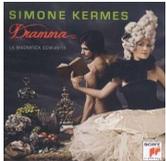


Simone Kermes - Damma (2012)

Written by bluesever

Thursday, 05 April 2018 12:08 -

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1 *Per trionfar pugnando* - From 'Arianna e Teseo' 2 *Alto Giove* - From 'Polifemo' 3 *Vedra turbato il mare* - From 'Mitridate' 4 *Tace l'augello* - From 'Agrippina' 5 *Empi se mai disciolgo* - From 'Il Germanico' 6 *Le limpid'onde* - From 'Ifigenia in Aulide' 7 *Son qual nave in ria procella* - From 'Zenobia in Palmira' 8 *Simone Kermes: Consola il genitore* - From 'L'Olimpiade' 9 *Sul mio cor* - From 'Adriano in Siria' 10 *Se doppo ria procella* - From 'Il Germanico' 11 *Lascia ch'io pianga* - From 'Rinaldo' Simone Kermes - soprano La Magnifica Comunità (Ensemble) Isabella Longo - concertmaster

Emblazoned on the title page of many an 18th-century Italian opera libretto, “damma per musica” soon became the name for the operas composed to those words. The name perfectly evokes the fury of passions which the masterpieces of the period captured with such power.

This collection of astonishing discoveries – many of them heard here in world-premiere recordings – brings together some of the most magnificent arias of the genre. All of them place such huge demands on the singer’s abilities that only the world’s most legendary castratos such as Farinelli and Caffarelli were considered able to do them justice. ---Editorial Reviews, arkivmusic.com

Simone Kermes’s latest CD of 18th-century opera seria arias is delightful from start to finish. In parallel with Lava and Colori d’amore, its two predecessor discs, Damma’s contents are shaped according to a pertinent theme – in this case, the formidable talents of the era’s leading castrato sopranos. Most of the operas sampled here had Caffarelli and Farinelli, the two most

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famous, as their primo uomo; but the programme goes beyond saluting their ability to dazzle with range, agility and tonal brilliance. Showpieces, notably those from Leo's *Zenobia in Palmira* (1725) and Porpora's *Germanico in Germania* (1732) – with its exhilarating triplet cascades for voice and obbligato horn – alternate with slower airs in which melting delicacy becomes the keynote.

Indeed, the disc's highlight is 'Le limpido'onde' from Porpora's *Ifigenia en Aulide* (1735), a pastoral siciliana in a vein of time-stilling enchantment worthy of Handel. The German soprano delivers it, as she does all the numbers (among them Handel's own 'Lascia ch'io pianga'), with a spellbinding command of vocal style, mood and tone-colouring. Some people find her singing mannered; I prefer to think of her as the Schwarzkopf of the Baroque – a singer in whom keen intelligence (demonstrated no less in her scholarly booklet note), stylistic sophistication and searching imagination achieve extraordinary artistic combination. Throughout, *La Magnifica Comunità*, the Padua-based period band, supports her magnificently. ---Max Loppert, classical-music.com

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