La Scala's famous chorus master Romano Gandolfi. As Richard Osborne writes in his booklet notes, "the Abbado-Gandolfi era was one in which the chorus was part and parcel of a finely-honed ensemble, whose sound was more fierce, more elegant, more beautiful—in a phrase, more authentically Verdian—than of any other opera house of the period." On evidence of this recording, it's hard to disagree—and of its kind this certainly is an ideal disc, superbly sung and supported by excellent orchestral playing and recorded sound. ---classicstoday.com

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