

Natalie Dessay – Handel – Delirio (2006)

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01. Il Delirio Amoro: Introduzione 02. Il Delirio Amoro: Recitative: Da quel Giorno Fatale 03. Il Delirio Amoro: Aria (allegro): Un pensiero voli in ciel 04. Il Delirio Amoro: Recitative: Ma fermati pensier 05. Il Delirio Amoro: Aria: Per te lasciai la luce 06. Il Delirio Amoro: Recitative: non ti bastava ingrato 07. Il Delirio Amoro: Aria: Lascia omai le brune vele 08. Il Delirio Amoro: Recitative: Ma siamo giunti in Lete 09. Il Delirio Amoro: Entree 10. Il Delirio Amoro: Minuet: In questo a mene piaggie serene 11. Il Delirio Amoro: Recitative: Si disse Clori 12. Il Delirio Amoro: Minuet 13. Aci, Galatea e Polifemo: Aria: Qui l'augel da pianta in pianta lieto vola (Aci) 14. Mi palpita il cor: Adagio: Mi palpita il cor 15. Mi palpita il cor: Allegro: Agitata e l'alma mia 16. Mi palpita il cor: Recitativo: Tormento e gelosia 17. Mi palpita il cor: Aria (Largo): Ho tanti affanni in petto 18. Mi palpita il cor: Recitativo: Clori dite mi lagno 19. Mi palpita il cor: Aria (Allegro): S'un di m'adora la mia crudele Natalie Dessay – soprano Le Concert d'Astree Emmanuelle Haim – conductor

Two decades ago Handel's early Italian-language cantatas were little known, but sopranos have discovered that they provide a top-level vocal workout while offering more than a hint of the mature Handel's genius. This disc by French singer Natalie Dessay, one of the hottest sopranos on the scene, is going to be hard to beat. Dessay shares the credit with the period-instrument ensemble Le Concert d'Astrée and its conductor Emmanuelle Haïm, who has been turning out one groundbreaking Baroque disc after another.

Dessay and Haïm grasp the young Handel's compositional personality perfectly. These are works by a ferocious new talent, recently moved from conservative northern Germany to Italy, with its wealth of extreme vocalists, including castrati (for whom these cantatas were probably originally written). The music is full of fiery vocal ornaments, high energy, and enough daring dissonances to make the audience sit up and take notice. Dessay is in control of even the toughest long runs, and better still, she forges a vocal language to match the sharp accents and tense phrase shaping Haïm gets from her instrumentalists in the two Italian cantatas on the theme of love fulfilled and frustrated -- even in the midst of all the vocal action, Dessay

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manages a tight little crescendo on many of the long notes.

With the long, lonely pastoral aria "Qui l'augel da pianta in pianta," from the cantata Aci, Galatea, e Polifemo, things go from very fine to sublime. Dessay shapes these 11 minutes of music as a single long breath. She sings quietly at the very top of her range, with unbelievable warm intensity. She interacts with the solo oboe and violin as if they were all part of some cosmic dance, so closely attuned that she almost justifies the bizarre half-and-half photo of her face merged with Haïm's in the liner booklet. The slow Baroque aria of lost love does not get any sweeter than this. An extraordinary vocal recording, with all the forces cooperating to bring to life music that everyone ought to know. ---James Manheim, Rovi

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