

Antonio Vivaldi – Orlando Furioso RV 728 (2004)

Written by bluesever

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CD 1 01. Sinfonia (Concerto in Do maggiore per archi e cembalo RV116) : I. Allegro [0:02:18.12] 02. II. Andante [0:01:52.25] 03. III. Allegro [0:01:02.71] 04. Atto I - Scena 1 - I. Recitativo (Angelica, Alcina) [0:02:50.43] 05. II. Aria (Angelica) Un raggio di speme [0:03:43.57] 06. Atto I - Scena 2 - I. Recitativo (Alcina, Orlando, Astolfo) [0:02:18.16] 07. II. Aria (Alcina) Alza in quegli' occhi [0:03:38.23] 08. Atto I - Scena 3 - I. Recitativo (Orlando, Astolfo) [0:01:10.07] 09. II. Aria (Astolfo) Costanza tu m'insegni, e vuoi ch'io spero [0:04:46.45] 10. Atto I - Scena 4 - I. Recitativo (Orlando, Bradamante) [0:02:04.03] 11. II. Aria (Bradamante) Ascondo il mio sdegno [0:03:06.65] [play](#) 12. Atto I - Scena 5 - I. Recitativo (Orlando) [0:01:28.05] 13. II. Aria (Orlando) Nel profondo [0:03:57.54] 14. Atto I - Scena 6 - I. Recitativo (Angelica, Medoro) [0:02:08.44] 15. Atto I - Scena 7 - I. Recitativo (Alcina, Angelica, Medoro) [0:02:14.67] 16. Atto I - Scena 8 - I. Recitativo (Orlando, Angelica, Medoro) [0:02:27.43] 17. II. Aria (Angelica) Tu sei degl'occhi miei [0:02:29.34] 18. III. Recitativo (Orlando) [0:00:26.35] 19. IV. Aria (Orlando) Troppe e fiero, il nume arciero [0:03:12.52] 20. Atto I - Scena 9 - I. Recitativo (Alcina, Medoro) [0:00:50.33] 21. II. Aria (Medoro) Rompo i ceppi [0:03:37.01] 22. Atto I - Scena 10 - I. Recitativo (Alcina, Ruggiero) [0:03:37.35] 23. Atto I - Scena 11 - I. Recitativo (Bradamante, Alcina, Ruggiero) [0:02:12.67] 24. II. Aria (Ruggiero) Sol da te, mio dolce amore [0:07:49.20] 25. Atto I - Scena 12 - I. Recitativo (Alcina, Bradamante) [0:00:38.55] 26. Atto I - Scena 13 - I. Recitativo (Alcina) [0:00:33.27] 27. II. Aria (Alcina) Amorse ai rai del sole [0:03:59.33] CD 2 01. Atto II - Scena 1 - I. Recitativo (Alcina, Astolfo) [0:01:55.66] 02. II. Aria (Alcina) Vorresti amor da me [0:03:05.13] 03. Atto II - Scena 2 - I. Recitativo (Astolfo, Bradamante) [0:01:12.33] 04. II. Aria (Astolfo) Benche nasconda [0:03:08.05] 05. Atto II - Scena 3 - I. Recitativo (Bradamante, Ruggiero, Orlando) [0:02:07.70] 06. II. Aria (Bradamante) Taci, non ti lagnar [0:02:05.70] 07. Atto II - Scena 4 - I. Recitativo (Ruggiero, Orlando) [0:01:03.51] 08. II. Aria (Orlando) Sorge l'irato nembo [0:03:49.09] 09. III. Recitativo (Ruggiero, Orlando) [0:00:22.59] 10. Atto II - Scena 5 - I. Recitativo (Angelica, Medoro) [0:01:09.26] 11. II. Aria (Medoro) Qual candido fiore [0:02:44.71] 12. Atto II - Scena 6 - I. Recitativo (Angelica, Orlando) [0:01:21.24] 13. II. Aria (Angelica) Chiara al pari di lucida stella [0:07:24.19] 14. III. Recitativo (Angelica, Orlando) [0:01:32.10] 15. Atto II - Scena 7 - I. Recitativo (Astolfo, Angelica, Orlando) [0:01:20.17] 16. Atto II - Scena 8 - I. Recitativo (Orlando, Angelica) [0:00:33.12] 17. Atto II - Scena 9 - I. Recitativo (Orlando) [0:03:03.24] 18. Atto II - Scena 10 - I. Recitativo (Bradamante, Ruggiero) [0:01:39.00] 19. II. Aria (Ruggiero) Che bel morir in sen [0:02:18.22] [play](#) 20. III. Recitativo (Bradamante) [0:00:21.33] 21. IV. Aria (Bradamante) Se cresce un torrente

