



Category: Opera

Price: 13.80 €

Performer: Bezzina Gilbert: conductor
Ensemble Baroque di Nizza
Giuditta - Landy Sophie
Nutrice - Pichon Raphaël
Oloferne - Ghazarossian Carl
Church of St. Martin and St. Augustin, Nice, 2008

Media: 1 CD

Program information:

The name of Alessandro Scarlatti (1660-1725) is linked to the history of the Italian baroque oratorio no less than to opera and cantatas. In the field of the oratorio he firstly followed the flourishing tradition of Rome and then outlined a formal model of expression that was to be widely used in the works of the composers of the younger generations.

Born in Palermo in 1660, Scarlatti first approached the oratorio in Italian in 1683, with *Agar et Ismaele esiliati*, on a text by Giuseppe Domenico de Totis. In this work the distinction between recitative and aria seems to be made definitively systematic, whilst the figure of the historian, a characteristic feature of Latin oratorio, is abolished. In 1684 in Naples Scarlatti took up the post of director of the Royal Cappella, and left aside the composition of oratorios for a while.

He did not return to the oratorio until 1693 when he set two works on Italian texts: *I dolori di Maria sempre Vergine*, performed at San Luigi's in Palazzo and *La Giuditta*, an oratorio for five voices and instruments, on a libretto by cardinal Pietro Ottoboni. Some years later, in March 1697, Scarlatti returned to the story of Judith and Holofernes to set a new libretto, this time written by Antonio, the father of the cardinal Pietro Ottoboni. This second *Giuditta*, of which we know neither where it was first performed nor why it was created, was written for three voices, strings and basso continuo and is known today as the "Cambridge" *Giuditta*, (as its manuscript is conserved in the Rowe Music Library of King's College, Cambridge). This indeed is the work recorded on our CD. Three characters appear in this composition: *Giuditta* (soprano), the *Nurse* (contralto) and *Holofernes* (tenor). The *Nurse* has a musical role wholly equal to those of the other two characters, and indeed some of the most important parts of the score are written for her. The writing is always very flexible, with rather short recitatives and extremely concise, functional arias, often of virtuoso nature. The conception and idiom of the oratorio are strongly influenced by the simplification of style typical of the closing decades of the seventeenth century. Thus whilst the frequent use of instrumental ritornellos looks towards an eminently seventeenth century mode of composition, the brief three-part symphony that opens the composition and the use of dance rhythms, for example in *Giuditta's* aria *Non ti curo, o libertà - to all effects a minuet -*, clearly reflect the composer's openness towards new musical experiences and offer a foretaste of the expressive mood of the new century.

Strong Points and Reviews:

Gilbert Bezzina conducts three singers specialised in baroque music and the Ensemble Baroque de Nice, which celebrated 25 years' activity in 2007. Since its foundation the orchestra, made up of 12 stable members using original period instruments, has rapidly made a name for itself as one of the finest French groups specialising in baroque music.

Under the direction of Gilbert Bezzina, precursor of the revival of the baroque violin, the Ensemble has dedicated itself to research and the study of the performance of the repertoire of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This has led to the rediscovery of forgotten, unpublished baroque masterpieces

"What richness and sophistication in this almost Arcadian work (...)" The Ensemble Baroque de Nice and conductor Gilbert Bezzina underline its melodic opulence, let recitatives breathe (...)"

Olivier Rouvière - Diapason, May 2008

"The essential elements are all there: the perfect performance of the Ensemble Baroque de Nice and of their conductor (...) the singing of Sophie Landy, soprano endowed with a clear and poetic voice, who interprets a touching *Giuditta*..."

Jean Gallois - Opéra Magazine, May 2008

Tracklist:

Part 1

- 1 Sinfonia 2:53
- 2 Nutrice, al fato Assiro cede Bettulia (Giuditta) 1:33
- 3 Turbe timide, che fate? (Giuditta) 0:56
- 4 Signora, ah che le strida (Nurse) 0:40
- 5 A che giova d'un solo l'ardire (Nurse) 2:08
- 6 S'il più forte vacilla (Giuditta) 0:46
- 7 Sciolgo il crin, snudo il sen (Giuditta) 1:49
- 8 Scordato consigliere (Giuditta) 1:56
- 9 Deh, rifletti al gran cimento (Nurse/Giuditta) 2:03
- 10 Segui, Madre, il mio passo (Giuditta) 0:22
- 11 Sommo Dio, ch'in cor di donna (Nurse) 2:03
- 12 Ecco le tende Assire (Giuditta) 0:13
- 13 Chi m'addita, per pietà (Giuditta) 4:12
- 14 Donna, de' petti Assiri son men forti gli usberghi (Oloferne) 0:42
- 15 Togliti da quest'occhi (Oloferne) 1:16
- 16 Duce, Bettulia è serva del tuo valor (Giuditta) 0:59
- 17 Se ritorno entro le mura (Giuditta) 3:03
- 18 Donna, a torto m'accusi di superbo e crudel (Oloferne) 0:46
- 19 Mi combatte, mi stringe, m'atterra (Oloferne) 2:25
- 20 Ma no, vanne (Oloferne) 0:21

21 Tu m'uccidi e non t'accolgo/ m'accogli (Giuditta/Oloferne) 1:34
Part 2
22 Del pianto vostro, o lumi (Giuditta) 1:02
23 Posso e voglio (Giuditta) 1:15
24 Dell'inimico Assiro (Nurse) 1:48
25 Vincerò/ Vincerai s'il Ciel destina (Giuditta/Nurse) 2:11
26 Madre, apprendo il cimento (Giuditta) 0:57
27 Non ti curo, o libertà (Giuditta) 3:27
28 Non ti curo, o libertà (Nurse) 1:03
29 Bella, non ruotan gl'astri con sì soave (Oloferne) 1:10
30 Quella terra onde fuggisti (Oloferne) 1:51
31 Ma impallidita al suolo chini le luci e taci (Oloferne) 1:01
32 Bella, mi vuoi deridere (Oloferne) 1:29
33 Vieni, e le nostre cene col tuo semblante honora (Oloferne) 0:47
34 Già sapesti ferir (Oloferne) 0:51
35 Siedo, ma già non siede l'instacabil pensier (Giuditta) 1:13
36 Piega o Duce, il capo altero (Giuditta) 2:21
37 Madre, perché i riposi del tuo, del mio signor (Giuditta) 1:00
38 Ardea di fiamma impura (Nurse) 1:35
39 Dormi (Nurse) 3:27
40 Disse, e dormi Sansone (Nurse) 2:58
41 Tu che desti (Giuditta) 3:23
42 Ecco le mura amiche (Nurse) 0:44
43 Spunta l'alba (Nutrice/ Giuditta) 1:59
44 Amici, eccovi il teschio dell'Assiro Oloferne (Giuditta) 2:00
45 Di Bettulia avrai la sorte (Giuditta) 1:46