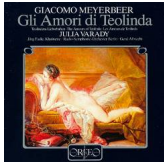


Meyerbeer - Gli Amori di Teolinda (Julia Varady) [1984]

Written by bluesever

Sunday, 19 April 2015 15:58 -

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1. Intro (Andante) 2. Cavatina (Andante) 3. Recitativo (Allegro) 4. Recitativo (Allegro Moderato) 5. Coro Dei Pastori (Allegro Con Moto) 6. Recitativo (Allegro) 7. Recitativo (Andante Con Vars) 8. Recitativo (Allegro Molto Moderato) Julia Varady (soprano) Jörg Fadle (clarinet) Berlin RIAS Chamber Choir & Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra Gerd Albrecht (conductor)

Meyerbeer takes a lot of heat by moderns for works often misconstrued as artistically vulgar. The reality is that he was a great innovator, and an excellent and dominating composer in his chosen genre, grand opera. His music offers enormous pleasures when well done, though this is often a challenging condition given the demands he makes on his singers. I think Meyerbeer on balance greatly rewards investigation and am always eager to hear his music. This very early work, "Gli Amori di Teolinda", was new to me, and its quality caught me quite off guard. Filled with color and life, it dates from around 1815. Composed when Meyerbeer was barely into his twenties, long before the stupendous successes on the operatic stages of Paris that made him one of the dominant opera composers of his day, the piece was commissioned by a clarinet virtuoso, one Heinrich Baermann. The fellow's wife, a 19th century soprano I never heard of, also was written into the cantata, and so we have this truly singular and quite delightful series of short numbers by soprano and then clarinet!

The Cantata reminds us that Meyerbeer hung around some pretty fair composers as a youth, Beethoven and Weber for two, and Meyerbeer's writing for the clarinet astounds me! It's really good! Weber's famous Concertos clearly registered! The clarinet player, Jorg Fadle, is recorded in a forward manner, and it seems quite good to me, though a friend who plays the instrument suggests it might be better. But I can't see why this piece of early Romantic music should be so overlooked and forgotten by clarinet players.

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Meyerbeer was destined to write great arias, and this little cantata is not one of those examples of juvenilia or early works where one wonders how anything wonderful came from such as this. The soprano selections are mostly winning if not unforgettable melodies, and all are sung with vigor and her usual high style by lyric soprano Julia Varady. Fans of Ms Varady will not be disappointed! An added bonus to the proceedings is the bright winning orchestration. Too, Meyerbeer already has an easy way of kicking in drama wherever and whenever he wishes.

The Orfeo recording is quite good, with the clarinet rightfully given a front row place before the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra.

If not a major work, this is a delightful experience, and one I will enjoy playing again. I must add that The Meyerbeer Fan Club, a good group to check out for any questions about the composer, though liking this work, feels a newer version, preferably a live performance, would best bring home all the bacon. From what I hear this one is plenty good enough for the curious. --- Doug - Haydn Fan, amazon.com

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