

Gioacchini Rossini - La Cenerentola (Abbado) [1972]

Written by bluesever

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Disc 1 01. Sinfonia [0:08:10.25] 02. No, no, no, non v'e [0:01:42.52] 03. Una volta c'era un re [0:04:42.35] 04. O figlie amabili [0:05:08.33] 05. Miei rampolli femminini [0:06:08.42] 06. Tutto e deserto [0:11:41.15] 07. Scegli la sposa [0:06:44.53] 08. Allegrissimamente, che bei quadri [0:01:54.25] 09. Signor, una parola [0:13:46.67] 10. La del ciel nell'arcano profondo [0:08:35.25] 11. Conciossiacosacche trenta botti gia gusto [0:05:11.00]

Disc 2 01. Duetto - Zitto, zitto: piano, piano ...Principino, dove siete [0:08:05.07] 02. Ah! se velata ancor ...Sprezzo quei don [0:06:57.45] 03. Signor, Altezza, e in tavola [0:04:57.18] 04. Sia qualunque delle figlie [0:08:59.35] 05. Si ritrovarla io guiro [0:06:04.42] 06. Duetto - Un segreto d'importanza [0:04:58.60] 07. Canzone - Una volta c'era un re [0:03:15.23] 08. Storm Music [0:03:37.37] 09. Sestetto - Siete voi ...Questo e un nodo avviluppato [0:04:34.20] 10. Sestetto - Donna sciocca, alma di fango [0:08:26.38] 11. Finale II - Della Fortuna instabile [0:02:02.12] 12. Scena - Sposa/ Signor perdona ...Rondo - Nacqui all'affanno [0:08:37.08]

Teresa Berganza (Mezzo Soprano) Luigi Alva (Tenor) Renato Capecchi (Baritone) Paolo Montarsolo (Bass) Margherita Guglielmi (Soprano) Laura Zannini (Soprano) Ugo Trama (Bass) Scottish National Opera Chorus London Symphony Orchestra
Claudio Abbado – conductor

La Cenerentola might just be my favorite Rossini opera, and this Abbado version is probably the best there is. In fact, this recording was Abbado's first as an opera conductor in 1972. He delivers an utterly spirited, sparkling and lively version, warm and humane, and has the LSO play their hearts out; the orchestral playing is technically impressive, of course, rhythmically exact, but more importantly manage to realize a range of colors and textures and a freshness that one rarely hears in a Rossini opera.

The singers might perhaps be a little more variable. Teresa Berganza is wonderfully idiomatic and sympathetic as Cenerentola, giving a touching and vivid, beautifully sung and warmly

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characterized portrayal - one which I cannot really imagine being surpassed. Luigi Alva is a steady, impressively sung Don Ramiro and Ugo Trama, despite being perhaps a little heavy-handed at times, is generally good as Alidoro. Evaluating Capecchi's performance is more difficult - on the one hand, he gives us an impressively sung role, with lots of character and color, but on the other he does seem to lack a little in humor. Something of the same applies to Montarsolo's Don Magnifico. I have no qualms about Guglielmi or Zannini who delivers generally finely sung and characterized parts.

Yet the glory of the set is undeniably Abbado and the LSO, and I believe he is responsible for the fact that the ensembles are consistently magnificent; an all-important feature of a Rossini opera, of course. Importantly, the 1972 sound quality is exemplary; vivid and clear. In the end, this is really not a recording you'd want to be without, despite the fact that equally good - perhaps even better - singing can be found elsewhere. I'd say it's a classic. ---G.D., amazon.com

This 1817 opera was a popular success when premiered and never entirely passed out of the operatic repertoire during the time when operas of Rossini's period were out of favor. Don't expect fairy godmothers and glass slippers. Perrault's famous fairy tale is stripped of all supernatural characters and events in this loose adaptation of it. According to librettist Jacopo Ferretti, this was done to please the Roman audience who disdained "children's tales." Cinderella here suffers indignities from her stepfather and two stepsisters, but still retains her kindness, charm, and interest in the latest fashions. The slipper is replaced by a bracelet (in order to comply with current moral standards and not show the ankle), by which the Prince recognizes Cinderella at the end of the opera.

Ferretti and Rossini spent just over one month working on the opera, beginning work December 23, 1816, with a premiere on January 27, 1817. It is consistently tuneful, lighthearted, and spirited. The overture represents another of those cases in which Rossini raided an earlier score (La Gazetta) as the last-minute source of an overture for the new opera. It fits this opera like a glove. Cinderella's part provides sopranos with two popular coloratura arias, "Una volta c'era un re" and "Ah prence, io cado ai vostri pie," more challenging than any music Rossini had composed previously. Cinderella's father has a great buffo aria, "Miei ramipoli" in which he complains of being awakened from sleep by noisy people. ---Rovi

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