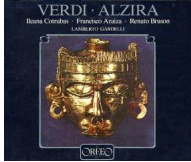


Giuseppe Verdi – Alzira (Gardelli) [1992]

Written by bluesever

Thursday, 27 January 2011 19:30 - Last Updated Saturday, 14 June 2014 13:56

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CD1

1. *Sinfonia*
2. *Introduzione*
3. *Scena, Cavatina e Stretta*
4. *Act I, Coro*
5. *Scena e Cavatina*
6. *Scena e Cavatina*
7. *Scena e Duetto* [play](#)

Cd2

1. *Finale I*
2. *Act II – Introduzione*
3. *Scena e Duetto*
4. *Scena e d'Aria*
5. *Coro d'Ancelle*
6. *Scena e d'Aria Finale* [play](#)

Francisco Araiza (Tenor)
Daniel Bonilla (Bass)
Renato Bruson (Baritone)
Ileana Cotrubas (Soprano)
Donald George (Tenor)
Alexandru Ionita (Tenor)
Sofia Lis (Mezzo Soprano)
Jan-Hendrik Rootering (Bass)

Bavarian Radio Chorus
Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra
Lamberto Gardelli - conductor

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Verdi's Alzira is based on a play by Voltaire, *Alzire, ou Les Américains*. It was the eighth of his 28 operas, and while it is generally regarded as one of his so-so earlier efforts, it is better than its reputation. Some believe the element that has sabotaged its popularity is the libretto by Salvatore Cammarano, owing in large part to its problematic treatment of one of the lead characters, Zamoro, who comes across as a rather feisty but, alas, very dense fellow. Yet the story moves swiftly along and brims with love and envy, misunderstandings and vengeance, just the ingredients that make so many other Verdi operas a success.

The plot is a sort of a boy-finally-gets-girl story, with Zamoro winning the hand of the Indian princess Alzira, but only after he has killed Peruvian governor Gusmano, who had planned to marry her against her will. The dying Gusmano forgives Zamoro and all ends well, if not happily. The music generally rises above whatever weaknesses one might cite in the libretto, and while none of Verdi's numbers here have achieved wide currency, there are several well-crafted ones, and the score features both colorful orchestration and a strong sense for drama.

Lasting about 90 minutes, it is compact and wonderfully atmospheric, from the playful, menacing music in the Introduction to the tragic closing number, Gusmano's "Altre Virtudi, Insano." In between, one is treated to the pomp and color of the opening Act II chorus, "Mesci, Mesci," as well as to Zamoro's beautiful second act aria, "Irne Lungi Ancor." But there are many other splendid moments sprinkled throughout the opera, including the lively, colorful ensemble number that closes the first act, "Trema, Trema," as well as the stormy "Su Fragil Barca" and the touching "Il piano," both sung by Alzira in Acts I and II, respectively.

Much of the opera, not least its libretto, calls to mind *Il Trovatore*, with Zamoro a sort of counterpart to Manrico. Yet despite its problems, Alzira has fewer weaknesses in its libretto than *Il Trovatore*, even if it might lack the knock-out numbers of that later effort. In the end, Alzira must be assessed as a good, underrated Verdi opera that deserves greater attention.
---Robert Cummings, Rovi

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