Gluck - Il Trionfo di Clelia (2012)

Disc: 1 *1. Overtura. Moderato - (Allegro) 2. Overtura. Andante 3. Overtura. Minuetto 4. Act 1. Scene 1, 2. Recitativo. Come! Oh ardir temerario! 5. Act 1. Scene 1, 2. Aria. Sì, tacerò, se vuoi 6. Act 1. Scene 3. Recitativo. Vedesti, o principessa 7. Act 1. Scene 3. Aria. Ah, celar la bella face 8. Act 1. Scene 4, 5. Recitativo. Io più pace non ho; tutto m'ingombra 9. Act 1. Scene 4, 5. Aria. Resta, o cara; e per timore 10. Act 1. Scene 6. Recitativo. Prence, un istante... 11. Act 1. Scene 7. Recitativo accompagnato. Grazie, o Dei protettori; è vostro dono 12. Act 1. Scene 7. Aria. Tempeste il mar minaccia 13. Act 1. Scene 8. Recitativo. Signor, pronto al tuo cenno 14. Act 1. Scene 8. Aria. Sai che piegar si vede 15. Act 1. Scene 9. Recitativo. Che più pensar? La libertà di Roma 16. Act 1. Scene 10. Recitativo accompagnato. Che crudel sacrifizio 17. Act 1. Scene 10. Aria. Saper ti basti, o cara*

Disc: 2

1. Act 1. Scene 11. Recitativo. Misera, ah qual m'asconde 2. Act 1. Scene 11. Aria. Mille dubbi mi destano in petto 3. Act 2. Scene 1. Recitativo. Dei! Scorre l'ora, e col bramato avviso 4. Act 2. Scene 1. Aria. Dei di Roma, ah, perdonate 5. Act 2. Scene 2, 3. Recitativo. Alla tua tenerezza 6. Act 2. Scene 2, 3. Duetto. Sì, ti fido al tuo gran core. 7. Act 2. Scene 4, 5. Recitativo. Larissa, io non t'intendo. 8. Act 2. Scene 4, 5. Aria. Sol del Tebro in su la sponda 9. Act 2. Scene 6, 7, 8. Recitativo. Troppo, amica, eccedesti. 10. Act 2. Scene 6, 7, 8. Aria. Dico che ingiusto sei 11. Act 2. Scene 9. Recitativo. Ma fra tutti gli amanti 12. Act 2. Scene 10, 11. Marcia 13. Act 2. Scene 10, 11. Recitativo accompagnato. No, traditori, in Ciel di Roma il fato 14. Act 2. Scene 10, 11. Sinfonia 15. Act 2. Scene 10, 11. Recitativo accompagnato. Ecco il trmpo, o Romani. Ardir; gli dei 16. Act 2. Scene 10, 11. Sinfonia 17. Act 2. Scene 12. Recitativo. Ah da' cardini suoi 18. Act 2. Scene 12. Recitativo accompagnato. Padre, Tebro 19. Act 2. Scene 13. Recitativo. Barbaro fato! Ah, dunque 20. Act 2. Scene 13. Aria. Io nemica? A torto il dici. 21. Act 2. Scene 14. Aria. Non speri onusto il pino

Disc: 3

1. Act 3. Scene 1. Recitativo. Ma Larissa che fa? 2. Act 3. Scene 1. Aria. Tanto esposta alle sventure 3. Act 3. Scene 1. Recitativo. Eccola alfin... No, m'ingannai: di Mannio 4. Act 3. Scene 1. Recitativo accompagnato. Ah, già vorrei che scoperta ogni frode 5. Act 3. Scene 2, 3. Recitativo. Dove s'asconde mai? So pur che altrove 6. Act 3. Scene 2, 3. Aria. Ah ritorna, età dell'oro 7. Act 3. Scene 4, 5. Recitativo. Tarquinio, il so: del violato patto 8. Act 3. Scene 4, 5. Aria. Spesso, se ben l'affretta 9. Act 3. Scene 6. Recitativo. Ah m'abbandoni, empia fortuna, e teco 10. Act 3. Scene 6. Aria. In quest selva oscura 11. Act 3. Scene 7, 8. Recitativo. Olà; venga, e s'ascolti 12. Act 3. Scene 7, 8. Recitativo accompagnato. Violatrice

