

## Baldassare Galuppi - Il Mondo alla Rovversa (2001)

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1. Act I. Sinfonia 4:04 2. Chorus: 'Presto, Presto, Alla Catena' 0:42 3. Recitative: Tulia 'Ite All'opre Servili' 0:46 4. Chorus: 'Presto, Presto, Alla Catena' 0:19 5. Recitative: Tulia 'Poiche Del Viril Sesso' 2:13 6. Recitative: Tulia 'Aurora, Ah Non Vorrei' 1:32 7. Aria: Tulia 'Fiero Leon, Che Audace' 7:42 8. Recitative: Aurora 'Che Piacer, Che Diletto' 3:05 9. Aria: Aurora 'Quegl'occhietti Si Furbetti' 6:20 10. Recitative: Graziosino 'Oh Che Gusto, Oh Che Gusto!' 0:37 11. Aria: Graziosino 'Quando Gli Augelli Cantano' 4:48 12. Arietta: Giacinto 'Madre Natura?' 1:27 13. Recitative: Giacinto 'Quasta Parucca, In Vero' 4:43 14. Aria: Giacinto 'In Quel Volto Siede Un Nume' 4:39 15. Recitative: Cintia 'Oh, Quanto Mi Fan Ridere' 0:54 16. Aria: Cintia 'Se Gli Uomini Sospirano' 5:47 17. Recitative: Tulia 'Ma Io, Per Dir Il Vero' 2:48 18. Aria: Tulia 'Cari Lacci, Amate Pene' 7:16 19. Recitative: Rinaldino 'Dov'e, Dov'e Chi Dice' 0:57 20. Aria: Rinaldino 'Gioje Care, Un Cor Dubioso' 5:34 21. Recitative: Giacinto 'O Diana Mia Gentile!' 0:41 22. Recitative: Cintia ' (Con Aurora Giacinto?)' 1:34 23. Finale I: Cintia 'Venite, O Ch'io Vi Faccio' 4:28 24. Act II. Chorus And Recitative: Chorus 'Liberta, Liberta' 8:24 25. Recitative: Tulia 'Com'e Possibile Mai' 0:40 26. Aria: Tulia 'Fra Tutti Gli Affetti' 4:30 27. Trio: Rinaldino 'Queste Rose Porporine' 1:58 28. Recitative: Rinaldino 'Osservate, Compagni: Ecco Un Naviglio' 0:34 29. Trio: Rinaldino, Giacinto, Graziosino 'A Terra, A Terra' 0:24 30. March 1:07 31. Sinfonia 0:20 32. Recitative: Cintia 'Ola, Voi Che Venite' 0:41 33. Aria: Ferramonte 'Quande Le Donne Parlano' 2:50 34. Recitative: Rinaldino 'Ah, Purtroppo Egli E Ver!' 0:38 35. Aria: Rinaldino 'Nochier Che S'abbandona' 4:13 36. Recitative: Cintia 'La Vogliamo Vedere' 3:46 37. Aria: Cintia 'Che Cosa Son Le Donne' 3:47 38. Recitative: Giacinto 'Esser Dovro Crudele' 2:46 39. Aria: Giacinto 'Al Bello Delle Femine' 5:20 40. Recitative: Aurora 'Dunque, Cintia Sgarbata' 3:12 41. Aria: Aurora 'Quando Vien La Mia Nemica' 4:44 42. Recitative: Graziosino 'Son In Un Bell'imbroglio' 0:25 43. Aria: Graziosino 'Son Di Coraggio Armato' 3:25 44. Recitative: Cintia 'Dov'e, Dov'e La Spada?' 0:29 45. Finale II: Cintia 'E Questa La Promessa' 3:14 46. Act III. Recitative: Tulia 'Ahime! Chi Mi Soccorre?' 1:21 47. Aria: Tulia 'Fino Ch'io Vivo Adorero' 2:30 48. Recitative: Ferramonte 'Io Rido Come Un Pazzo' 0:36 49. Aria: Ferramonte 'Le Donne Col Cervello' 1:44 50. Recitative: Graziosino 'Non Ne Vuo Piu Sapere' 1:00 51. Aria: Aurora 'Che Bel Regnar Contenta' 1:47 52. Recitative: Graziosino 'Colui Di Ferramonte' 2:15 53. Aria: Grziosino 'Giuro... Signora Si' 1:33 54. Recitative: Cintia 'Ah, Ch'e Un Piacere Soave' 1:26 55. Duet: Cintia 'Eccomi Al Vostro Piede' 2:46 56. Finale III: Chorus Of Women: 'Pieta, Pieta Di Noi' 2:19 57. Epilogue 0:46  
Marinella Pennicchi - soprano (Tulia) Rosa Dominguez - mezzo-soprano (Aurora) Mya Fracassini - mezzo-soprano (Cintia) Lia Serafini - soprano (Rinaldino) Furio Zanasi - baritone (Graziosini) Fulvio Binetti - baritone (Giacinto) Davide Livermore - tenor (Ferramonte) Swiss Radio choir I Barocchisti Diego Fasolis - conductor

Galuppi wrote around 100 operas, the first at the age of 16, as well as oratorios, choral music and harpsichord concertos. Born in Venice he travelled to London (1751) and St Petersburg (1766-68) and, according to Dr. Charles Burney, a scholar who travelled extensively in Italy during the 1770s, he had more influence on English music than any other Italian. More recently the renowned musicologist Prof. Edward Dent (1876-1957) has suggested that while Galuppi's melody was attractive but not strikingly original; "he had a firmer grasp of harmony, rhythm, and orchestration than most of his contemporaries".

