

Hasse - Cantatas, Ballads & Sonatas (1994)

Written by bluesever

Sunday, 17 June 2018 15:43 -

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1. Cantata, *Quel vago seno, O Fille: Recitative 1* 1:19 2. Cantata, *Quel vago seno, O Fille: Aria 1* 8:57 3. Cantata, *Quel vago seno, O Fille: Recitative 2* 1:51 4. Cantata, *Quel vago seno, O Fille: Aria 2* 7:38 5. Sonata in B minor, opus II no. VI, for flute and basso continuo: *Andante* 1:52 6. Sonata in B minor, opus II no. VI, for flute and basso continuo: *Allegro* 2:18 7. Sonata in B minor, opus II no. VI, for flute and basso continuo: *Arioso* 2:12 8. Sonata in B minor, opus II no. VI, for flute and basso continuo: *Presto* 2:49 9. Aria, *Ah Dio, ritornate from La conversione di Sant'Agostino* 7:45 10. Cantata, *Fille dolce, mio bene: Recitative 1* 0:51 11. Cantata, *Fille dolce, mio bene: Aria 1* 6:14 12. Cantata, *Fille dolce, mio bene: Recitative 2* 0:35 13. Cantata, *Fille dolce, mio bene: Aria 2* 6:03 14. Sonata in C minor, opus VII no. VI for harpsichord: *Adagio* 2:58 15. Sonata in C minor, opus VII no. VI for harpsichord: *Allegro* 4:01 16. Sonata in C minor, opus VII no. VI for harpsichord: *Adagio* 5:01 17. Sonata in C minor, opus VII no. VI for harpsichord: *Allegro* 2:43 18. Venetian Ballads: *Grazie agli inganni tuoi* 3:13 19. Venetian Ballads: *No ste' a condanarme* 1:51 20. Venetian Ballads: *Cosa e' sta Cossa?* 0:55 21. Venetian Ballads: *Si', la gondola avere', no crie'* 3:36 Lulianne Baird - Soprano Erin Headley - Bass Viola da gamba Malcolm Proud - Harpsichord Nancy Hadden - Flute

Though chiefly celebrated now, as in his own day, as an opera composer, Hasse wrote a significant quantity of sacred pieces and much delightful chamber music for voices and instruments. This new disc offers a well-chosen and stylishly performed selection, almost entirely belonging to the last mentioned category. He was a younger contemporary and compatriot of Bach, Handel and Telemann, whose music by and large reflected the rococo taste for pleasing melodies with lightly textured and graceful accompaniments. Doctor Burney was fulsome in his tribute to Hasse, describing him as "equally a friend to poetry and the voice". The two cantatas, aria and ballads performed in this programme would seem to bear out Burney's opinion.

The cantatas provide the greatest substance here. They are expertly crafted pieces, each

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consisting of two pairs of alternating recitatives and arias. Hasse seems often to have gone in for unusually extended da capo arias; one of them—in the captivating *Quel vago seno, o Fille*—lasts for almost nine minutes, while two others are of almost equally impressive proportions. But, as I say, they are skilfully written and hold our attention with their engaging melodic contours and effective accompaniments.

Julianne Baird is one of the most stylish and thoughtful of our present interpreters of baroque and early classical music; and the conjunction of an agile technique with an alluring vocal timbre gives considerable strength to her performances. Sometimes in previous recordings I have found her intonation variable but not so here, where almost every detail falls lightly and unerringly into place.

I enjoyed the instrumental items, too. Malcolm Proud, who provides first-rate continuo realizations throughout, also gives us a favourable impression of Hasse's solo keyboard skill in a fine Sonata in C minor for harpsichord. The outstanding movement here is the third one, a deeply felt, darkly coloured Adagio which Proud plays with unhurried and affecting intensity. One of the record companies should sign up this fine player for repertoire of greater substance. The flautist Nancy Hadden gives a lively account of a B minor Sonata, while Erin Headley plays the composer's own alternative version for viola da gamba of an aria from Hasse's last cantata, *La conversione di Sant' Agostino*. Like Proud, both Hadden and Headley contribute excellent obbligatos and continuo, respectively, elsewhere in the programme.

In short, a delightful disc, well considered, well performed and intimately recorded. No disappointments here. I shall be listening to *Si, la gondola avere* (one of the Venetian ballads) every day until further notice.' ---Nicholas Anderson, gramophone.co.uk

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