

Antonio Sacchini - Oedipe à Colone (Jean-Paul Penin)[2006]



CD 1 1. Oedipe a Colonne, opera~Ouverture 2. Oedipe a Colonne, opera~Act 1. En vain un frère ingrat 3. Oedipe a Colonne, opera~Act 1. Ah, le trône où j'aspire 4. Oedipe a Colonne, opera~Act 1. Habitants de Colone et citoyens d'Athènes 5. Oedipe a Colonne, opera~Act 1. Nous braverons pour lui 6. Oedipe a Colonne, opera~Act 1. Vous avez entendu 7. Oedipe a Colonne, opera~Act 1. Venez régniez, jeune princesse 8. Oedipe a Colonne, opera~Act 1. Andantino 9. Oedipe a Colonne, opera~Act 1. Allegro 10. Oedipe a Colonne, opera~Act 1. Vous quittez votre aimable Athènes 11. Oedipe a Colonne, opera~Act 1. Gavotte 12. Oedipe a Colonne, opera~Act 1. Je ne vous quitte point 13. Oedipe a Colonne, opera~Act 1. Allons au temple offrir nos sacrifices 14. Oedipe a Colonne, opera~Act 1. Votre cour devint mon asile 15. Oedipe a Colonne, opera~Act 1. Implorons les bienfaits 16. Oedipe a Colonne, opera~Act 1. Ô vous que l'innocence même 17. Oedipe a Colonne, opera~Act 2. Où vais-je, malheureux... 18. Oedipe a Colonne, opera~Act 2. Oh, n'avançons pas davantage 19. Oedipe a Colonne, opera~Act 2. Ta consolante voix 20. Oedipe a Colonne, opera~Act 2. Filles du Styx 21. Oedipe a Colonne, opera~Act 2. Ah, nous sommes perdus 22. Oedipe a Colonne, opera~Act 2. Du malheur auguste victime 23. Oedipe a Colonne, opera~Act 2. Ô bonté secourable et chère!

CD 2 1. Oedipe a Colonne, opera~Act 3. Oedipe et le roi sont ensemble 2. Oedipe a Colonne, opera~Act 3. Dieux! Ce n'est pas pour moi 3. Oedipe a Colonne, opera~Act 3. En ma faveur, daigne attendrir un père 4. Oedipe a Colonne, opera~Act 3. On vient 5. Oedipe a Colonne, opera~Act 3. Ma fille, que veut-il et qu'attend-il de nous? 6. Oedipe a Colonne, opera~Act 3. Daignez rendre, seigneur, notre cause plus juste 7. Oedipe a Colonne, opera~Act 3. Elle m'a prodigué sa tendresse et ses soins 8. Oedipe a Colonne, opera~Act 3. Toi, scélérat, je te maudis encore 9. Oedipe a Colonne, opera~Act 3. Délivrez-vous d'un monstre furieux 10. Oedipe a Colonne, opera~Act 3. Où suis-je, mes enfants? 11. Oedipe a Colonne, opera~Act 3. Ô doux moments 12. Oedipe a Colonne, opera~Act 3. Le Ciel est désarmé 13. Oedipe a Colonne, opera~Act 3. Le calme succède aux tempêtes

Sviatoslav Smirnov (Baritone) Manon Feubel (Soprano) Fabrice Mantegna (Tenor) Daniel Galvez-Vallejo (Tenor) Raphaëlle Farman (Soprano) Choeur de Chambre et Orchestre de la Camerata de Bourgogne Jean-Paul Penin - conductor

You can't help feeling a bit sorry for Antonio Sacchini. Born in Florence, trained in Naples, he specialised in writing opera seria; he spent 10 years in London where his initial success was eventually marred by financial troubles. Fleeing London in 1781 he moved to Paris. There he won the support of Queen Marie Antoinette but got caught up in the warfare between Gluck and Piccini. His opera, *Dardanus*, was staged by the French court in 1785 and was a success but the Queen failed to get *Oedipe à Colonne* staged in 1786. This fact is said to have contributed to Sacchini's death. When *Oedipe à Colonne* was finally staged in 1787 - at the Paris Opera rather than at the court theatre - it was a great success and was performed regularly there until 1830.

The story is based on the Sophocles play, but without the really gruesome bits. In the play, blind Oedipus struggles to Colonnus supported by his daughter Antigone. There Theseus, King of Athens agrees to support him against Creon, Jocasta's brother, who now rules Athens. Oedipus's son Polynices comes to gain his father's forgiveness. Oedipus curses Polynices, who is slain by Creon and Oedipus is taken by the Gods.

So much for Sophocles. In Sacchini's version Oedipe - as he is called in the opera - is still blind and more than a little intemperate but he is eventually reconciled with his son and all ends happily. The opera opens with the planned wedding celebrations for Polynice and Eriphile, Thésée's daughter. Thésée, King of Athens, is supporting Polynice against his brother Eteocles, who currently rules Thebes. Act 1 is taken up with setting the scene, the wedding preparations (complete with dancing) and finally Thésée and Polynice's visit to the temple for Polynice's act of expiation. The act ends with the High Priest announcing that the gods have rejected Polynice's offerings.

Act 2 starts with Polynice lamenting his lot and deciding that his father, who has cursed him, would surely forgive him. At this moment Oedipe appears with Antigone and Polynice flees. The remainder of the act is concerned with Oedipe's troubles and concludes with Thésée offering Oedipe his support.

Act 3 covers the attempts of Polynice, Antigone and Thésée to reach a resolution with Oedipe. Though Oedipe calls down curses on Polynice and Eteocles, he is finally reconciled to his children, the High Priest announces that the anger of the gods is calmed and that Polynice and Eriphile may marry.

The construction of the libretto is not ideal. A large chunk of act 1 is concerned with the

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marriage preparations of Eriphile who barely re-appears in the opera. The two strongest characters, Oedipe and Antigone, do not appear until Act 2.

What struck me, upon listening to the music, was how much like Gluck it sounds, even down to the cast of some of the melodies. Sacchini is very flexible in his use of accompanied recitative, of which there is a great deal in the opera. The overall feel is of freedom and expressive mellifluousness. There are no really great melodies, though some are memorable, more it is the flexibility of the drama and the way the piece flows that stays with you.

A stronger composer could probably have made the extraneous bits - like the dance movements in Act 1 - seem more germane, but Sacchini is never less than poised and charming and sometimes a lot more so. --- Robert Hugill, musicweb-international.com

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