

Alessandro Scarlatti - Il martirio di Santa Teodosia (2012)

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(1) *Parte prima* [34'15"] (2) *Parte seconda* [33'59"] Maria Espada, soprano (Santa Teodosia) Carlos Mena, alto (Decio) Fernando Guimarães, tenor (Arsenio) Luigi de Donato, bass (Urbano) Al Ayre Español Eduardo López Banzo – conductor recorded: Nov 21, 2012, Laeishhalle, Hamburg period instruments

Oratorio *Il martirio di Santa Teodosia*. Nobody expects much of a plot in Italian oratorio, and this does not disappoint in that respect. Teodosia, a Christian in Palestine in AD 308, is threatened with death by Governor Urbano; his son Arsenio is in love with her and begs her to recant, as does Decio the Roman prefect. She refuses, and duly undergoes martyrdom. This is not described in the libretto but the internet suggests she was either struck in the neck with a ram's horn or all the flesh was torn from her body (suggestions for a future staging).

Chamber group Al Ayre Español led by Eduardo López Banzo from the harpsichord produced a lush, perhaps slightly old-fashioned sound but very energetically played. The singers were all excellent. Spanish soprano María Espada was sublime as Teodosia, her arias increasing in intensity as her end approached. Singing with very straight tone but judicious use of vibrato, her well projected soprano filled the hall with full high notes and excellent coloratura. ---
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