

## Christoph Willibald Gluck- Armide (Minkowski) (1996)

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### Christoph Willibald Gluck- Armide [Minkowski] (1996)



CD1 1. Armide - Overture Les Musiciens du Louvre 4:24 2. Armide / Act 1 - 2. "Dans un jour de triomphe" Françoise Masset 2:11 3. Armide / Act 1 - 3. "Je ne triomphe pas" Mireille Delunsch 1:06 4. Armide / Act 1 - 4. "Qu'importe qu'un captif manque" Nicole Heaston 0:38 5. Armide / Act 1 - 5. "Les enfers ont prédit cent fois/Un songe affreux" Mireille Delunsch 1:55 6. Armide / Act 1 - 6. "Vous troublez-vous d'une image légère" Nicole Heaston 1:00 7. Armide / Act 1 - 7. "Armide, que le sang qui m'unit avec vous" Laurent Naouri 1:10 8. Armide / Act 1 - 8. "Je vois de près la mort" Laurent Naouri 1:11 9. Armide / Act 1 - 9. "La chaîne de l'hymen m'étonne" Mireille Delunsch 1:22 10. Armide / Act 1 - 10. "Pour vous, quand il vous plaît" Laurent Naouri 1:19 11. Armide / Act 1 - 11. "Contre mes ennemis" Mireille Delunsch 0:46 12. Armide / Act 1 - 12. "Si je dois m'engager un jour" Mireille Delunsch 1:02 13. Armide / Act 1 - 13. "Armide est encore plus aimable/Nos ennemies" Sandrine Rondot 3:01 14. Armide / Act 1 - 14. Andante Les Musiciens du Louvre 1:19 15. Armide / Act 1 - 15. "Ô ciel! Ô disgrâce cruelle! Vincent Le Texier 1:13 16. Armide / Act 1 - 16. "Poursuivons jusqu'au trépas" Mireille Delunsch 2:01 17. Armide / Act 2 - 17. "Invincible héros" Yann Beuron 2:25 18. Armide / Act 2 - "Le repos me fait violence" / "Fuyez les lieux où règne Armide" / "J'aime la liberté" Charles Workman 2:53 19. Armide / Act 2 - 19. "Arrêtons-nous ici" Laurent Naouri 0:46 20. Armide / Act 2 - 20. "Esprits de haine et de rage" / "Dans le piège fatal notre ennemi s'engage" Mireille Delunsch 2:22 21. Armide / Act 2 - 21. "Plus j'observe ces lieux" Charles Workman 6:01 22. Armide / Act 2 - 22. "Au temps heureux où l'on sait plaire" Valerie Gabail 0:54 23. Armide / Act 2 - 23. "Ah! Quelle erreur, quelle folie" Valerie Gabail 1:08 24. Armide / Act 2 - 24. Moderato Les Musiciens du Louvre 1:03 25. Armide / Act 2 - 25. "On s'étonnerait moins" Nicole Heaston 2:17 26. Armide / Act 2 - 26. "Ah! Quelle erreur, quelle folie" Les Musiciens du Louvre 1:06 27. Armide / Act 2 - 27. "Enfin, il est en ma puissance" Mireille Delunsch 2:23 28. Armide / Act 2 - 28. "Ah! Quelle cruauté de lui ravir le jour!" Mireille Delunsch 1:46 29. Armide / Act 2 - 29. "Venez, secondez mes désirs" Mireille Delunsch 2:06 30. Armide / Act 3 - 30. "Ah! Si la liberté me doit être ravie" Mireille Delunsch 3:48 31. Armide / Act 3 - 31. "Que ne peut point votre art?/Votre amitié .." Françoise Masset 1:40 32. Armide / Act 3 - 32. "De mes plus doux regards Renaud sut se défendre" Mireille Delunsch 1:02 33. Armide / Act 3 - 33. "Que votre art serait beau!" Françoise Masset 4:05 34. Armide / Act 3 - 34. "Venez, venez, Haine implacable!" Mireille Delunsch 2:32 35. Armide / Act 3 - 35. "Je réponds à te vœux" Ewa Podles 0:36 36. Armide / Act 3 - 36. "Plus on connaît l'amour" Ewa Podles 2:00 37. Armide / Act 3 - 37. Andante Les Musiciens du Louvre 0:41 38. Armide / Act 3 - 38. "Amour, sors pour jamais" Ewa Podles 4:12 39. Armide / Act 3 - 39. "Sors, sors du sein d'Armide" Ewa Podles 1:26 40. Armide / Act 3 - 40. "Suis l'amour, puisque tu le veux" Ewa Podles 1:42 41. Armide / Act 3 - 41. "Ô ciel!

