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G. F. HÄNDEL | W. A. MOZART

Arias and Overtures



Stavanger Symphony Orchestra

Jan Willem de Vriend conductor

Mari Eriksmoen soprano



SUPER AUDIO CD

G. F. HÄNDEL | W. A. MOZART

Arias and Overtures

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W. A. MOZART (1756-1791)

[1] "Al destin che la minaccia"

Aspasia from Mitridate, rè di Ponto, K. 87 (K. 74a)

4:58

G. F. HÄNDEL (1685-1759) / **W. A. MOZART**

[2] Overture from *Acis und Galatea*, K. 566

3:33

[3] "Wie lieblich ist der Boten Schritt" from *Der Messias*, K. 572

2:14

W. A. MOZART

[4] "Quando avran fine omai" - "Padre, germani, addio!" -

"Ecco, Idamante, ahimè" *Ilia from Idomeneo*, K. 366

8:16

G. F. HÄNDEL

[5] "Da tempeste il legno infranto"

Cleopatra from Giulio Cesare in Egitto, HWV 17

6:08

[6] "O had I Jubal's Lyre" *Achsah from Joshua*, HWV 64

2:42

G. F. HÄNDEL / **W. A. MOZART**

[7] "O fühltest du die Qualen"

- "Wie's Täubchen klagt um den Gemahl"

Galatea from Acis und Galatea, K. 566

6:07

W. A. MOZART (1756-1791)

[8] "Alma grande e nobil core", K. 578

4:29

G. F. HÄNDEL / **W. A. MOZART**

[9] Overture from *Das Alexander-Fest*, K. 591

5:53

W. A. MOZART

[10] "Crudele? Troppo mi spiace..." - "Non mi dir"

Donna Anna from Don Giovanni, K. 527

6:01

G. F. HÄNDEL

[11] "M'adora l'idol mio" *Agilea from Teseo*, HWV 9

5:57

W. A. MOZART

[12] "Ach, ich fühl's" *Pamina from Die Zauberflöte*, K. 620

3:58

G. F. HÄNDEL

[13] "Secondate, oh giusti dei" *Metella from Silla*, HWV 10

2:24

[14] "Amarti si vorrei" *Agilea from Teseo*, HWV 9

4:54

W. A. MOZART

[15] "Or sai chi l'onore" *Donna Anna from Don Giovanni*, K. 527

2:49

Total time 70:33

For the booklet with libretto, please see www.challengerecords.com/booklets/cc72832



Mozart composed *Mitridate, re di Ponto*, his first opera seria, at the age of fourteen. It was also his first big operatic success. Vittorio Amadeo Cigna-Santi wrote the libretto, based on Racine's play *Mithridate*. Aspasia, betrothed to King Mitridate, secretly loves Sifare. Her powerful aria "Al destin che le minaccia" in Act One reflects her emotional conflict.

While working as a diplomat in London during the late 1760's, Baron Gottfried van Swieten became passionately fond of Handel's music. Subsequently, in Vienna, van Swieten founded a group of noblemen-connoisseurs called the Society of Associated Cavaliers - a society of ancient music. For the Society's concerts between 1788 and 1791 van Swieten commissioned Mozart to arrange and newly orchestrate four works by Handel – *Messiah*, *Acis and Galatea*, *Alexander's Feast* and the *Ode for St. Cecilia's Day*. Mozart's arrangement of Handel's *Acis and Galatea*, commissioned for performance in Vienna and with a libretto by John Gay, dates from November 1788. In his re-orchestration of the delightful overture Mozart replaces the original oboes with clarinets.

Mozart's arrangement of *Messiah*, which Handel composed in 1741, dates from a few months after his version of *Acis and Galatea*. Charles Jennens devised the libretto, chiefly using passages from the Prayer Book. Van Swieten gave Mozart clear instructions to fill out Handel's orchestral accompaniment, using the instruments available for his Society's concerts – flutes, clarinets, bassoons, horns, trumpets, trombones and timpani. The original English text was translated into German by Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock. Mozart added to some numbers what might be termed "additional accompaniments",

including new counterpoints and new harmonies. These additions are beautiful in themselves and certainly provide more than novelty interest. From the latter half of Part Two, the aria "Wie lieblich ist der Boten Schritt" (How beautiful are the feet) is a 12/8 Larghetto in G minor, accompanied by violins and continuo.

First produced in Munich in January 1781, *Idomeneo* (libretto by Giambattista Varesco) was Mozart's first fully mature opera. Although the subject belongs to the distant past, the characters are flesh and blood, as Mozart's music compels us to believe in their changing emotional states. This powerful opera seria is set on the island of Crete shortly after the Trojan War. In the opening scene Ilia, daughter of King Priam, has been brought captive to Crete, where she laments her fate.

