

111 Years of Deutsche Grammophon - CD 29

Handel: Ah! mio cor



Alcina Act 2 1 *Ah, mio cor* [10:48] Hercules Act 3 2 *Recit. acc: "Where shall I fly?"* [6:30]
Agrippina, HWV 6 Act 2
3 *Pensieri, voi mi tormentate!* [7:30]
Giulio Cesare in Egitto HWV 17 Atto primo
4 No. 12 *Aria "Cara speme, questo core tu cominci"* [6:02]
Joshua
5 *O Had I Jubal's Lyre* [2:38]
Ariodante HWV 33 Act 2
6 *"Scherza infida in grembo al drudo"* [11:39]
Theodora (1750) Part 2
7 *Sinfony - "With darkness deep" (Theodora) - Sc. 2* [6:00]
Amadigi di Gaula Act 2
8 *Desterò dall'empia dite* [5:49]
Orlando Act 2
9 *Ah Stigie larve! ... Vaghe pupille, non piangete, no* [7:45]
Ariodante HWV 33 Act 3
10 *"Dopo notte, atra e funesta"* [6:52]
Rinaldo Act 2
11 *"Lascia ch'io pianga"* [4:58]
Magdalena Kozená - mezzo-soprano Venice Baroque Orchestra Andrea Marcon – conductor

Before she turned 30, Czech mezzo-soprano Magdalena Kozená became a popular and critically celebrated figure in Europe, touted as the chief competitor to Cecilia Bartoli (although there is no evidence of personal rivalry between the two). Her area of primary expertise is eighteenth century music, particularly Bach, but she has also had success in more Romantic

opera and song repertory. Kozená's voice has been variously described as "sweet" and "fiery and melting," depending on her repertory; more constant are her vocal agility and sense of drama, which have brought her high regard.

She initially studied at the Brno Conservatory, then with Eva Blahová at the College of Performing Arts in Bratislava. Even before her graduation in 1995, she was winning major prizes in the Czech Republic and internationally, the most significant being top honors at the sixth International Mozart Competition in Salzburg in 1995. She spent the 1996-1997 season as a member of the Vienna Volksoper. In 1998 she made her debut at the Drottningholm Festival as Paride in Gluck's *Paride ed Elena*. In 2000 came debuts at the Châtelet in Paris as Gluck's Orpheus, and at the Vienna Festival as Nero in Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea*. In 2001 she appeared as Cherubino in the Aix-en-Provence Festival. She is also an active recitalist throughout Europe, although she is far less known in the United States, despite performances in San Francisco and at Carnegie Hall. Participation in Metropolitan Opera productions of Mozart and Janáček is steadily boosting her American reputation.

Early on, she signed a recording contract with Deutsche Grammophon, which has resulted in two or three CDs per year since 1997, simultaneously with occasional releases on other labels. She has been featured mainly in Baroque and Classical music, although she has also ventured into the Romantic era and twentieth century Czech songs, and as a recitalist she has performed and recorded Britten, which has endeared her to the nationalistic British press. Even greater honor came to Kozená in 2003; the success of her recording of Romantic French opera arias, not to mention her presence in the 2002 centenary production of *Pelléas et Mélisande* at the Opéra Comique, had much to do with her being awarded the title of Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French government. In 2009, her recording of Julietta fragments by Martinu won a Gramophone award, while in 2010 she toured with the ensemble Private Musicke in a program based on her album *Lettere amorose*. --- James Reel, AMG

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