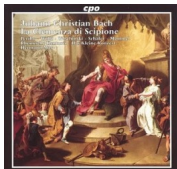


Johann Christian Bach - La Clemenza di Scipione

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CD1 1.Atto I. Sinfonia 2.Scena 1. Recitativo: Cessate, omai cessate (Scipione) 3.Coro: S'oda il suon delle trombe guerriere 4.Scena 2. Recitativo: Questa, o Scipio (Marzio, Arsinda, Scipione, Idalba) 5.Aria: Confusa, abbandonata (Arsinda) 6.Scena 3. Recitativo: Magnanimo Scipio (Idalba, Scipione) 7.Aria: Allorchè il vincitore (Idalba) [play](#) 8.Scena 4. Recitativo: Lade al Ciel giunse alfine (Scipione, Marzio) 9.Marcia 10.Recitativo: Il forte (Luceio, Marzio, Scipione) 11.Aria: Parto, ma serbo in mente (Luceio) 12.Scena 5. Recitativo: Amico, comprendesti (Scipione, Marzio) 13.Aria: Alma nata in riva al Tebro (Scipione) 14.Scena 6. Recitativo: Ancor non giunge Idalba (Marzio, Idalba) 15.Aria: Pugna il guerriero in campo (Marzio) 16.Scena 7. Aria: Dal dolor cotanto oppressa (Arsinda) 17.Recitativo: Stelle! Chi mi riscuote? (Arsinda) 18.Scena 8. Recitativo: Adorata mia sposa (Luceio, Arsinda) 19.Recitativo: Me infelice! (Luceio, Arsinda) 20.Duetto: Deh quel pianto omai tergete (Luceio, Arsinda)

CD2

1.Atto II. Scena 1. Recitativo: No, piú dubbio non v'è (Marzio, Idalba) 2.Scena 2. Recitativo: M'è già noto per prova (Idalba) 3.Aria: Nell'oggetto che m'accende (Idalba) 4.Scena 3. Recitativo: Vieni, siegui i miei passi (Arsinda, Luceio) 5.Scena 4. Recitativo: Fermati, ingrato (Scipione, Luceio) 6.Coro: Provi l'libero infido 7.Recitativo: E nessuno sa dirmi (Arsinda, Marzio) 8.Scena 5. Recitativo: Alceste? (Arsinda, Luceio, Scipione, Marzio) 9.Aria: Fra le catene avvinto (Scipione) 10.Scena 6. Recitativo: Barbare inique stelle! (Arsinda, Luceio, Marzio) 11.Recitativo: Alfin forza è ch'io parta (Luceio) 12.Aria: Frena le belle lagrime (Luceio) 13.Scena 7. Recitativo: Principessa, che tardi? (Marzio, Arsinda) 14.Aria: Non odi consiglio (Marzio) 15.Scena 8. Recitativo: Misera! Che far deggio? (Arsinda, Idalba) 16.Scena 9. Recitativo: E ancor paga non sei (Arsinda) 17.Aria: Infelice! In van m'affano (Arsinda) 18.Scena 10. Recitativo: Marzio, Arsinda dov'è? (Scipione, Marzio, Arsinda) 19.Scena 11. Recitativo: Che si brama da me? (Luceio, Scipione, Marzio, Arsinda) 20.Terzetto: Tu mi deridi, altero (Arsinda, Scipione, Luceio) 21.Atto III. Scena 1. Aria: Dei pietosi, in tal cimento (Luceio) 22.Recitativo: Ma del carcere oscuro (Luceio) 23.Scena 2. Recitativo: Luceio, idole mio (Arsinda, Luceio, Marzio) 24.Recitativo: Dunque il Ciel mi condonna (Arsinda, Luceio) 25.Aria: Nel partit, bell'idol mio (Luceio)

[play](#)

26.Scena 3. Recitativo: Sposo amato - Luceio! (Arsinda) 27.Aria: Ah si vada (Arsinda) 28.Scena 4. Recitativo: Di Nemisi quest'è (Scipione, Marzio, Idalba) 29.Scena Ultima. Marcia 30.Recitativo: Prence, intendesti (Scipione, Luceio) 31.Coro: Suoi strali terror de' mortali 32.Recitativo: Oh, delle colpe (Sommo Sacerdote, Idalba, Luceio, Scipione, Arsinda) 33.Quintetto e Coro: Se mesti, e dolente 34.Applause