Handel composed *Julius Caesar*, his seventeenth opera, in 1724. Loosely based on historic events and with a libretto by Nicola Haym, it was a great success in its own time and remains one of the most frequently performed of Baroque operas. "Da tempeste il legno infranto" is sung by Cleopatra in Act Three. Caesar has travelled to her camp and she is overjoyed to see him.

Handel's oratorio *Joshua*, one of many which he based on Old Testament sources, dates from 1747. Thomas Morell compiled the libretto. "O had I Jubal's Lyre", one of Handel's most popular arias, is sung by Achsah, daughter of Caleb, in Part III. In this showpiece she expresses her joy and gratitude at being granted permission to marry the young warrior Orthniel.

From Mozart's arrangement of *Acis und Galatea*, "Schafer, was suchst du so angstlich" (Shepherd, what art thou pursuing? in the original English) is sung by Damon, as he urges Acis to abandon his search for Galatea. Handel's perennially popular work (English text by John Gay) has been variously described as a pastoral, a masque or a serenata. It was premiered in 1718.

Interpolating arias into other composers' operas was common practice in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Mozart wrote *Alma grande e nobile core*, K 578, for insertion into *Cimarosa's Li due baroni*, premiered in 1789. Numerous disguises lead to the kind of mistaken identity common to many comic operas. This aria is a gem from Mozart's maturity (roughly contemporary with *Così fan tutte*) and one of several insertion arias which he composed in 1789. *Madama Laura* is indignant at the behaviour of her unworthy admirer.

Alexander's Feast was another of Handel's works which Mozart was commissioned in 1790 to newly orchestrate. Handel composed the original ode (text by Dryden) in 1736. A great success, it was frequently revived in subsequent seasons. The overture begins in typically Baroque manner – a stately opening section with dotted rhythms, then a fugal Allegro – though the following minuet (Andante) forms a less conventional conclusion.

Mozart composed *Don Giovanni* in 1787. As the production of *Le Nozze di Figaro* at the Estates Theatre in Prague had been a triumphant success, the theatre management commissioned Mozart to write a new opera. Based on the famous legend of Don Juan, this proved to be another of his

outstanding collaborations with librettist Lorenzo da Ponte. “Non mi dir” (preceded by the recitative “Crudele”) is sung by Donna Anna in Act Two, as she asks Don Ottavio to refrain from talking about marriage until she has had time to recover from her father’s death.

Handel’s opera Teseo (libretto by Nicola Haym) dates from 1712, the year in which he decided to settle in England. (He took British citizenship fifteen years later.) This heroic opera is a retelling of the Greek legend of Theseus (Teseo in Italian). One of the highlights is the aria “M’adora l’idol mio” (My idol adores me), sung in Act One by Agilea, who is in love with Teseo and is proud of her own constancy. This aria requires brilliance from not only the singer but also the obbligato oboist.

Mozart composed *Die Zauberflöte* – libretto by Emanuel Schikaneder – in the year of his death aged thirty-five. Set in Ancient Egypt, the opera combines elements of pantomime with such moral themes as good-versus-evil, enlightenment and universal brotherhood. Thus it appeals on different levels simultaneously. The many instances of Masonic symbolism in *The Magic Flute* – in the music, libretto and scenery – reflect both Mozart’s and Schikaneder’s membership of the Masonic Brotherhood, but awareness of these references is not essential to our appreciation. The music itself is richly diverse, ranging from melodies of folk-like simplicity to more solemn, ritualistic pieces including an old-fashioned Lutheran chorale tune. In Act One the handsome prince Tamino has instantly fallen in love with Pamina, the Queen of the Night’s daughter. In Act Two the three boys have advised Tamino to remain silent,

but the heartbroken Pamina misunderstands his lack of response, fearing that he loves her no more. She sings of her anguish in “Ach, ich fühl’s” – in G minor, a key which in Mozart’s music – instrumental or vocal – is associated with a special poignancy.

Handel’s opera Silla (1713) is about the Ancient Roman dictator Lucius Cornelius Sulla, but librettist Giacomo Rossi changed his name to Silla. The work is believed to have been performed only once, but Handel recycled some of its music in his next two operas, a practice which was especially common back then. The florid aria “Secondate, oh giusti dei” (Help me, ye just gods) is sung by Silla’s wife Metella. Scandalised by her husband’s outrageous behaviour, she persuades Scabro, her confidant, to conspire with her against him.

