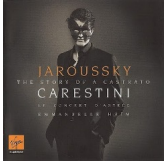


The Story of a Castrato – Carestini (Jaroussky) [2007]

Written by bluesever

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1. Siface: Tu che d'ardire m'attendi – Erminio [play](#) 2. I fratelli riconosciuti: Ciel nemico - Attalo 3. Arianna in Creta: Ove son... Qui ti sfido - Teseo 4. Ariodante: Scherza, infida - Ariodante 5. Alcina: Sta nell'ircana 6. Alcina: Mi lusinga 7. Farnace: Se mi dai morte - Farnace 8. La clemenza di Tito: Se mai senti - Sextus 9. La clemenza di Tito: Vo disperato – Sextus [play](#) 10. Demofonte: Sperai vicino il lido 11. Orfeo: Mio bel nieme 12. Orfeo: In mirar la mia sventura

Philippe Jaroussky, countertenor

Le Concert d'Astree

Emmanuelle Haim - conductor

Following the trend of singers releasing recitals based on the repertoire of great performers of previous centuries -- Cecilia Bartoli's tribute to Maria Malibran and Juan Diego Flórez's to Giovanni Battista Rubini, for instance -- countertenor Philippe Jaroussky has devoted a CD to the repertoire of eighteenth century castrato Giovanni Carestini, who was a rival of Farinelli's. According to contemporary accounts, Farinelli was the more virtuosic of the two, with a hair-raisingly dazzling coloratura, and Carestini was noted for the beauty and purity of his tone, and his profound musical and dramatic characterizations. The demands of the arias collected here make it clear that Carestini must also have had a fully developed technique, because they require remarkable agility and an awe-inspiring range that essentially encompasses both soprano and contralto registers, as well as great interpretive sensitivity. Jaroussky's voice is not large, but he has plenty of power for even the most dramatically charged of these selections. It's notable for its absolutely accurate intonation, and its pure, creamy tone, with a gleam not often heard in countertenors. He also possesses a formidable technique and sings the most treacherous coloratura passages with effortless-sounding agility and freedom. He has a breathtaking pianissimo that can broaden from near inaudibility to full-throated warmth. Perhaps

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the most striking thing about his performances, though, is the depth of his musical characterizations, which comes from giving life to his characters' emotions through the deeply felt shaping of every phrase. There is not a moment of perfunctory Baroque note-spinning on the album -- every run and ornament is packed with meaning and passion.

Not surprisingly, the four selections from Handel operas are the musical highlights. Using what is essentially the same musical language as Porpora, Capelli Leo, Hasse, Graun, and any early work by Gluck, Handel brings a noticeably more profound insight to his dramas, as well as a level of musical inventiveness and inspiration that's unmatched by his contemporaries. The arias from Ariodante and Alcina, in particular, are marvels of psychological insight and musical grace. Jaroussky is no less engaged in the works of lesser composers, though, and invests each with depth and commitment that bring out their strengths. Emmanuelle Haïm leads Le Concert d'Astrée in performances of exceptional responsiveness, tonal beauty, and rhythmic suppleness. Virgin's sound is clean, open, and vibrant. ---Stephen Eddins, Rovi

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