

## Le Sueur - Oratorios for the coronations of the Sovereign Princes of Christendom (1993)

Written by bluesever

Monday, 15 September 2014 16:25 -

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1 *Allegro fierament* 4:38 2 *Allegro commodo* :57 3 *Moderato religioso* 2:05 4  
*Andantino religioso* 4:54 5 *In poco lento dum antique caractere* 3:49 6 *Allegro pomposo*  
7:19 7 *Moderato affettuoso colle stele antico* 5:27 8 *Allegro commodo* 5:47 9 *Lento*  
*sempre* 2:43 10 *Allegretto pomposo* 3:19 11 *Allegro spiritoso* 2:40 12 *Allegretto*  
4:40 13 *Gracioso affettuoso, ma fieramente* 6:10 14 *Allegretto pomposo e nobile* 3:40  
15 *Moderato nobile* 4:01 16 *Allegro commodo* 2:20 New Berlin Chamber Orchestra  
Chorus Musicus Köln Christoph Spering – director

This is an all-digital recording of a collection of rarely performed oratorios, composed by Jean-Francois Le Sueur (1760-1837) for the occasion of the coronation of Charles X (king of France) - following Napoleon's (final) abdication. While the recording does not break up the three oratorios - the booklet (included) does list the tracks as they were performed at the ceremony.

This music is grand, pompous but retains a level of dignity and even "simplicity" which doesn't make it pretentious, in fact, there are parts in it which are hardly joyous or theatrical - as one would expect from coronation music. Track 14 (*Allegretto pomposo e nobile*) could easily be mistaken for a movement from a requiem. --- demonoid.ph

A musical practitioner before the Revolution, during the Revolution and after the Restoration, Le Sueur was one of the few musicians able to survive this tumultuous time in France. Although he was not a prolific composer, his works and influence continued, however meagerly, through

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his students including Berlioz, Gounod and Ambroise Thomas. The works which Le Sueur did write consisted primarily of operas and sacred endeavors. Initially he served as a choirmaster at Notre Dame in Paris but during the Revolution turned to the stage in operatic settings. The first opera which he composed was "Telemaque" though it was not performed until 1796. "La caverne," and "Paul et Virginie" were composed in 1793 and '94 respectively and were quite successful. His greatest operatic work was "Ossian ou Les bardes" which was not praised simply because of the tastes of the time but also because of the meritorious quality of the work. Today "Ossian" would appear conventional at best but the choruses within the body of the opera excell. "La mort d'Adam" was an opera that would have been better served as an oratorio because of its lack of imagination and movement. The section reflecting the curse of Cain, however, demonstrates Le Sueur's potential for color and finesse as the music seemingly depicts the emotions in the events as told in the biblical narrative. To be sure, this was one of his goals and theoretical emphases. Le Sueur was able to combine the element of serious opera, comic opera and opera buffa in "La caverne" through a strong dramatic character. Historically, however, Le Sueur's major contribution to music was the tome "Expose d'une musique" which was a demonstration of his apt succession to Rousseau, intellectual acuity, and the place of musical composition as an imitator of nature and human emotions. The music could not evoke the object itself but rather was able to inspire emotions in the listener concerning the particular phenomena. Music, according to Le Sueur, could not be divorced from the text. He did not conclude, however, that the text could be metaphysical or abstract; accordingly, Le Sueur maintained a penchant for vocal music, and not, instrumental music. --- Keith Johnson, Rovi

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