

Handel

Rodelinda

Pristine
XR

The bicentenary of Handel's death and the tercentenary of Purcell's birth were marked in London in June 1959 by a three week festival of their music. London was an obvious place to hold it: both composers had worked there, and indeed both are buried in Westminster Abbey. Four of Handel's operas were performed during the festival: *Samson* at Covent Garden, *Rodelinda* and *Semele* at Sadler's Wells, and *Solomon* at the Royal Festival Hall.

Rodelinda was written in 1725 for the King's Theatre, Haymarket but was not heard in Britain between the eighteenth century and a radio performance in 1928. A different radio performance followed in 1935, and finally there was a revival at the Old Vic in 1939. This 1959 production thus brought a rarely heard opera to London audiences.

The star of this production was undoubtedly Joan Sutherland. Sutherland had begun the move from dramatic soprano to dramatic coloratura, specialising in previously obscure bel canto operas, with Handel's *Alcina* in March 1957. Handel's *Samson* and Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* had followed in late 1958 and early 1959. She takes the title role in this performance, an ideal vehicle for her dazzling coloratura. The reviewer in the *Times* described her performance as 'momentous in beauty and dignity, pathos and electric vigour,' while Opera Magazine saw the performance as 'confirmation that we have in our midst one of the great sopranos of the world.'

Janet Baker sings Eduige in what could easily be called her break-through performance. Aged just 25 at the time, she went on to become Britain's leading mezzo-soprano with a particular affinity for the bel canto repertoire. Her recordings of the works of Bach, Gluck, Handel and Purcell became benchmarks. Janet Baker was actually a far more versatile singer than that, performing works as diverse as the *Trojans* by Berlioz, Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*, and Britten's *Owen Wingrave*. She was also a regular and notable recitalist. Opera Magazine described her as 'one of the most arresting, intelligent and imaginative mezzos we have, with vivid declamation and a rich, ringing, individual timbre.'

Grimoaldo is sung by the British bass-baritone Raimund Herincx. As a house baritone for Welsh National Opera and Sadler's Wells, Herincx proved himself capable of singing a wide variety of roles and genres, from Verdi to Tippett. Later in his career he became best known for Wagnerian roles. Conductor Charles Farncombe created the Handel Opera Society in 1955, with the aim of restoring Handel's forgotten operas to the stage. His production of *Deidamia* in 1955 received a positive audience response, and a regular series of opera productions ensued, often at Sadler's Wells. This BBC broadcast is an important addition to his rather small discography.



Pristine
XR
PACO 144

- CD 1
- 1 Overture (2:08)
 - 2 Act 1 - Ho perduto il caro sposo (7:10)
 - 3 L'empio rigo del fato vile non potrà (3:44)
 - 4 Io già t'amai, ritrosa (2:37)
 - 5 Lo farò (4:15)
 - 6 Di Capido impiego i vannì (4:33)
 - 7 Pompe vane di morte! (2:56)
 - 8 Dove sei, amato bene? (5:45)
 - 9 Ombre piante, urne funeste! (8:42)
 - 10 Morrai sì (4:34)

- 11 Act 2 - Grimaldo era duca (4:29)
- 12 Spietati, io vi giurai (2:56)
- 13 Prigioniera hò l'alma in pena (6:55)
- 14 Frà tempeste faneste a quest' alma (2:40)

- CD 2
- 1 Con rauco momorio (6:35)
 - 2 Recitative (1:41)
 - 3 Scacciata dal suo nido (3:32)
 - 4 Ritorna, oh caro e dolce mio tesoro (6:16)
 - 5 Tuo drudo è mio rivale (2:26)
 - 6 Io t'abbraccio (6:46)
 - 7 Act 3 - Del german nel periglio (1:19)
 - 8 Un seffiro spirò (2:24)
 - 9 Quanto più fiera tempesta freme (4:22)
 - 10 Chi di voi fù più infedele (6:51)
 - 11 Se'l mio non è sì forte (7:04)
 - 12 Amicol ah! (0:56)
 - 13 Se fiera belva ha cinto frà le catene il piede (2:10)
 - 14 Fatto inferno è il mio petto (1:35)
 - 15 Mà por voi lusingate (7:08)
 - 16 Vivi tiranno! (2:44)
 - 17 Mio caro bene! (4:25)
 - 18 Dopo la notte oscura più lucido (2:48)
 - 19 BBC Radio Announcer (1:00)

XR remastering by Andrew Rose

Cover artwork based on a
photograph of the performance

Broadcast on 24 June 1959
Sadler's Wells Theatre, London

Sung in English
Translation by David Harris
Track titles shown in the original
Italian to aid navigation, comparison
and score-following

Continuo: Thurston Dart, harpsichord

Total duration: 2hr 15:26

For a full catalogue visit
www.pristineclassical.com
or call : (00) 33 967 391 857

© 2017 Pristine Audio