

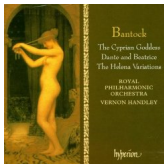
## Bantock - The Cyprian Goddess, Helena, Dante And Beatrice (Handley) [1995]

Written by bluesever

Monday, 23 February 2015 20:35 -

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The Cyprian Goddess (Symphony No.3): 1. *Maestoso e sforzato - Lentamente - Poco largamente - Con piu moto* 2. *Liberamente - Affrettando - Tranquillo molto sostenuto* 3. *Animando - Con fuoco - Con moto agitato* 4. *Lentamente - Lento sostenuto - Poco lentando - Allegretto grazioso - Con fuoco - Con anima* 5. *Piu moto, affrettando - Tranquillo, e molto sostenuto*  
Helena (Orchestral Variations On The Theme HFB): 6. *Theme: Lento molto* 7. *Variation I: Allegro molto con fuoco* 8. *Variation II: Poco tranquillo* 9. *Variation III: Allegretto scherzando* 10. *Variation IV: Molto moderato quasi religioso* 11. *Variation V: Capriccioso* 12. *Variation VI: Poco agitato* 13. *Variation VII: Lento molto e sostenuto* 14. *Variation VIII: Con moto affettuoso* 15. *Variation IX: Allegro impetuoso* 16. *Variation X: Non piu Allegro* 17. *Variation XI: Andante doloroso* 18. *Variation XII: Finale: Allegro appassionato* 19. *Dante And Beatrice - Maestoso - Poco largamente - Vivo - Lento - Allegro con fuoco - Appassionato - Sostenuto cantabile - Andante tranquillo, poco rubato*  
Royal Philharmonic Orchestra Vernon Handley – conductor

The Cyprian Goddess—which everyone else calls Aphrodite in Cyprus, and identifies as an "ode" rather than a "symphony"—predated the Celtic Symphony by one year. If not a work of comparable strength or thematic distinction, Bantock knew Richard Strauss' orchestra, and reveled in it without descending to mere imitation. Helena Variations of 1899 is the earliest work here, affectionately modest without sounding like Elgar's Enigma, premiered that same year. What commends these pricey disks to those who may also find Bantock an insulin injection after, say, anything by Delius, or the bulk of their contemporaries, is Vernon Handley's red-blooded, almost intuitive conducting, and the gorgeous performances he wins from the Royal Philharmonians. An early cassette set from some German festival (celebrating as I recall the development of BASF recording tape) put me off him for many years: neither Mozart there nor the Dvorák Eighth were distinctive much less distinguished, and the imported London Phil was suffering one of its anemic periods. However, Handley's incomparable recording of the Vaughan Williams Job (back in the EMI catalog again, at midprice, glory hallelujah) provoked a massive reevaluation of his gifts, confirmed by a VW Fifth Symphony finer than any other in the history of disks, an ongoing Malcolm Arnold Symphonies series, and this Bantock project that

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one hopes will continue to uncover many more buried treasures. --- classicalcdreview.com

The third issue in Hyperion's Bantock Edition contains three substantial works in the GB oeuvre, Dante and Beatrice, the Helena Variations, and the 3rd Symphony, entitled The Cyprian Goddess. Absorbing as it is and a vital release for most Bantockians, it would probably not be the best place to begin investigating GB's music. --- Vincent Budd, musicweb-international.com

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