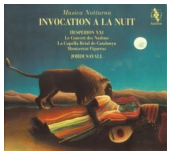
Musica Notturna - Invocation à la Nuit (2008)



CD 1
Durme, hermosa donzella • Berceuse Sefardi
Ay luna que reluzes (Villancico) •Anonyme
In Primo Nocturno I • Cristóbal de Morales
No la devemos dormir (Villancico) • Bartomeu Cárceres
In Primo Nocturno II • Cristóbal de Morales
Si la noche haze escura • Francisco Guerrero
Romance del Conde Claros • Francisco Salinas
Hor che'l Ciel, e la Terra (1 parte) • Claudio Monterverdi
CosÌ sol d'una chiara fonte viva (2 parte) • Claudio Monterverdi
Nana : Aurtxo txikia negarrez • Anonyme (Trad. Basque)
Rorro: Desvelado dueño mio • Tomás Torrejón y Velasco
El Mariner • Traditionnelle Catalane (vers. Arianna Savall)
С Куклои / Avec la poupée • Modest P. Musorgsky
Kuus, kuus kallike (Berceuse Estonienne) • Arvo Pärt
Les Voix Humaines • F. Savall d'après Marin Marais
Nana: Duermete, niño, duerme • Manuel de Falla

CD 2
Cuando el Rey Nimrod • Trad. Sepharad (vers. Jordi Savall)
Estas noches à tan largas • Anonyme (vers. Jordi Savall)
Lullabie [Galliard] • Anthony Holborne
The Night Watch [Almaine] • Anthony Holborne
Nuit • Marc Antonie Charpentier
La Rêveuse • Marin Marais
A Dance for the Followers of Night (18) • Henry Purcell
Prelude • Henry Purcell
A Fairies Dances • Henry Purcell
Prélude del l'Acte troisième • Marin Marais
Symphonie pour le Sommeil • Marin Marais
Air du 3e Ouverture BWV 1068 • J. S. Bach
La Paix : Largo alla Siciliana • G.F. Haendel
Sonata 6. Lento • Joseph Haydn
Marcia Funebre. Adagio assai • L.v. Beethoven

Maurerische Trauermusik, K 477 • W.A. Mozart

Montserrat Figueras, soprano
Hesperion XXI/ La Capella Reial de Catalunya/ Le Concert des Nations
Jordi Savall - director

This 10-year celebration of the Alia Vox label solemnizes the magnificent artistry of Jordi Savall and wife Montserrat Figueras, culling tracks from their albums from the early 1990s through the present on the Astree/Auvidis (1975-1996) and Alia Vox (1998-2008) labels. All of these 140 (!) albums are planned in re-release under Alia Vox Heritage, and this tribute serves as a sort of kickoff.

Does it work? Yes, for the most part. The theme, explained in great details in the notes, is that of the night, whether music referencing the night, recorded at night, inspired by the night, whatever the association – whether tenuous or not. So Morales's Officium Defunctorum, a nocturnal matins setting which accompanies the vigil for the dead seems quite appropriate, as does the gorgeous lullaby Desvelado dueno mio by Tomas de Torrejon y Vlasco, a Peruvian composer who played a large part in politics of his age. Arvo Part finds a place on this first disc (subtitled "Songs of the Night") with Kuus, kuus kallike, words used to lull a child to sleep.

Disc two falters a bit in my opinion. Solely instrumental, it is easy to see why the fantastical elements of Purcell's Fairy Queen fit the topic well (and three numbers are given here), but the "death" theme of the Funeral March from Beethoven's "Eroica" symphony and Mozart's Masonic Funeral Music seem oddly incongruous, the Beethoven especially shown in a dramatic torso that seems weirdly out of place – divorced from the main body of the work. On the other hand, the nighttime premiere of Handel's Royal Fireworks Music (Largo all Siciliana) fits nicely, its nocturnal associations often forgotten.

This production has great sound all through, and performances are stunning. Though the collection fails a little at the end, the vast majority of the program works very well. Alia Vox is a model of production values; while others cut, they offer book length notes on glossy pages with color photos, superb notes, texts, and translations in seven languages! There is no finer label today in terms of what they offer to you, the consumer, and should be recognized for it. Bravo to all concerned! ---–Steven Ritter, audaud.com

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