

Andreas Scholl – Arias for Senesino (2005)

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1. [Händel] *Bel contento già gode quest'alma*
2. [Händel] *Pompe vane di morte!...*
3. [Händel] *Dove sei, amato bene?*
4. [Albinoni] *Stelle ingrato*
5. [Albinoni] *Selvagge amenità*
6. [Lotti] *Discordi pensieri*
7. [Scarlatti] *Del ciel sui giri*
8. [Lotti] *Fosti caro agl'occhi miei*
9. [Händel] *Dall'ondoso periglio...*
10. [Händel] *Aure, deh, per pietà*
11. [Händel] *Al lampo dell'armi*
12. [Händel] *Cara sposa*
13. [Porpora] *Ver per le vene il sangue*

Andreas Scholl - Counter Tenor Byzantine Academy
Ottavio Dantone – conductor

Countertenor Andreas Scholl's *Arias for Senesino* collects operatic arias of the early eighteenth century, written for the castrato Senesino, whose real name was Francesco Bernardi. This focus on the music associated with a single individual has several benefits: it places the listener in the position of an opera goer of Senesino's time, awaiting the next appearance of a performer who can justifiably be called a star, and it illuminates the ways composers tailored music to a particular singer. Composers represented include Handel, who recruited Senesino to sing at London's Royal Academy of Music; Handel's arias are the largest single group, and for Senesino he created lengthy, leisurely arias that allowed the castrato to put his much-chronicled dramatic skills to work. "Cara sposa," from *Rinaldo* (1711) is an eight-minute example. Arias by such composers as Albinoni, Alessandro Scarlatti, Antonio Lotti, and Nicola Porpora are also included. These are alto castrato arias, touching on such themes as melancholy, prayer,

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pastoral love, and fears of impending doom. The material is ideally suited to Scholl's voice, which is creamy, expressive, precisely on pitch, and altogether endearing. He fares less well on the disc's few loud, athletic arias of anger and revenge, but for anyone who enjoys the sound of a countertenor -- a male voice singing in traditionally female ranges -- this is a fine collection from one of the world's top practitioners of the art. ---James Manheim, Rovi

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