

Véronique Gens - Tragédiennes II (2009)

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1. *Alceste - Acte III, Scène 3 - Air D'Alceste: Grands Dieux Soutenez Mon Courage...Ah! Divinités Implacables* 6:38 2. *Dardanus - Act IV, Scène 6 - Air D'Iphise: Il Me Fuit...Rien Ne Peut Êmouvoir* 3:49 3. *Dardanus - Acte 1, Scène 1 - Air D'Iphise: Cesse Cruel Amour De Régner Sur Mon Âme* 3:04 4. *Didon - Acte III, Scène 1 - Air De Didon: Non, Ce N'est Plus Pour Moi* 4:27 5. *Orphée Et Eurydice: Ballet Des Ombres Heureuses* 5:10 6. *Orphée Et Eurydice: Air De Furies* 4:02 7. *Oedipe À Colone - Acte III, Scène 1 - Air D'Antigone: Dieux, Ce N'est Pas Pour Moi Que Ma Voix Vous Implore* 2:20 8. *Andromaque - Acte I, Scène 1 - Air D'Hermione: C'est Le Seul Espoir Qui Me Reste....Si Fidèle Au Noeud Qui L'engage* 2:34 9. *Les Palatins - Acte II, Scène 10: Entrée Très Gaye De Troubadours* 2:25 10. *Les Palatins - Acte I, Scène 1 - Air D'Argie: Triste Séjour* 2:31 11. *Les Palatins - Acte II, Scène 2: Sarabande* 3:03 12. *Renaud - Acte II, Scène 1 - Air D'Armide: Hélas Vous Le Dirais-Je....Ah! Que Dis-Tu?* 3:33 13. *Les Paladins - Acte II, Scène 10: Menuets I & II* 4:33 14. *Médée - Acte II, Scène 4 - Air De Nérès: Ah! Nos Peines Seront Communes* 8:24 15. *Herminie - Récit & Air D'Herminie: Mais Sur Cette Arène Guerrière....Il n'est Plus....Dieux Cruels!* 3:48 16. *Les Troyens - Acte I - Récitatif & Air De Cassandre: Les Grecs Ont Disparu - Malheureux Roi* 7:00
Véronique Gens (soprano) Les Talens Lyriques Christophe Rousset - director

The tragic operas of the French Baroque can be rough going for the new listener, whose eyes may glaze over when hearing about rules of French prosody, classical models, and Lully's dominance of the scene. But this single-disc recital solves any problems you may have had in encountering operatic music from Lully to Gluck. Credit soprano Véronique Gens, who has often sung lighter material and now is turning to the serious works of Rameau and his era at just the right time. Her voice is impressively versatile, with a muscular medium-wave vibrato that can easily drop off into a stage whisper or rise into anger. Credit conductor Christophe Rousset and his group Les Talens Lyriques, with their on-the-ball, sensitive accompaniment and unique catgut-scraping string sound. Credit booklet writer Jean Duron for a quick, painless introduction to the 100-year history of how French opera composers, working in the centralized musical system of the French monarchy, responded to the musical world as it changed around them. Credit the engineers from Virgin Classics, who have made the Church of Notre Dame-du-Liban in Paris into something resembling a close-up, row-five theatrical experience, and caught the

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powerful sense of immediacy and communication in Gens' singing. And credit whoever devised the program, which offers good-sized chunks of music from various operas, complete with overtures and other instrumental interludes, instead of a sequence of disconnected arias and random sonatas linked to the main program only by chronology. This album will earn praise from those who follow Gens closely, and for the general listener looking to hear some French Baroque opera arias it's a godsend -- the tragic heroine is a central figure of the era, and Gens and company have brought her fully to life. --- James Manheim, Rovi

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