

Ann Hallenberg - Carnevale 1729 (2017)



CD 1 Geminiano Giacomelli: Gianguir 1 *Mi Par Sentir La Bella* 9:43 Giuseppe Maria
Orlandini: Adelaide 2
Non Sempre Invendicata 5:38 3 *O, Del Mio Caro Sposo... Quanto Bello Agl'occhi Mie* 15:22
4 *Scherza In Mar La Navicella* 5:44 5 *Vedrò Più Lieta E Belle* 8:40
Geminiano Giacomelli: Gianguir
6 *Vanne, Sì, Di Al Mio Diletto* 7:11
CD 2 Tomaso Albinoni: Filandro
1 *Il Tuo Core In Dono Accetto* 4:07 2 *Fior Ch'a Spuntar Si Vede* 3:31
Nicola Porpora: Semiramide Riconosciuta
3 *Il Pastor, Se Torna Aprile* 6:28 4 *In Braccio A Mille Furie* 3:04 5 *Bel Piacer Saria D'Un*
Core 8:35
Leonardo Leo: Catone In Utica
6 *Soffre Talor Del Vento* 6:48 7 *Ombra Cara, Ombra Adorata* 9:22
Leonardo Vinci: L'Abbandono Di Armida
8 *Nave Altera Che In Mezzo All'Onde* 4:17
Ann Hallenberg - mezzo-soprano Il Pomo d'Oro - orchestra Stefano Montanari - conductor

Where to begin listing the virtues of this gorgeous double-CD release by mezzo-soprano Ann Hallenberg? Perhaps with the unique programming concept, re-creating the operas staged during Carnival season in the year 1729 in Venice, a special year because all the big stars of Italian opera had come back home after disagreements with their impresario, Handel, in England. The arias, written for the likes of the castrato Senesino and the soprano Faustina Bordoni, have all the technical fireworks of the Handel operas of the 1720s that have gained popularity. And consider that the music is virtually unknown, with much of it here receiving its premiere on recordings; much of the research was done by Hallenberg herself, along with her husband, with performers once again leaving musicology in the dust. Is it second-order opera? Hardly, and here you can rely on the opinion of Handel himself, who dropped in to hear this remarkable stretch of music and took some of it back to London to make pastiches out of it. You can stop in anywhere for vocal heroics, but sample one of the more melodic pieces, such as "Bel piacer saria d'un core", from *Semiramide riconosciuta* of Nicola Porpora, Haydn's teacher.

The program is intelligently put together, with most of the pieces grouped together by individual opera, but two altogether fascinating selections from Gianguir, by the all-but-unknown Geminiano Giacomelli framing the arias from Giuseppe Maria Orlandini's *Adelaide* on CD 1. The sharp, sensitive orchestral work of *Il Pomo d'Oro* under Stefano Montanari is a major attraction. And last, but certainly not least, is the voice of Hallenberg herself, arguably at its absolute peak, easily tackling arias across a wide range, delivering plenty of power in the big runs and yet entering into each character. Oh, yes, Pentatone's audiophile-quality sound, recorded at the entirely appropriate Villa San Fermo in Lonigo, is superb. Sit back and enjoy, says Pentatone's little logo. Indeed: this is one of those rare recordings that breaks entirely new ground yet remains a pure pleasure, fully realized on its own terms. ---James Manheim, AllMusic Review

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