

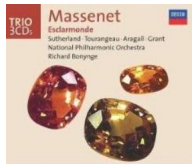
## Massenet – Esclarmonde 1974 (2011)

Written by bluesever

Sunday, 30 June 2013 16:38 -

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## Massenet – Esclarmonde 1974 (2011)



CD1 1. *Dignitaires! Guerriers!* - Clifford Grant 9:34 2. *Roland! Roland! Comme ce nom me trouble* - Dame Joan Sutherland 4:58 3. *Parséis! - O ma soeur* - Dame Joan Sutherland 4:02 4. *Ah! trop malheureuse Esclarmonde!* - Dame Joan Sutherland 1:17 5. *On vient, ma soeur!* - Huguette Tourangeau 5:29 6. *C'en est fait!* - Dame Joan Sutherland 3:39 7. *Esprits de l'air! Esprits de onde!* - Dame Joan Sutherland 1:50 8. *Roland! Roland! Roland!* - Dame Joan Sutherland 4:42 9. *Ah! Ah!* - John Alldis Choir 3:56 10. *Où suis-je?* - Giacomo Aragall 4:20 11. *Sois bénie, o magie* - Dame Joan Sutherland 6:02 12. *Voici le divin moment* - Dame Joan Sutherland 6:42 13. *Hélas! Ma bien-aimée!* - Giacomo Aragall 7:51 14. *Ecoute encor!* - Dame Joan Sutherland 3:44 15. *O glaive, à ton aspect* - Giacomo Aragall 3:20 CD2 1. *O Blois! Misérable cité!* - Robert Lloyd 3:05 2. *Kyrie eleison* - Louis Quilico 5:54 3. *Dieu de miséricorde* - Louis Quilico 3:45 4. *Noble héros!* - Robert Lloyd 3:04 5. *Gloire! Chantons notre victoire! A toi, Roland* - Giacomo Aragall 4:21 6. *Gloire! Chantons notre victoire! Gloire à Roland!* - Giacomo Aragall 1:34 7. *La nuit bientôt sera venue* - Giacomo Aragall 2:12 8. *Mon fils, je te bénis!* - Louis Quilico 3:36 9. *Je ne m'appartiens plus* - Giacomo Aragall 2:52 10. *A genoux!* - Louis Quilico 2:24 11. *Ah! Roland!* - Dame Joan Sutherland 5:40 12. *Regarde-les, ces yeux plus purs* - Dame Joan Sutherland 2:41 13. *Non! Tu ne seras pas à mes transports ravié!* - Giacomo Aragall 2:07

### CD3

1. *Entendez tous* - Graham Clark 4:11 2. *Oui, le délai marqué s'avance* - Ryland Davies 3:17 3. *Les temps vont s'accomplir* - Clifford Grant 3:26 4. *Elle a voulu choisir* - Huguette Tourangeau 3:11 5. *D'une longue torpeur* - Dame Joan Sutherland 3:58 6. *Où suis-je maintenant?* - Dame Joan Sutherland 2:42 7. *Donc, pour sauver la vie* - Dame Joan Sutherland 2:29 8. *Il vient! Ah! quel supplice!* - Dame Joan Sutherland 2:43 9. *Ne plus te voir!* - Giacomo Aragall 5:11 10. *Dignitaires! Guerriers! Sous ces augustes voûtes* - Clifford Grant 9:32 Robert Lloyd (Bass), Graham Clark (Tenor), Dame Joan Sutherland (Soprano), Huguette Tourangeau (Mezzo Soprano), Clifford Grant (Bass), Giacomo Aragall (Tenor), Louis Quilico (Baritone), Ryland Davies (Tenor), Ian Caley (Tenor) John Alldis Choir, National Philharmonic Orchestra Richard Bonyngge - conductor

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This overweight bon-bon from 1889 is one of Massenet's most exotic and lush works, one filled with musical motifs that bring Wagner to mind. It was composed for the California-born soprano Sybil Sanderson, a large, stunning woman with whom Massenet was obsessed; her vocal agility, huge tone, and startling range (up to a G above high-C) are thoroughly exploited in the score, and it is no wonder that the opera is rarely performed. But along came Joan Sutherland, with all of the vocal characteristics (save the G--here she sings a lower E-flat option, and the high-Cs and Ds are frequent and gigantic), and the opera was revived and recorded in 1974.

As it turns out, the opera is gorgeous if you can tolerate such an unending parade of orchestral colors; imagine a very expensive paint store exploding in front of you. The plot is all sorcery, enchanted isles, knights, and a quite dazzling exorcism, and if your belief can be suspended that much and you allow yourself to bask in it, this is one of opera's greatest guilty pleasures. And the duets are as stunning as anything in Manon or Werther.

This performance is ravishing. In addition to the spectacular Sutherland, the under-recorded Catalan tenor Giacomo Aragall uses his attractive voice to great effect, baritone Louis Quilico is a proper menace as the exorcising Bishop, and Clifford Grant intones importantly as Esclarmonde's father. Huguette Tourangeau's weird mezzo is on display as Esclarmonde's sister. Richard Bonyngé leads a luxuriant performance. -- Robert Levine, ClassicsToday.com

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