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*Quelle horrible menace!*" Mireille Delunsch 1:55 CD2 1. Armide / Act 4 - 42. "Nous ne trouvons partout que des gouffres" / "Allons chercher Renaud" Yann Beuron 3:04 2. Armide / Act 4 - 43. "Redoublons nos soins/On voit d'ici le séjour ..." Brett Polegato 1:52 3. Armide / Act 4 - 44. "Voici la charmante retraite" Nicole Heaston 2:18 4. Armide / Act 4 - 45. Musette - Second Air - Musette Les Musiciens du Louvre 1:18 5. Armide / Act 4 - 46. "Allons, qui vous retient encore?" Brett Polegato 0:23 6. Armide / Act 4 - 47. "Enfin je vois l'amant" Nicole Heaston 3:19 7. Armide / Act 4 - 48. "Ce sceptre d'or... /Je tourne en vain les yeux.." Brett Polegato 1:37 8. Armide / Act 4 - 49. "D'où vient que vous vous détournez" Françoise Masset 2:12 9. Armide / Act 4 - 50. "Pourquoi faut-il encore m'arracher mon amant?" Françoise Masset 2:37 10. Armide / Act 4 - 51. "Fuyons les douceurs dangereuses" Brett Polegato 1:36 11. Armide / Act 5 - 52. "Armide, vous m'allez quitter!" Charles Workman 1:53 12. Armide / Act 5 - 53. "D'une vaine terreur pouvez-vous être atteinte" Charles Workman 2:06 13. Armide / Act 5 - 54. "Aimons-nous"/"Témons de notre amour extrême" Mireille Delunsch 3:08 14. Armide / Act 5 - 55. Chaconne Les Musiciens du Louvre 5:29 15. Armide / Act 5 - 56. "Les Plaisirs ont choisi pour asile" Magdalena Kozená 1:32 16. Armide / Act 5 - 57. "C'est l'amour qui retient dans ses chaînes" Magdalena Kozená 2:54 17. Armide / Act 5 - 58. Gracieux Les Musiciens du Louvre 1:01 18. Armide / Act 5 - 59. "Jeunes coeurs" Magdalena Kozená 1:37 19. Armide / Act 5 - 60. Air sicilien Les Musiciens du Louvre 2:30 20. Armide / Act 5 - 61. "Allez, éloignez-vous de moi" Charles Workman 3:20 21. Armide / Act 5 - 62. "Il est seul" Brett Polegato 0:33 22. Armide / Act 5 - 63. "Notre général vous appelle" Brett Polegato 1:10 23. Armide / Act 5 - 64. "Renaud! Ciel! Ô mortelle peine!" Mireille Delunsch 5:18 24. Armide / Act 5 - 65. "Il faut partir" Yann Beuron 0:50 25. Armide / Act 5 - 66. "Le perfide Renaud me fuit" Mireille Delunsch 2:53 26. Armide / Act 5 - 67. "Quand le barbare était en ma puissance" Mireille Delunsch 3:18 Armide - Mireille Delunsch Rinaldo - Charles Workman Artemidor - Yann Beuron Fury of Hate - Ewa Podles Hidraot - Laurent Naouri Ubaldo - Brett Polegato Danish Knight - Yann Beuron Phenice - Françoise Masset Sidonie - Nicole Heaston Aront - Vincent Le Texier Demon Lucinda - Nicole Heaston Demon Melissa - Françoise Masset Naiad - Valerie Gabail Les Musiciens du Louvre Marc Minkowski, 1996

To modern music lovers, Gluck is best-known for his Orpheus and Euridice and, to a lesser extent, for Alceste. But he was also the composer of other operas which deserve to be remembered. Among these operas is Armide, which Gluck composed in 1777 for the Paris Opera. (By that time, he had revised his earlier versions of Orpheus and Alceste for staging in Paris.) In setting Armide, Gluck took the libretto written by Phillipe Quinault which had been used by the great French composer Lully in his opera, Armide, presented in 1686. Thus, Gluck was deliberately setting himself in competition with the earlier master. After Gluck's opera, other composers have set the Armide story, including Haydn in an opera and Brahms in a cantata, Renaldo.

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This CD of Armide features the musicians of the Louvre conducted by Marc Minkowski and a distinguished cast of singers. Mr. Minkowski specializes in early music with an emphasis on scores and composers that have not received the attention they deserve. We are fortunate to have CD's readily accessible to explore Gluck's Armide. The work comes through in this release with intensity and passion.

Armide is a story of the power of love and of the war between love and hate. The heroine, Armide, is a sorceress who has just defeated an army of Christian crusaders. She values her freedom and declines to marry unless to a man who can defeat the crusader's hero, Renaud. In the course of the story, Armide casts a spell on Renaud to make him, for a time, love her. But, unfortunately for Armide, she falls in love with Renaud totally and unconditionally. Renaud is ultimately rescued and abandons Armide who bewails her loss mightily and destroys the magic palace she had built for herself and Renaud.

Gluck was known for attempting to integrate text and music into an artistic whole rather than for indulging in lengthy musical flourishes for their own sake. In Armide, he carries out his artistic programme in part. But there are long sections of dances, musical interludes, and scenes that have little dramatic intensity and which run counter to Gluck's austere style of composition. This is probably due in part to Gluck's decision to use, without editing, the early libretto by Quinault which had been adopted to the different compositional style of Lully. (In the years between Lully and Gluck, some composers had tried to eliminate various portions of Quinault's text to speed-up the action. But Gluck took the original libretto.)

Gluck's Armide is not often performed today, but it is a treasure. The heroine, Armide, is a great multi-faceted role with arias expressing the extremes of passionate love and deep hatred. The role is beautifully performed on this CD by Mireille Dellunsch. There is a character in the opera titled "hate", -- hate personified with lengthy arias worthy of the Queen of the Night -- performed guttily and intensely by Ewa Poodles. Charles Workman is an effective Renaud, but this music belongs to the women leads.

The first and fifth acts of Gluck's Armide move with swift intensity while some of the more relaxed material is in act two and, particularly, in act four. For me, the most powerful musical moment of this score comes at the end of the opera in Armide's aria "La Perfide Renaud" which shows her fury at her abandonment by Renaud. Also in Act 5 is a beautiful duet between Armide and Renaud and an "Air Sicilien" featuring the solo flute. The scenes with Hate are stunning.

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Gluck's Armide is a grand opera by a great composer. It will delight listeners willing to be adventurous as well as lovers of opera, early classical music, and passionate music. It is a joy to have this work available. --- Robin Friedman (Washington, D.C. United States)

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