“Amarti si vorrei” (I should like to love you) is a poignant lament (Adagio) from Act Four of Handel’s Teseo. Here Agilea’s feelings are in marked contrast with the happiness she expressed in “M’adora l’idol mio” (sung earlier on the disc). Abducted by the evil Medea, she is told that she must reject Teseo or see him killed.

“Or sai chi l’onore” is sung by Donna Anna in Act One of Don Giovanni. Having recognised the Don as her attacker of the previous night, she describes her terror to Don Ottavia in this turbulent aria.

Philip Borg-Wheeler



Mari Eriksmoen Soprano

The profile of Norwegian soprano Mari Eriksmoen continues to rise through her regular appearance on Europe's major opera, concert and recital stages, and she is consistently praised for her compelling blend of radiant stage personality and purity of vocal tone.

On completion of her studies in Oslo (Norwegian Academy of Music), Paris (Conservatoire National Supérieur) and Copenhagen (Royal Danish Academy of Opera), Eriksmoen was invited almost immediately to debut as Zerbinetta (*Ariadne auf Naxos*) at Theater an der Wien, launching her career and marking the beginnings of a close and ongoing collaboration, appearing there since as Olympia (*Les contes d'Hoffmann*), Euridice (Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo*), Agilea (Handel's *Teseo*), Servilia (*La clemenza di Tito*) and as Susanna, Zerlina and Fiordiligi in the Da Ponte Trilogy conducted by the late Nikolaus Harnoncourt.

Eriksmoen made her role debut as Mélisande (*Pelléas et Mélisande*) in an acclaimed staging for Opera Vlaanderen by Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, Damien Jalet and Marina Abramović, of which *Forum Opéra* wrote "her French diction was faultless, her voice like crystal, and she embodies the hypnotising fragility of this heroine to perfection." Further performances followed at Grand Théâtre de Luxembourg, and she reprises the role and staging this season marking her debut at Grand Théâtre de Genève.

Eriksmoen was unanimously praised for her performance in the world premiere of “Waiting”, a symphonic passion based on Henrik Ibsen’s Peer Gynt, set to the music of Edvard Grieg, conceived and staged by Calixto Bieito as part of the 2019 Bergen International Festival with subsequent performances at Bilbao’s Teatro Arriago, Copenhagen’s Tivoli Concert Hall and Vilnius’ Russian Drama Theatre. “Waiting” features as part of Opéra national du Rhin’s 20/21 season, marking her house debut, conducted by Eivind Gullberg Jensen.

Other operatic highlights include both Susanna and Sophie (*Der Rosenkavalier*) for Den Norske Opera, Blondchen (*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*) at Oper Frankfurt, Glyndebourne Festival Opera and the BBC Proms, La Fée in Damiano Michieletto’s production of *Cendrillon* at Komische Oper Berlin under Henrik Nanasi, Waldvogel in Daniel Barenboim’s epic *Ring Cycles* at Teatro alla Scala and, most recently, her first Donna Anna (*Don Giovanni*) in a semi-staging for the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra and Daniel Harding.

In concert, Eriksmoen has performed with Orchestre de Paris, Berliner Philharmoniker, Oslo Philharmonic, Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, Danish National Symphony Orchestra, Gothenburg Symphony, Münchner Philharmoniker, and the Internationale Stiftung Mozarteum among others. Last season’s appearances brought some key additions to her already expansive repertoire including *Mater gloriosa* in Mahler’s Symphony No.8 under Jukka-Pekka Saraste, and both Britten’s *Les Illuminations* and Canteloube’s *Chants d’Auvergne* with Ed Gardner. In the current season, Mari Eriksmoen joins Klaus Mäkelä in Mahler’s Symphony No 2 with Oslo

Philharmonic, Ed Gardner in Brahms’ *Ein deutsches Requiem* with Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, Kazuki Yamada in Orff’s *Carmina Burana* with Orchestre Philharmonique de Monte Carlo, and Dalia Stasevska in a selection of Mozart arias with the Trondheim Symfoniorkester.

On disc, Eriksmoen features on Schumann’s *Szenen aus Goethes Faust* with Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks under Daniel Harding (Naxos), Mozart’s *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, both with Akademie für alte Musik Berlin under René Jacobs (harmonia mundi) and Glyndebourne Festival conducted by Robin Ticciati (Opus Arte DVD), and in a “poised, elegant and persuasive” (*Guardian*) debut recital disc featuring songs by Grieg, Grøndahl, Wolf and Strauss with Alphonse Cemin (Alpha).



