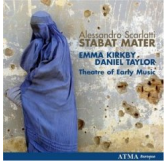


Alessandro Scarlatti - Stabat Mater (Kirkby) [2006]

Written by bluesever

Monday, 29 March 2010 23:13 - Last Updated Wednesday, 23 April 2014 21:24

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1. *Stabat Mater: Stabat Mater*
2. *Stabat Mater: Cuius animam gementem*
3. *Stabat Mater: O quam tristis et afflicta*
4. *Stabat Mater: Quae moerebat*
5. *Stabat Mater: Quis est homo*
6. *Stabat Mater: quis non posset contristari*
7. *Stabat Mater: Pro peccatis...*
8. *Stabat Mater: Vidit suum...*
9. *Stabat Mater: Pia Mater*
10. *Stabat Mater: Sancta Mater*
11. *Stabat Mater: Fac ut ardeat*
12. *Stabat Mater: Tui nati vulnerati*
13. *Stabat Mater: Luxta crucem...*
14. *Stabat Mater: Virgo virginum*
15. *Stabat Mater: Fac ut portem*
16. *Stabat Mater: Inflammatus et...*
17. *Stabat Mater: Fac me cruce*
18. *Stabat Mater: Quando corpus morietur*
19. *Concerto XXI: Andante*
20. *Concerto XXI: Allegro*
21. *Concerto XXI: Veloce*
22. *Concerto XXI: Lento*
23. *Concerto XXI: Allegro*

Emma Kirkby : Soprano

Daniel Taylor : Alto

Theatre of Early Music

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This quiet, circumspect, yet oddly moving recording of Alessandro Scarlatti's Stabat Mater is as far as can be imagined from the intense fireworks of another contemporary recording of the work, that led by conductor Rinaldo Alessandrini on the Naïve label. Soprano Emma Kirkby, countertenor Daniel Taylor, and the Montreal-based Theatre of Early Music (a period-instrument group founded by Taylor) tread catlike through the work, which was written some years before Pergolesi's more famous Stabat Mater setting but was commissioned by the same Italian religious order. The Scarlatti work, more than Pergolesi's, is full of quasi-operatic devices -- pregnant pauses, dissonant "sighs," and, in the final "Amen," some heady vocal acrobatics. In this performance everything is kept to a very quiet level, which may seem inappropriate to Scarlatti's basically theatrical language. Kirkby and Taylor are highly sensitive interpreters, however, and they work together (in the work's four luscious duets) and separately to bring out dissonances and unusual phrase shapes that get lost in a bigger interpretation. Kirkby does not have the absolute clarity of voice that she once did, but she has not lost any of her ability to bring quiet tension to a melodic line.

This chamber-sized Scarlatti Stabat Mater might have worked very well in a pairing with the more intimate Pergolesi work, but instead we get the Concerto XXI for flute, strings, and continuo, a little-known work. The intentions of the album are nowhere more clearly revealed than in the decision to replace the transverse flute with Francis Colpron's recorder -- usually it's done the other way around, but the quiet, conversational tone of the recorder and its ability to slide around the center of a consonance as needed fit what this ensemble is trying to do. One might wish for a new recording of the Stabat Mater by Cecilia Bartoli, a Scarlatti interpreter who can combine detail and athleticism, but for now this very expressive performance is worth checking out. ---James Manheim, Rovi

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