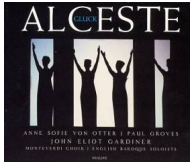


Gluck – Alceste (Gardiner) [2002]

Written by bluesever

Monday, 01 March 2010 15:39 - Last Updated Thursday, 28 November 2013 22:50

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CD1 01. Overture 02. Acte I. Choeur: Dieux, rendez-nous roi, notre pète! / Recitatif: Peuples, écoutez! 03. Choeur à deux parties: Ô malheureux Admète! / Recitatif: Sujets du roi le plus aime 04. Air: Grands Dieux! du destin qui m'accable (Alceste) 05. Pantomime 06. Récitatif: Dieu puissant (Grand-Prêtre) / Choeur et solo: Dieu puissant 07. Récitatif: Dispensateur de la lumière (Grand-Prêtre) 08. Récitatif: Immortel Apollon! (Alceste) 09. Récitatif: Apollon est sensible à vos gémissements (Grand-Prêtre) 10. Récitatif: Où suis-je? Ô malheureux Alceste! (Alceste) 11. Solo: Tes destins sont remplis (Grand-Prêtre, Alceste) 12. Air: Ombres, laves, pâles compagnes de la mort (Alceste) 13. Acte II. Choeur: Que les plus doux transports succèdent aux alarmes! 14. Ballet / Choeur avec la danse: Que les plus doux transports 15. Récitatif: Ô mon roi! (Plusieurs gens du Peuple, Evandre, Admète) 16. Récitatif: Alceste! - Cher époux! (Admète, Alceste) CD2 01. Choeur avec la danse: Parez vos fronts de fleurs nouvelles 02. Air: Ô Dieux! soutenez mon courage (Alceste) 03. Air: Bannis la crainte et les alarmes (Admète) 04. Air: Je n'ai jamais chéri la vie (Alceste) 05. Récitatif: Grands Dieux! pour mon époux (Alceste) 06. Air: Ah! malgré moi mon faible Coeur (Alceste) 07. Acte III. Récitatif: Nous ne pouvons trop répandre de larmes (Evandre, Coryphée) 08. Récitatif: Après de longs travaux (Hercule, Evandre, Coryphée, choeur) 09. Récitatif: Au pouvoir de la mort je saurai la ravir (Hercule) 10. Récitatif: Grands Dieux, soutenez mon courage (Alceste) 11. Air: Ah! Divinités implacable! (Alceste) 12. Récitatif: Ciel! Admète! (Alceste, Admète) 13. Air: Alceste, au nom des Dieux! (Admète) 14. Air: Caron t'appelle, entend sa voix (Un Dieu Infernal) 15. Choeur des Dieux infernaux et soli: Alceste! Le jour fuit 16. Soli et choeur: Ami, leur rage est vaine (Hercule, Admète, choeur) 17. Récitatif: Poursuit, ô digne fils du souverain des Cieux (Apollon) 18. Trio: Reçois, Dieu bienfaisant (Alceste, Admète, Hercule) 19. Récitatif: Ô mes amis! Alceste m'est rendue (Admète, Alceste, choeur) 20. Chaconne

Alceste – Anne Sofie von Otter Admete – Paul Groves High Priest and Hercules – Dietrich Henschel Evandre – Yann Beuron A Herald and Apollo – Ludovic Tezier Oracle and Infernal God – Frederic Caton Coryphe – Hjordis Thebault Alceste's Alter Ego – Gladys Massenet Alceste's Children – Lucie Barret, Arthur Carayon Monteverdi Chor English Baroque Soloists Sir John Eliot Gardiner – conductor

Considering that this opera is a great, deep story of hopelessness, undying love, and nobility of

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purpose, word, and deed, this performance is strangely unmoving. Perhaps in order for Gluck's straightforward operatic tales of splendid beings to be effective they have to be performed incorrectly; to be sure, the recent release of a recording of this opera in Italian, filled with Sturm and Drang and starring the vocally fascinating-if-overly-dramatic-and-somewhat-defective Leyla Gencer, is more riveting than this oh-so-authentic reading.

John Eliot Gardiner and his players make wonderful sounds, some big and sort-of scary, others mellow and supportive of the characters' sad plights. His tempos are just right. Anne Sofie von Otter is an intelligent artist who plays off the words and sings beautifully (some of her music is transposed down to accommodate her mezzo range), but Gencer (and even Jessye Norman on Orfeo) makes you want to cry at Alceste's plight; Otter merely makes you appreciate it. There's nothing she does wrong, but there's also something missing. Tenor Paul Groves has a bright, expressive voice that he uses with ardor as Admetus; Dietrich Henschel's baritone is just right for the noble character and potency of both the High Priest and Hercules. The rest of the cast is impressive, and the chorus, which really knows how to lament, is superb—although its off-stage utterances at times are almost inaudible. This is a very classy release and I know in my heart and head that it represents Gluck's opera superbly. It's also just a bit dull. ---Robert Levine, www.classicstoday.com

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