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Arsinda - Linda Perillo Idalba - Christine Wolff Luceio - Jörg Waschinski Scipione - Markus Schäfer Marzio - Hans Jörg Mammel Das Kleine Konzert Rheinische Kantorei Max Herrmann - conductor, 2000

La Clemenza di Scipione was Johann Christian Bach's last Italian opera for the English stage. It premiered at the King's Theater in Haymarket on April 4, 1778, and was very well received. The libretto was written by an anonymous diplomat to the English court and is relatively simple in design. The text provided Bach with plenty of vocal numbers, room for ballets, and a large divertissement. Bach's treatment of the orchestra is very advanced in La Clemenza di Scipione. The harmonies are rich and varied, and he exploits the coloristic possibilities offered him by full wind and brass sections. Dynamic contrasts, changes in textures, orchestral effects, and thematic recurrences wed the music to the dramatic action.

The choruses are very striking and well conceived, as are the other larger forms. There are no da capo or dal segno arias in this work; these had gone out of fashion. However, there are several of the new concertante arias, whose large-scale formal design and textural variety were derived from the instrumental concerto. Concertante arias usually feature two contrasting themes and a development section as in a sonata, as well as a cadenza for the vocalist and an orchestral ritornello. The most famous aria of this type was "Infelice in van ma'fanno," which featured concertante parts for solo oboe, violin, cello, and flute. This aria is thought to have influenced Mozart when he created "Martern aller Arten" for Die Entführung aus dem Serail. Mozart's aria is scored for the same group of obbligato instruments, and bears other similarities to Bach's piece as well. ---Rita Laurance, Rovi

Composed in 1778, J.C. Bach's La Clemenza di Scipione is a nice, direct, fat-free work. The arias tend to be short (not one of them is a da capo), the recitatives are to the point and likewise brief, and the action moves swiftly. Roman Scipio (tenor) has taken Cartagena and Spanish soprano princess Arsinda (and her soprano pal, Idalba) prisoner. Male soprano, fellow non-Roman Luceio, is betrothed to Arsinda, while the Roman general Marzio (tenor) is in love with Idalba and vice-versa. The whole plot revolves around the heroic Luceio's attempts to rescue Arsinda, et al., his being taken prisoner, and his being threatened by death if he refuses to pledge allegiance to Rome. He never does give in, but Scipio does--hence the clemency--and Scipio gives everyone their freedom once he realizes how impressive a gal Arsinda is. Everyone swears loyalty to Rome. Hooray! There's plenty of room for grief arias, anger arias,

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revenge arias, why-is-my-life-so-dreadful arias, and if-only-I-could-end-your(-my)-suffering arias, in many tempos. Orchestrally this is a wonderful performance. Das Kleine Konzert plays with ease, verve, and accuracy, and Hermann Max has a terrific feel for this après-Baroque, Classically Mozartean music, bringing its crisp rhythms to life. Little stage effects present on this live recording are welcome: When a clash of arms is referred to in the text, we hear swords. Except for applause at the opera's close, the audience could be mummified. The chorus too is excellent.

The solo singing, however, could be better. Markus Schäfer gets by in the coloratura, has an appealing if slightly colorless sound, and is believable as both the angry and forgiving Scipio; but he errs in interpolating notes slightly higher than written--the middle of his voice is his strength. Male soprano Jörg Waschinski can't handle coloratura (his first aria often becomes a blur) but he's energetic and the piercing top of his voice is interestingly heroic, even if it does take a while to get used to. Linda Perillo (Arsinda) seems to be an unfinished product--the desire and brains are there but the technique is not always certain, although she improves as the performance progresses. Her friend Idalba--Christine Wolff--suffers from the same problem. Hans Jörg Mämmel, as Marzio, is part warrior, part lover (as he explains in a first-act aria, with nicely chugging lower strings and slashing upper strings to martially impress us), and in fact his tenor is more colorful and secure than Schäfer's--their roles may have been better performed if reversed.

The music throughout is inventive and expert. The opera's longest aria, for Arsinda in Act 2, has obbligato parts for flute, oboe, and violin, oddly reminiscent of Mozart's "Martern aller arten" in The Abduction from the Seraglio (and like that aria, it's about suffering), and the largo-allegro Arsinda-Lucio duet that ends Act 1 is utterly charming, but sadly, the latter pinpoints Waschinski's weird vocal shortcomings. Is this set recommended? Yes, despite less than virtuosic soloists, and it makes you hungry for more of J.C. Bach's operas. ---Robert Levine, ClassicsToday.com

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