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[0:01:54.40] 22. Atto II - Scena 11 - I. Tutti (Coro) Al fragor de' corni audaci [0:00:57.22] 23. Atto II - Scena 11 - II. Recitativo (Angelica, Medoro, Alcina) [0:01:31.63] 24. Atto II - Scena 11 - III. Recitativo accompagnato (Medoro) [0:00:33.17] 25. Atto II - Scena 11 - IV. Tutti (Coro) Gran madre venere [0:00:24.73] 26. Atto II - Scena 11 - V. Recitativo (Alcina, Angelica) [0:01:19.30] 27. Atto II - Scena 11 - VI. Tutti (Coro) Diva dell' Espero [0:00:25.06] 28. Atto II - Scena 11 - VII. Recitativo (Alcina) [0:01:01.01] 29. Atto II - Scena 11 - VIII. Aria (Alcina) Così potessi anch'io [0:07:46.38] 30. Atto II - Scena 12 - I. Recitativo (Angelica, Medoro) [0:00:38.12] 31. Atto II - Scena 12 - II. Duetto (Angelica, Medoro) Belle pianticelle [0:00:2

CD 3

01. Atto III - Scena 1 - I. Recitativo (Astolfo, Ruggiero) [0:00:50.26] 02. II. Aria (Astolfo) Dove il valor combatte [0:01:57.71] 03. Atto III - Scena 2 - I. Recitativo (Ruggiero, Bradamante) [0:00:48.08] 04. Atto III - Scena 3 - I. Aria (Alcina) L'arco vuo frangerti [0:00:20.02] 05. II. Recitativo (Alcina, Ruggiero, Bradamante) [0:00:21.18] 06. III. Recitativo accompagnato (Alcina) [0:02:02.48] 07. IV. Recitativo (Alcina, Ruggiero, Bradamante) [0:01:34.35] 08. Atto III - Scena 4 - I. Recitativo (Orlando, Alcina, Ruggiero, Bradamante) [0:03:24.73] 09. Atto III - Scena 5 - I. Canzon e recitativo (Angelica, Orlando, Alcina, Ruggiero, Bradamante) [0:00:35.17] 10. II. Recitativo (Angelica, Orlando, Alcina, Ruggiero, Bradamante) [0:00:33.13] 11. III. Aria (Alcina) Che dolce piu, che piu giocondo stato [0:01:29.55] 12. IV. Recitativo (Angelica, Orlando, Alcina, Ruggiero, Bradamante) [0:01:29.61] 13. V. Aria (Angelica) Poveri affetti miei, siete innocenti [0:04:31.62] 14. Atto III - Scena 6 - I. Recitativo (Orlando, Alcina, Bradamante, Ruggiero) [0:01:51.52] 15. II. Aria (Bradamante) Io son ne' lacci tuoi [0:02:23.57] 16. III. Recitativo (Orlando, Alcina, Bradamante, Ruggiero) [0:00:27.38] 17. Atto III - Scena 7 - I. Recitativo (Ruggiero, Medoro) [0:01:05.16] 18. Atto III - Scena 8 - I. Recitativo (Angelica, Ruggiero, Medoro) [0:01:21.62] 19. II. Aria (Ruggiero) Come l'onda [0:02:59.20] 20. Atto III - Scena 9 - I. Recitativo (Angelica, Medoro) [0:00:27.15] 21. II. Aria (Medoro) Vorebbe amando il cor [0:04:21.31] 22. Atto III - Scena 10 - I. Recitativo (Orlando) [0:00:57.63] 23. II. Aria (Orlando) Scendi nel Tartaro [0:00:29.38] 24. III. Recitativo (Orlando) [0:02:12.09] 25. IV. Recitativo accompagnato (Orlando) [0:00:44.20] 26. Atto III - Scena 11 - I. Recitativo (Alcina, Orlando, Bradamante, Ruggiero) [0:01:01.47] 27. Atto III - Scena 12 - I. Recitativo (Angelica, Medoro, Bradamante, Alcina) [0:00:22.48] 28. Atto III - Scena Ultima - I. Recitativo (Astolfo, Bradamante, Alcina, Ruggiero, Orlando) [0:02:02.18] 29. Atto III - Scena Ultima - II. Recitativo accompagnato (Alcina) [0:00:43.41] 30. Atto III - Scena Ultima - III. Aria (Alcina) Andero, chiamero dal profondo [0:00:31.36] 31. Atto III - Scena Ultima - IV. Recitativo (Astolfo, Bradamante, Alcina, Ruggiero, Orlando) [0:00:48.24] 32. Atto III - Scena Ultima - V. Tutti (Coro) Con mirti e fiori [0:00:48.02]

