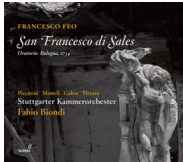


Francesco Feo - San Francesco di Sales (2017)



CD I PARTE PRIMA [75:11] 01 Sinfonia 02 Recitativo: *Eccoci giunti al fin* (Angelo, San Francesco) 03 Aria: *Nel verno più severo* (Angelo) 04 Recitativo: *Colla celeste guida, Signor* (San Francesco) 05 Aria: *Queste dolanti lagrime* (San Francesco) 06 Recitativo: *E quai pensier funesti* (Inganno, Eresia) 07 Aria: *Già colla pallid' ombra* (Eresia) 08 Recitativo: *E puoi temer* (Inganno) 09 Aria: *Questo che spirano* (Inganno) 10 Recitativo: *Vedi, Francesco* (Angelo, San Francesco, Eresia, Inganno) 11 Aria: *Deponi un tanto orgoglio* (Angelo) 12 Recitativo: *E tu, che fai* (San Francesco) 13 Aria: *Tu serbi accolto* (San Francesco) 14 Recitativo: *E chi sei tu* (Eresia, San Francesco, Inganno) 15 Aria: *Se dalla chara fonte* (Eresia) 16 Recitativo: *Se che gli stessi* (San Francesco) 17 Aria: *Tu sei la nube impura* (San Francesco) 18 Recitativo: *E qualia noi d'avante* (San Francesco, Angelo) 19 Aria: *Quando più s'alza* (Angelo) 20 Recitativo, a4, Coro: *Tu me paventa intanto* (Inganno, Eresia, San Francesco, Angelo)

CD II PARTE SECONDA [62:41] 01 Recitativo: *Padre, ravvisi come di Francesco* (Eresia, Inganno) 02 Aria: *Tutte dell'Erebo* (Inganno) 03 Recitativo: *Se già disperì, oh Dio* (Eresia, Inganno, Angelo) 04 Aria: *Serbi l'ardire istesso* (Angelo) 05 Recitativo: *O Dio delle vendette* (San Francesco) 06 Aria: *Sommo Dio, dal ciel discenda* (San Francesco) 07 Recitativo: *Oh come lieto* (Angelo, San Francesco) 08 Aria: *Con la virtude istessa* (Angelo) 09 Recitativo: *Ch'il crederebbe mai* (Inganno, San Francesco) 10 Aria: *Pallid'ognora in volto* (Eresia) 11 Recitativo: *Empii, conosco il vostro reo* (San Francesco, Eresia) 12 Aria: *Intendi i sensi miei* (San Francesco) 13 Recitativo: *Tu colle fole tue* (Inganno) 14 Aria: *Come stridente fulmine* (Inganno) 15 Recitativo: *Quale improvvisa luce* (Eresia, Inganno, Angelo) 16 Aria: *Voi dell'eterno pianto* (Angelo) 17 Recitativo: *Noi fuggiremo* (Inganno, San Francesco) 18 Coro: *Già l'Eresia* (Coro)

Angelo: Monica Piccinini, soprano Eresia: Roberta Mameli, soprano San Francesco: Delphine Galou, alto Inganno: Luca Tittoto, bass Stuttgarter Kammerorchester Fabio Biondi, violin & direction

Fabio Biondi's immense curiosity for characterful music – especially of forgotten scores from the Baroque – yields another fabulous surprise with Francesco Feo's oratorio San Francesco di Sales. Feo's reputation is at last starting to wax after having waned dramatically in the nineteenth century and thenceforward: in his own age he was compared very highly with Bach

and Handel, and Charles Burney was moved to describe his vocal music as being “full of fire and invention and force in the melody and expression of the words”; Feo was also a boon companion of Pergolesi. He wrote both operas (such as *Siface* – which had a libretto by Metastasio) and church music, with compositions which demanded significant vocal virtuosity from his performers.

San Francesco di Sales: apostolo del Chablais is a set of reflections and imagery on the work of this inspirational Catholic Bishop of Geneva from the turn of the seventeenth century, and the oratorio probably saw the light of day in 1734.

This new release, further evidence of Glossa's commitment to the music of the Neapolitan Baroque, presents Fabio Biondi directing the highly-versatile forces of the Stuttgarter Kammerorchester and four of today's brightest and most stylish voices as the oratorio's soloists: sopranos Monica Piccinini and Roberta Mameli, contralto Delphine Galou, and bass Luca Tittoto. Ample opportunity is also provided in Feo's score for instrumental virtuosity, and Biondi's own abundant violinistic flair is much to the fore here. ---glossamusic.com

As late as the end of the 18th century, one writer put the Neapolitan composer Francesco Feo on a level with Bach and Handel, but, in line with the general neglect of composers from Naples (a bigger city than Rome or Venice in the middle 18th century), he is hardly known today. The Italian violinist and conductor Fabio Biondi and composer/musicologist Manuel de Roo have done a good deal of work producing a performable score of this 1734 oratorio, *San Francesco di Sales*, and the results are well worth checking out for lovers of the transitional late Baroque. There are several strong points here, first among them the application of the influential light Neapolitan style to a sacred subject. The effect is a bit incongruous but bright and charming, especially inasmuch as the opera does not really dramatize the life of the titular saint but rather presents him in dialogues with allegorical figures like Heresy. This works in a kind of pastoral-like way, and Feo's music, for the mid-1730s, was absolutely cutting edge. Sample the sharp aria *In questo spirano* of *Inganno* (Deception), which one can imagine having been in the back of Mozart's mind as he sat down to compose *Se vuol ballare* from *Le nozze di Figaro*. The oratorio, in two parts, has engaging and original melodies throughout. Then there are strong performances from both the Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra, with Biondi conducting from the violin, and the quartet of soloists; St. Francis de Sales is a female alto, and the contrasting sopranos, Monica Piccinini (an Angel) and Roberta Mameli (Heresi) are delightful. Biondi catches the pre-Classical idiom effectively, toning down his characteristic slashing attacks and avoiding the temptation among Baroque performers to Baroque-ify everything. On the downside

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Poniedziałek, 13 Sierpień 2018 14:36 -

are the increasing similarity of the sequence of recitative and aria as the oratorio proceeds, a hazard of the genre, and the rather impersonal sound environment of Stuttgart's Stiftskirche. Recommended for Baroque enthusiasts of all stripes. ---James Manheim, AllMusic Review

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