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HANDEL: ODE FOR ST CECILIA'S DAY

 FEBRUARY 10, 2018 [EMR2015](#) [RECORDING](#) [0](#)

Cristina Grifone *soprano*, Hans Jörg Mammel *tenor*, Musica Fiorita, Daniela Dolci
59:41
Pan Classics PC10381

Preceded by a stylish account of Handel's Concerto Grosso op. 6/4, this is a crisply persuasive account of the same composer's *Ode for St Cecilia's Day*. Composed as an attempt in 1739 to revive the traditionally lavish celebrations for the patron saint of music, Handel's *Ode* was performed alongside his *Alexander's Feast*, some of the Op. 6 Concerti and a new organ concerto. As with *Alexander's Feast*, the *Ode* sets a text by Dryden, and Handel is at his most imaginative in animating the various scenarios his librettist conjures up. Daniela Dolci and Musica Fiorita generally employ a light athletic sound, allowing for very expressive singing and playing, and bringing an admirable clarity to Handel's rich and varied score. The playing and singing is consistently of the highest standard, the one slight fly in the ointment being tenor soloist Hans Jörg Mammel's slightly eccentric vowel sounds – given Handel's characteristic eccentricity in underlaying English text we can perhaps forgive this small failing. In every other respect, this is a thoroughly enjoyable account of the *Ode*, a charming and engaging work, which apart from "The Trumpet's Loud Clangour" occasionally extracted as a concert showpiece, is bafflingly underperformed nowadays. Perhaps, due precisely to finely chiseled authentic performances such as this, we are becoming more aware of the considerable virtues of works by Handel traditionally regarded as 'minor' pieces.

D. James Ross

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Georg Friedrich
Handel

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Day
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