Galuppi is important in operatic history as the pioneer of the *finalé*, joining movements into a concerted whole in which the dramatic action reaches a crucial situation and is then developed. His most successful operas were written, as here, with the Venetian playwright Carlo Goldoni who had reformed the original 'comedia dell'arte' and developed this into 'opera buffe', thus bringing comedy into the opera house. His texts provided simplicity and directness with reduction of dialogue, more musical numbers, including arias, lovers' duets and big final ensembles. Galuppi set the dialogue words with *secco recitative*. In combination Goldoni and Galuppi were said to have invented 'opere buffe'.

First staged in Venice in the autumn of 1750, *Il Mondo alla Rovversa* (The World turned Topsy-Turvy) with an alternative title *Osia Le donne che commando* or *Women in Command* gives the clue of the plot, which concerns an island in the Antipodes governed by a council of women. Act 1 opens with the three members of the council, Tulia (sop), Aurora (mezz) and Cintia (mezz) demonstrating their power over their spineless lovers, Giacinto (bar), Graziosino (bar), and Rinaldino (sop). The women fear the men will, being physically stronger, overthrow them. Meanwhile the men, in fact, are happy to be in a state of subjection to feminine wiles. Aurora fancies adding Giacinto, in love with Cintra, to her tally of lovers, leading to a three sided confrontation.

In Act 2 the women decide to move towards a monarchical government but none of them is agreed by a majority because "no lady will consent to be subject to another" and each protagonist ponders how to grasp the reins of power to herself. While each lady plots, some willing men arrive by boat albeit that one, Ferromonte (ten) is not as willing as the rest and believes that the 'chains of love' should be avoided. In the final and shortest Act, Rinaldino, convinced by Ferromonte of the necessity to overthrow female rule, saves the life of Tulia. Cintia, whose thirst for power has driven her to propose the murder of her rivals, has to humble herself before her lover, Giacinto. To Ferromonte's great satisfaction all now accept the inevitable conclusion that 'women in command make for a topsy-turvy world' that can never last.

In the Chandos issue, Act 1 fits neatly on to one disc; Acts 2 & 3 on to the second. The recording, made in the auditorium of the Stelio Mulo in Lugano, features the choir of Swiss Radio with the ensemble of I Barocchisti. The foregoing will reassure Baroque specialists as to the approach, as will the fact that all the soloists are experienced in this specialist field. That means flexible, lightish voices using little vibrato allied to an ability to hold an even line in the recitatives and not let dramatic impact sag in the arias and duets. The challenge in casting the singers is to enable the listener to recognise which character is singing by the timbre of voice. Both baritones have wide ranges of tone and colour but there are times when the ear is confused as to which character is singing. At first I wondered if Fulvio Bettini as Giacinto was more suitable for Mozart's Figaro. But no, as a Bach cantata specialist he can handle the demands of the music and brings lively runs and characterisation to his role as does the lighter voiced Furio Zanasi as Graziosini. The tenor, Davide Livermore as Ferromonte, has an edge to his voice, not inappropriate here, that indicates his Mozartian operatic work.

Of the women singers, the two mezzos are easily differentiated; the Cintia of Mya Fracassini being more towards the contralto end of that vocal register, whilst Rosa Dominguez has a distinctly lighter voice. Both sing well and with appropriate vocal and dramatic intensity in arias and duets, and with good line in the recitatives. Of the sopranos, Marinella Pennicchi as Tulia, has a pure toned light voice with a secure top and trill, and is a delight to listen to. I couldn't say that of Lia Serafini as Rinaldino. I found raw patches in the middle of her voice that didn't lie easily on my ear; others may react otherwise. Try CD1 tk19-20.

It is a pleasure to report that the orchestra and chorus play a full and vital part under the direction of Diego Fasolis. The recording is up to Chandos's renowned high standards with a well-balanced sound in an airy natural acoustic. When so many issues of operatic music from this period involve recording of live performances, complete with coughs, stage movements, inappropriate applause, etc. disturbing the enjoyment. It is therefore particularly pleasing to welcome this fine recording of a rare work by a composer who made a distinct contribution to the evolution of opera.

The accompanying booklet contains brief historical notes, a synopsis, biographies of participants and a libretto with English translation. ---Robert J Farr, musicweb-international.com

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