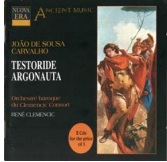


Carvalho - Testoride Argonauta (2002)

Written by bluesever

Sunday, 03 February 2019 15:56 -

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Disc 1 1. *Sinfonia Act One* 6:17 2. *Ove t'inoltri, o pricipessa* 1:53 3. *Nascondere nel seno* 10:52 4. *Di giusto sdegno acceso* 8:58 5. *A protegga o chiaro Dio* 12:37 6. *Ah, chi mai del mie destino* 8:20 7. *L' affanno me uccide* 6:21 8. *Fieri sospetti atroci* 8:18 Disc 2
1. *Act Two: Aure Tranquille* 1:55 2. *Del favor de' doni suoi* 11:55 3. *Se la mia fe' te diedi* 9:09
4. *Fra tanti martiri* 6:44 5. *Nell' orror della procella* 7:09 6. *Serbasi fedele* 12:52 7. *Perfida no, non sei* 9:17 8. *Goda lieto i giorni e l'ore* 1:42

Lina Åkerlund (Soprano) Daniela Hennecke (Soprano) Elisabeth von Magnus (Mezzo Soprano) Lucia Meeuwsen (Mezzo Soprano) Curtis Rayam (Tenor) Clemencic Consort Baroque Orchestra René Clemencic - conductor

João de Sousa Carvalho, the premier Portuguese composer of the last half of the eighteenth century, trained in Italy before establishing a career in his home country because Italian music was held in such high regard in Portugal. There is little in his music to distinguish it from Italian music of the period. *Testoride Argonauta* (1780), like all of his many operas, sets an Italian text. This first recording of the opera, made in 1990, is a mixed bag. On the positive side, the vocal performances are exemplary. The cast members, including sopranos Elisabeth von Magnus, Daniela Hennecke, and Lina Akerlund; alto Lucia Meeuwsen; and to a somewhat lesser extent, tenor Curtis Rayam, have voices well suited to this repertoire, as well as the vocal resources to negotiate its virtuosic demands with elegance and style. They are excellent singing actors and approach the silly libretto with the seriousness and nuanced attention to detail they might bring to Mozart. Their ability to act with their voices succeeds in bringing the wooden characters to life, and they are a pleasure to listen to. On the down side, the instrumental performance is decidedly uneven. Orchestra Baroque du Clemencic, led by René Clemencic, is thin and anemic sounding, and the playing is sometimes ragged. The horns in particular are distractingly erratic in attack and intonation. The opera itself gets off to a slow start, with enough expository recitative to make the listener wonder if it is going to be worth slogging through two CDs. Things pick up considerably by the middle of the first act, and there are some impressive solos and an especially lovely duet, so perseverance does pay off. (The tracks are broken up in an entirely irrational manner, so it's not possible to skip over the humdrum recitatives.) Nuova Era recorded the opera at a very low level, so it's necessary to boost the volume considerably, which also

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highlights the annoying stage noises and page turns. The polished and committed singing may outweigh the deficits in the opera and recording and make this a release that fans of Classical-era vocal music would want to investigate. ---Stephen Eddins, AllMusic Review

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