Joseph Haydn – Orfeo Ed Euridice (Hogwood) [1997]

1. Ouverture (4:14) 2. ACT I: Sventurata, che fo? (2:44) 3. Ferma, ferma il piede, o principessa! (2:14) 4. Che chiedete da me? (1:00) 5. Filomena abbandonata (5:31) 6. Cieli! Soccorso! Aita! (1:50) 7. Rendete a questo seno (2:52) 8. Cara speme! Alme di scoglio! (6:25) 9. Oh prodigio, oh stupor (1:13) 10. O poter dell'armonia! (0:41) 11. Ah, chi sa dirmi (2:48) 12. Il pensier sta negli oggetti (3:03) 13. Grazie agli dei (2:11) 14. Come il foco allo splendore (8:29) 15. ACT II: Finche circola il vigore (1:05) 16. Adorata consorte (1:51) 17. Finche circola il vigore (1:22) 18. Numi, che ascolto! (2:03) 19. Ecco, signor, la principessa e sola (1:08) 20. Dov'e, dove l'amato bene? (2:59) 21. Del mio core il voto estremo (3:42) 22. Con Euridice estinte son le gelose cure (0:33) 23. Dov'e quell'alma audace (4:21) 24. In un mar d'acerbe pene (4:06) 25. Euridice, signor (1:13) 26. Mai non sia inulto (1:58) 27. ACT III: Ah, sposo infelice! (5:06) 28. Al cielo te ne voli (2:39) 29. Ah, sposo infelice! (1:37) 30. Che sara mai d'Orfeo ? (0:25) 31. Chi spira e non spera (3:44) 32. Venerata Sibilla (1:55) 33. Al tuo seno fortunato (6:01) 34. Costanza a me si chiede ? (0:54) 35. La giustizia in cor regina (3:21) 36. ACT IV: Infelici ombre dolenti (3:39) 37. Che ascolto, oh Numi ! (0:29) 38. Urli orrendi, disperati (2:21) 39. O Signor, che all'ombre imperi (0:18) 40. Trionfi oggi pieta (0:46) 41. O della reggia mia (1:08) 42. Intermezzo (0:46) 43. Quai dolci e care note ascolto ! (0:30) 44. Son finite le tue pene (0:34) 45. Sovvengati la legge (1:21) 46. Perduto un'altra volta (2:29) 47. Mi sento languire (3:47) 48. Barbaro, infido amore (0:12) 49. Vieni, vieni, amato Orfeo (1:14) 50. Perfide, non turbate di piu (0:26) 51. Bevi, bevi in questa tazza (3:15) 52. Andiamo, amiche, andiamo (0:44) 53. Oh, che orrore! (2:34)   Euridice - Cecilia Bartoli Orfeo - Uwe Heilmann Genio - Cecilia Bartoli Creonte - Ildebrando D'Arcangelo Pluto - Andrea Silvestrelli Baccante - Angela Kazimierczuk   The Academy of Ancient Music Christopher Hogwood

A surprising fact from the musicological realm is that Haydn wrote about the same number of operas as Mozart--though it's true that some of them were written for the marionette theater at Esterhaza, rather than the opera house. In other words, old "Gius[eppe] Haydn"--as the title page of this opera refers to him--was a master. Better known to some by its alternate title, L'anima del filosofo, Haydn's Orfeo ed Euridice was written in 1791 for the King's Theater, Haymarket, during the composer's first English sojourn, but went unperformed there or anywhere else until 1950. The libretto, by Carlo Francesco Badini, is based on Ovid's

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Metamorphoses, with its decidedly unhappy ending to the story (Euridice dies a second time, Orpheus is poisoned, and the Bacchantes perish in a storm). While the score as a whole does not possess the kind of momentum or dramatic sweep one finds in Mozart, it nonetheless is vintage Haydn: highly imaginative in its use of a large orchestra, with numerous fine choruses and beautiful arias. A strong cast has been assembled for this recording, with Cecilia Bartoli a special delight in two roles--Euridice, a lyric role requiring remarkable agility, and the Genio (or Sybill), originally written for a castrato, whose one aria ("Al tuo seno fortunato") is a coloratura tour de force. The score is played with marvelous fluency by the Academy of Ancient Music under the direction of Christopher Hogwood, contributing to a realization that is, in every respect, elegantly informed. ---Ted Libbey, amazon.com

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