[play](#)

Orlando - Marie-Nicolle Lemieux Angelica - Veronica Cangemi Alcina - Jennifer Larmore
Bradamante - Ann Hallenberg Medoro - Blandine Staskiewicz Ruggiero - Philippe Jaroussky
Astolfo - Lorenzo Regazzo Ensemble Matheus Jean-Christophe Spinosi – conductor

Composer Antonio Vivaldi may always stand in the shadow of his contemporary Handel when it

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comes to Baroque compositions, and the distinction between the two is further blurred by the fact that both composed operas based on the same epic poem, Ludovico Ariosto's "Orlando furioso". Vivaldi's 1727 opera came about eight years prior to Handel's "Alcina". Unsurprisingly, while several recordings of "Alcina" have been produced (including a particularly strong one of the 1999 William Christie-conducted Paris Opera production with Renee Fleming and Susan Graham released in 2000), this is the first full recording of Vivaldi's work, part of the Naive label's commitment to bring Vivaldi's largely unknown but beautifully composed operas to light.

Based on this stellar ensemble performance, I would argue that "Orlando furioso" is the stronger of the two works based on the recitatives, which are far more dramatically gripping, and the arias which not only showcase splendid voices but provide an intractable context for the intense drama of the story. The lush performance here captures Vivaldi's insinuating melodies which are full of voluptuous ornamentation. The shimmering orchestral passages are complemented by vibrant choruses that mirror the dramatic shifts in Grazio Braccioli's treatment of Ariosto's eventful poem. His libretto manages to keep the essence of the story but deepens the humanity in blending epic history with the supernatural. Similar to Handel's "Alcina", Vivaldi depicts a set of lively gallery of characters with individualistic personalities in a fanciful plot that moves at a breakneck pace.

At the center are two storylines that complement each other, the grand sweep of Orlando's madness and the tragedy of Alcina's downfall. In the title role as Charlemagne's nephew who falls deeply in love with Angelica, arguably the most dramatically challenging of the ensemble, Marie-Nicole Lemieux, a young contralto from Quebec, must make sense of the lovesick knight, and she does it with passionate delivery and a superb lower register. The richness of her tone is necessary to reflect Orlando's decline into dementia at the end of Act II and the series of "mad scene" monologues in Act III. As Alcina, mezzo-soprano Jennifer Larmore brings an imperious tone and supple edge to the powerful but doomed sorceress, who suffers for her love of Astolfo and then of Ruggiero. Soprano Veronica Cangemi brings a lovely, ethereal quality to the role of Orlando's beloved Angelica.

