

CAMILLA DE ROSSI: SANT' ALESSIO

JULY 21, 2016

Musica Fiorita, Daniela Dolci

64:47

Pan Classics PC 10347

Originally recorded some fifteen years ago, this sparkling performance of Camilla de

Rossi's fine oratorio is a welcome reissue. The work was composed in 1710 for Vienna, and follows standard oratorio practice of the time, with two acts, an ensemble of soloists who come together to form the single final chorus, and an Italian libretto. The plot is simple – Alessio is about to be wed; his parents and bride-to-be celebrate, but the call of holy asceticism is too great; Alessio renounces bride and family (to the chagrin of both) and leaves. He is eventually found some years later, after his death, having lived incognito as a beggar, and the story ends with the lamentation over his newly recognised body. Camilla de Rossi clothes this rather sad tale with some stirring and dramatic music, though (as is often the case) the best tunes seem to go to the laypeople, rather than to the saint! Alessio's father has a particularly splendid aria with trumpets and timpani ("Sonori concerti"), calling for celebrations about the forthcoming nuptials, which Rossi cleverly additionally uses as a dramatic awakening call for the meditating Alessio's first appearance. The saint's jilted bride gets the most dramatic aria ("Cielo, pietoso Cielo") which brings the first act to a breathtaking close, alternating between adagio lament and concitato rage. In the second act Alessio at last has his chance to shine in his ecstatic final "A guerra mi sfida." The performance is all one could wish for – Graham Pushee is a sublime Alessio, Rosa Dominguez a suitably spurned Sposa, Agniezka Kowalczyk a fine Madre and William Lombardi a sonorous Padre. Musica Fiorita play like angels under Daniela Dolci's expert and dramatically finely judged baton. Most enjoyable!

Alastair Harper

Performance *****

Recorded sound *****

Booklet note *****

Overall presentation *****

5/5