Roma de' giuramenti! 13. Act 3. Scene 7, 8. Aria. De' folgori di Giove 14. Act 3. Scene 9, 10. Recitativo (Respiro. Al fin parti.). Tempo è una volta 15. Act 3. Scene 9, 10. Coro. Oggi a te, gran re toscano
Clelia - Hélène Le Corre (soprano) Orazio - Mary-Ellen Nesi (mezzo) Tarquinio - Irini Karaianni (mezzo) Larissa - Burçu Uyar (soprano) Porsenna - Vassilis Kavayas (tenor) Mannio - Florin Cezar Ouatu Armonia Atenea Giuseppe Sigismondi de Risio - conductor

It is inevitable that prolific composers will be widely known for just a small proportion of their output; the great opera reformer Gluck is no exception. Written for the opening of the Teatro Communale in Bologna in May 1763, Il trionfo di Clelia was therefore completed the year after he had written the famous Orfeo for Vienna. The latter is hugely popular, whereas this new recording brings the opportunity to discover an unknown opera.

The libretto is the work of Pietro Metastasio, that most prolific of 18th century writers for the opera houses of Europe. It is a tale of love and duty, of personal loyalty tested in the context of the Siege of Rome. The priorities of the new work were to show off the most up to date technology of the new theatre. For example during the second act the collapsing bridge leads to the need to swim across the River Tiber in order to survive: a true test of heroism. Then there were the singers assembled by the Bologna management, whose virtuosity was of paramount concern.

In the light of this, anyone with a passing knowledge of operatic history and Gluck’s role as a reformer, who took the older seria style towards a closer liaison of music and drama, will be curious to know what Il trionfo di Clelia has to offer. The answer is that it gives us further confirmation of imagination and mastery by this splendid composer.

This performance from Athens is directed with a lively momentum by Giuseppe Sigismondi de Risio. The musicians of the original-instrument band Armonia Atenea acquit themselves with distinction. There is no lack of drama in delivering the quasi-military aspects of the score, which come to the fore during the overture and at regular intervals thereafter. Also the attention to detail of dynamic and textural sharing, and of instrumental colouring, gains from this subtle and warmly recorded acoustic.

The singers too seem inspired by their voyage of discovery. Clearly an element of vocal

virtuosity was one of the opera's priorities, and there is never any suggestion that such enthusiasms are denied in this performance. As such, several of the performances must be every inch as heroic as those experienced at Bologna in 1763, not least the leading soprano role of Clelia, brilliantly realized by Hélène de Corre. Irini Karaianni runs her close and the rest of the cast seem wholly in sympathy with their characters.

The question is: does this opera represent the discovery of one of the era's great operas? Only time will tell, and anyone acquiring this recording will be well placed to make that judgement. ---Terry Barfoot, musicweb-international.com

Christoph Williband Gluck (1714-1787) lived at a time when music was passing through an important transition: that from the baroque to the classical era. He was mainly an opera composer who revolutionized the genre, and whose influence was as far reaching as the times of Verdi and Wagner. Stage works such as "Orfeo ed Eurydice", "Alceste' and "Armide' are still performed regularly, but there is still much of his output that is either neglected or presumed lost.

This gem of an opera was unearthed quite accidentally by the conductor on this set, and now, thanks to MD&G's enterprising efforts, we can revel in the beauties of a work that we knew existed but whose score lay hidden in some remote drawer. Gluck composed this "opera seria' in 1763 for the new Bologna Theatre, and after its premiere, the work created wild enthusiasm whenever it was performed. Within a month more than 30,000 tickets were sold – a figure corresponding to more than half of Bologna's populace at the time – but a rich orchestral instrumentation and the outstanding new technical stage resources may have meant that the opera could never be performed in just the same way elsewhere. Consequently, "Clelia' fell into oblivion.

This recording is the first time in 250 years that the piece can be heard again in its first version. The libretto by Metastasio is set in ancient Rome, and contains all the ingredients that made 18th century opera such a success. Love, betrayal, unhappy suitors, abduction, violent battle scenes, godly interventions and a conciliatory conclusion celebrating the virtues and bravery of a very likeable Clelia all contribute to a very dynamic story full of opportunities for both composer and singers.

The lead roles of Clelia and Orazio are performed with breathtaking mastery and spectacular vocal pyrotechnics, but the rest of the ensemble are not far behind either. Indeed, there is a homogeneous sense of unity that exudes confidence and commitment from each soloist from the first recitative to the concluding chorus.

The Armonia Atenea playing on historical instruments give a superbly balanced rendition full of delicately-honed sounds and subtle tonal colours, while de Risio's remarkably heart-warming yet meticulous conducting has an irresistible momentum that keeps the dramatic action moving at a brisk pace. A mouthwatering issue that is both fascinating and revelatory. State of the art sound, notes and presentation complete a daring undertaking in the best MD&G tradition. Unreservedly recommended. ---Gerald Fenech, classical.net

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