Bass-baritone Lorenzo Regazzo brings a palpable lushness to his vocally powerful characterization of Astolfo, and the proud female warrior Bradamante is sung by mezzo soprano Ann Hallenberg with stunning verve. As the valiant Ruggiero, rising countertenor Philippe Jaroussky is outstanding, and his arias provide the most poignant moments of this production. He is particularly adept at blending his ethereal sound with all the very different voices of the other singers. Under the fluent direction of Baroque specialist Jean-Christophe Spinosi, the Ensemble Mateus proves expert in accommodating the variety of voices with instrumental nuance. If nothing else, this superb recording will introduce Vivaldi to a new generation unfamiliar with his dexterity in the Baroque genre. ---Ed Uyeshima

This review cannot be definitive as I am far from being an expert on Baroque opera. But I have long loved the recording of this opera, 'Orlando Furioso,' made many years ago, but drastically cut, by Claudio Scimone with the Solisti Veneti and featuring the almost superhuman singing of Marilyn Horne as Orlando. Add to that the Angelica of Victoria de los Angeles, Lucia Valentini-Terrani as Alcina, and Sesto Bruscantini as Ruggiero and you have a nigh-unbeatable combination. But this set not only gives us an uncut version of Vivaldi's opera (with some additions suggested by musicologist Frédéric Delaméa, additions which fill in gaps in the original materials from which this performance was produced), it features, amazingly, voices that are fully the equal of those in the fabled Scimone recording. Some roles have been re-assigned: Ruggiero is sung by a counter-tenor here (as opposed to Bruscantini's baritone); Medoro is sung by a mezzo, rather than a tenor.

One quibble I have about the Horne performance is that she made the role of Orlando, with all its vocal gymnastics, almost a caricature (forgive me, Horne fans! I'm one, too, after all). In the present recording Canadian mezzo Marie-Nicole Lemieux not only sings as well as Horne, but limns the character with greater sensitivity. Her ornamentation is not quite as spectacular, but it's also not as, how shall I say?, show-offy. And the ornaments are more in keeping with practice of 1727 when the opera was premièred, I believe. Lemieux is fully capable of Horne's acrobatics, so it's not a matter of lack of technique, it's more a matter of (gasp!) taste. A larger question arises about the replacement of the role of Ruggiero sung by a baritone (Bruscantini) with a counter-tenor (the sweet-voiced Philippe Jarrousky). In fact, though, at the first performance Ruggiero was sung by a mezzo who specialized in pants roles, so perhaps using a counter-tenor is more appropriate. In any event, Jarrousky is superb, bringing an appropriate delicacy to the role. Angelica, sung ravishingly by the Argentine soprano Veronica Cangemi, does not make us forget the late, beloved Victoria de los Angeles, but her performance does not suffer in comparison either. Jennifer Larmore has a complete triumph in her performance of Alcina which is, I feel, actually superior to that of Valentini-Terrani.

Instrumental support by Jean-Christophe Spinosi and his Ensemble Matheus is lively, sensitive and brilliant. Special mention must be made of the lovely flute obbligato in Ruggiero's aria, 'Sol da te, mio dolce amore,' played radiantly by Jean-Marc Goujon. Supporting roles are also well sung, in some instances better than on the Scimone set. I think this set heralds the real arrival of Marie-Nicole Lemieux on the international scene, at least on records. She has made some wonderful CDs, mostly on smaller labels; I raved about her recording with Tafelmusik on Analekta but was less taken with her Brahms lieder recital on the same label. I suspect this recording will bring her appropriate acclaim. Strongly recommended for lovers of superb

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singing. ---Scott Morrison

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