



06/09-(6)

Title:

Agostino Steffani (1654–1728)
Orlando generoso
Drama per il
Theatro d'Hannover (1691)

Musicians:

Soloists
Musica Alta Ripa
Bernward Lohr, harpsichord and cond.

3 CDs at the price of 2

Order Number:
MDG 309 1566-2

UPC-Code:



Public Eye

More than three hundred years have passed since the Duchy of Hanover became an electorate, and even today the local Welf dynasty continues to remain in the public eye. At the end of the seventeenth century this noble family launched a cultural offensive and obtained the services of the Italian composer Agostino Steffani as court music director, so that Duke Ernst August could become a prince elector. Even today, in the era of the current Ernst August of Hanover and his wife Caroline of Monaco, Steffani's works continue to be performed in the majestic gardens not far from the former summer residence of the Welfs – as this live recording of a performance of the opera *Orlando generoso* on three CDs with the Musica Alta Ripa and outstanding soloists impressively demonstrates.

International Diplomacy

The Italian was a stroke of luck for the duke, who also employed the talent of the trained theologian, diplomat, and musician for all sort of delicate negotiations. Steffani too profited from these assignments. At the beginning of the eighteenth century the Vatican sent him to Hanover as the official titular bishop and in order to represent the interests of the Curia Romana in Northern Europe, a mostly Protestant region.

Irreconcilable Differences

Orlando generoso was Steffani's fourth opera. The libretto describes the conflict between personal emotionality and calculating power politics typical in

the court society of the times: irreconcilable class differences plunge two lovers into madness. Steffani treats this theme with virtuosic and expressive vocal music. He combines Italian virtuosity and spontaneity with French elegance and refinement, thus creating his own, worldly tone.

Productive Teamwork

During their fifteen years as a team MDG and Musica Alta Ripa have presented a great many extraordinary productions. Italian chamber cantatas as well as instrumental music of the French late baroque and concertos and chamber music from the generation of Bach's pupils belong to their joint repertoire. Since 2000 three major CD projects devoted to the oeuvre of Johann Sebastian Bach have been completed, and a Telemann cycle was inaugurated in 2003. Numerous recording prizes such as the Diapason d'or, Cannes Classical Award, Echo Klassik, and Audiophile Référence are motivations for further discoveries – with this recording certainly representing one such find.

G. Ph. Telemann

Concertos and Chamber Music
Musica Alta Ripa
Vol. 1: MDG 309 1189-2
Vol. 2: MDG 309 1250-2
Vol. 3: MDG 309 1314-2
Vol. 4: MDG 309 1384-2
Vol. 5: MDG 309 1450-2

