Giuseppe Verdi – Il Corsaro (2005)

CD1

1. Il Corsaro - Prelude New Philharmonia Orchestra 2:43
2. Il Corsaro - Act 1 - "Come liberi volano i venti" The Ambrosian Singers 1:23
3. Il Corsaro - Act 1 - "Ah! sì, ben dite.." - "Tutto parea sorridere" - "Del- la brezza col favore"
4. Il Corsaro - Act 1 - "Si: de'corsari il fulmine" José Carreras 2:37
5. Il Corsaro - Act 1 - "Egli non riede ancora!" Jessye Norman 1:55
6. Il Corsaro - Act 1 - "Non so le tetre immagini" Jessye Norman 3:32 play
7. Il Corsaro - Act 1 - "E pur tristo, o Medora" José Carreras 1:44
8. Il Corsaro - Act 1 - "No, tu non sai comprendere" - "Tornerai, ma forse spenta" Jessye Norman 6:16
9. Il Corsaro - Act 2 - "Oh qual perenne gaudio t'aspetta" The Ambrosian Singers 1:50
10. Il Corsaro - Act 2 - "Né sulla terra creatura alcuna" - "Vola talor dal carcere" - "Seide celebra non gioia e festa" Montserrat Caballé 4:28
11. Il Corsaro - Act 2 - "Ah conforto è sol la speme" Montserrat Caballé 2:55
12. Il Corsaro - Act 2 - "Sol grida di festa" - "O prodi miei, sorgete" The Ambrosian Singers 1:30
13. Il Corsaro - Act 2 - "Salve, Allah!" Gian-Piero Mastromei 2:34
14. Il Corsaro - Act 2 - "Giunge un Dervis" - "Di': que'ribaldi tremano" José Carreras 2:54
15. Il Corsaro - Act 2 - "Resta ancora" Alexander Oliver 3:38
16. Il Corsaro - Act 2 - "Audace cotanto mostrarti pur sai?" Gian-Piero Mastromei 3:00
17. Il Corsaro - Act 2 - "Signor, trafitti giaconno" John Noble 4:18

CD2

1. Il Corsaro - Act 3 - "Alfin questo corsaro è mio prigione!" Gian-Piero Mastromei 2:02
2. Il Corsaro - Act 3 - "Cento leggiadre vergini" - "Ma togliam dall'anima" Gian-Piero Mastromei 3:26
3. Il Corsaro - Act 3 - "S'avvicina il tuo momento" Gian-Piero Mastromei 2:17
4. Il Corsaro - Act 3 - "Eccola!...fingasi." - "Sia l'istante maledetto" Gian-Piero Mastromei 4:56
5. Il Corsaro - Act 3 - "Eccomi prigionero!" José Carreras 4:30
6. Il Corsaro - Act 3 - "Ei dorme?" Montserrat Caballé 1:46
7. Il Corsaro - Act 3 - "Seid la vuole" - "Non sai tu che sulla testa" Montserrat Caballé 6:39
8. Il Corsaro - Act 3 - "Sul capo mio discenda" José Carreras 2:26
9. Il Corsaro - Act 3 - "La terra, il ciel m'abborino..." Montserrat Caballé 2:16
10. Il Corsaro - Act 3 - "Voi tacete..." Jessye Norman 4:14
11. Il Corsaro - Act 3 - "Per me infelice" José Carreras 3:29

12. Il Corsaro - Act 3 - "O mio Corrado, appressati" Jessye Norman 3:55 play

* Clifford Grant (Bass)
* Gianpiero Mastromei (Voice)
* John Noble (Baritone)
* Jessye Norman (Soprano)
* Alexander Oliver (Tenor)
* Montserrat Caballé (Soprano)
* José Carreras (Tenor)

New Philharmonia Orchestra
Lamberto Gardelli - conductor

Verdi actually began Il Corsaro (The Pirate) before I Masnadieri, which premiered over a year before Il Corsaro. He had considered the subject for the Venice Carnival season of 1844, but this was abandoned. He next planned to composed the work to fulfill an obligation to Her Majesty's Theatre, in London, asking Francesco Maria Piave to complete a libretto, based on Lord Byron's poem, The Corsair. This, however, was postponed and eventually replaced with I Masnadieri. Finally, Verdi set Il Corsaro to complete the terms of his contract with publisher Francesco Lucca, with whom Verdi had a less-than-friendly relationship.

Thus, when Verdi began work in earnest on the music of Il Corsaro, the libretto was already several years old. Furthermore, it is clear the success of the piece was of no great concern to him, for he had nothing to do with preparations for the premiere, did not direct the opera and failed to attend the first performance, on October 25, 1848, at the Teatro Grande in Trieste. Reviews of the performance were all negative; the opera ran for only three nights.

That the text and dramatic flow of Il Corsaro was in place before Verdi began Macbeth is clear in the former's comparative lack of cohesion and its old-fashioned writing. The opening Prelude contains tunes from the ensuing drama and begins with a stormy section that melts into lyrical passages before the curtain rises. As in Verdi's first few operas, a chorus, this time of pirates, begins the first act and also joins Corrado, the primo tenore, on the last few lines of his cabaletta, "Si, de' Corsari il fulmine," for which Verdi borrows from Carlo's cabaletta in I Masnadieri. Corrado and Medora close the act with a duet that is conventional in the contrast between the two parts in the lyrical first half and the parallel singing in the faster cabaletta section.

Verdi opens the second act with another chorus followed by a cavatina, this one, with more daring harmonies, introducing Gulnara. This scene, as well as the harem setting, was conceived by Piave and Verdi and is not in Byron's poem. The first scene of Act III is, belatedly, the "entrance" double aria of Seid, Pasha of Coron, whom we have already encountered in a duet with Corrado in the second act. Filled with contrasting meters and developing melodies, Seid's double aria is one of the high points of the opera, the reprise of the primary melody occurring in the orchestra. Later we hear a duet for Gulnara and Seid that looks ahead to Verdi's later work in its somewhat free text declamation over a melodically unified orchestra accompaniment. Also noteworthy is the return of the stormy music from the Prelude in the second scene of Act III, after which Gulnara announces Seid's death. Verdi creates closure by returning to melodies from the Prelude near the end of the opera, just before Medora dies and Corrado throws himself from a cliff. ---John Palmer, Rovi

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