

Giuseppe Verdi – Attila (2007)

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01. Prelude 02. Prologue 03. Act I 04. Act II 05. Act III Attila - Ildar Abdrazakov (bs) Ezio - Paolo Gavanelli (br) Odabella - Hasmik Papian (s) Foresto - Massimiliano Pisapia (t) Uldino - Giorgio Trucco (t) Leone - Dennis Wilgenhof (bs) Groot Omroepkoor & Radio Kamer Filharmonie Jaap van Zweden - conductor ZaterdagMatinee, Concertgebouw Amsterdam 08.IX.2007 Direct FM-broadcast Radio 4 (NL)

Verdi's Attila dates from what the composer dismissively called his "galley period"; nonetheless, like so many of his early works, the opera is interesting both in its own right and as an early indication of Verdi's mature style. Attila is marked by a steady and rousing energy. While many moments lack elegance, there are also elements of more subtle beauty; the heroine's "Liberamente or piangi" is outstanding, and the "Rome" ensemble is powerful enough to stand with those in Verdi's later works. Odabella's fiery aria and cabaletta in which she determines to kill Attila with his own sword, Foresto's aria lamenting her capture by the Huns, and Attila's own aria describing a vision of an old man barring him from Rome also demonstrate a strong creativity and musical power. While Ezio's music is rather pedestrian, it can be dramatic and effective in the care of the right singer.

The opera is very loosely based on the story of Attila the Hun, and depicts his death at the hands of Odabella, an enemy woman with whom he had fallen in love. Nearly all of the characters, with the exception of the rather bland tenor role, Foresto, present a challenging mix of contradictions. Odabella is bloodthirsty, yet feminine and vulnerable; Attila is a mix of cruelty and generosity; Ezio, the Roman general, is both treacherous and deeply patriotic. Attila's death arouses a mixture of feelings, a sympathy for the treachery surrounding his death, and at the same time a sharing in the sense of victory his demise brings to Odabella, Ezio, and Foresto.

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