Stavanger Symphony Orchestra (SSO) is one of Scandinavia's most successful orchestras. SSO performs and has its concerts in the Fartein Valen in Stavanger concert hall which is considered one of the best concert halls in Europe.

Andris Poga has been appointed SSO's new Chief Conductor, effective as of 2021/22. Jan Willem de Vriend is the orchestra's current Conductor-in-Residence. Recent guest conductors have included Karina Canellakis, Pablo Heras-Casado, Kazuki Yamada, James Gaffigan, Stanislav Kochanovsky, Lionel Bringuier, Dalia Stasevska, Markus Stenz and Vassily Sinaisky, among others. Frans Brüggen was the SSO's Artistic Director for early music from 1990-1997; Philippe Herreweghe had the same position from 2000 to 2004 and Fabio Biondi from 2006 to 2016. Ever since then, the SSO has continued to work regularly with exponents of historical performance practice including Kristian Bezuidenhout, Andrea Marcon, Jan Willem de Vriend, Matthew Halls, Ottavio Dantone, Riccardo Minasi, among others.

The orchestra has a recording label of its own; besides, it has recorded lots of Scandinavian music for BIS, as well as baroque music with Fabio Biondi for Naïve and other record companies. It has received numerous awards including the Gramophone Award in 2007, the Diapason d'Or in 2012 and the Spellemannpris (most lately 2015). SSO is known as an innovative orchestra excelling in many new enterprises: an album with Gisle Kverndokk's Symphonic Dances for SSO's inhouse label was awarded the 2019 Grammy Award for Best Immersive Audio Album; and it received two Hedda Awards in 2019 for the symphonic silent play 'The Mute'. The SSO has been touring in various European countries, Japan and the USA. The orchestra was founded in 1938 and consists of 85 musicians from 23 different nations.



Jan Willem de Vriend, formerly principal conductor of the Residentie Orkest The Hague (from 2015 to 2019), is now principal guest conductor of the Orquestra Simfònica de Barcelona i Nacional de Catalunya, Orchestre National de Lille and Stuttgart Philharmonic Orchestra. He is also Artist in Residence at the Stavanger Symphony Orchestra and makes regular guest appearances with ensembles such as the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Tonhalle Orchestra Zurich, Konzerthausorchester Berlin, Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra, Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra and Rotterdam Philharmonic.

De Vriend first established an international reputation as artistic director of the Combattimento Consort Amsterdam, which he established in 1982 and led from the violin until 2015. Specialising in music of the 17th and 18th century, and applying historically informed practice on modern instruments, the consort gave new life to many rarely heard works and Gramophone magazine praised its players as “accomplished... with technical finesse and a lively feeling for characterisation”. Its collaborative spirit lives on in de Vriend’s approach as he explores and energises the symphonic repertoire, in particular the music of Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Brahms and Johann Strauss.

From 2006 to 2018, he was chief conductor of the Netherlands Symphony Orchestra (Het Orkest van het Oosten), based in the city of Enschede. Early in his tenure he made a major impact with Mahler’s Symphony No. 1 in the 1893 Hamburg version, subsequently recorded for Challenge Classics. *Gramophone magazine* wrote: “Don’t miss this one... The music-making is

winningly fresh and vigorous". De Vriend and the orchestra went on to record a substantial Beethoven catalogue for Challenge Classics, embracing the complete symphonies and concertos (with Hannes Minnaar and Liza Ferschtman among the soloists). Classic FM praised the interpretation of Symphony No. 7 for "a bounding flair that does real justice to the composer's capacity for joy". Further landmarks in the Challenge Classics catalogue are the complete Mendelssohn symphonies, again with the Netherlands Symphony Orchestra, and the complete symphonies of Schubert, recorded with the Residentie Orkest, also De Vriend's orchestra for a Decca recording of Mendelssohn's complete works for piano and orchestra. The Konzerthausorchester Berlin was the choice for a Berlin Classics album of Schumann's complete works for piano and orchestra.

From 2008 to 2015 Jan Willem de Vriend was principal guest conductor of the Brabant Orchestra (now the South Netherlands Philharmonic) and he has made guest appearances with, among others, the Belgian National Orchestra, SWR Symphony Orchestra Stuttgart, Royal Flanders Philharmonic Orchestra, Luxembourg Philharmonic Orchestra, Wiener Kammerorchester and Hong Kong Philharmonic. His future plans include engagements with the Rotterdam Philharmonic, MDR Leipzig Radio Symphony Orchestra and NDR Radiophilharmonie.

In the field of opera, in both Europe and the USA, de Vriend and Combattimento Consort Amsterdam gave performances of works by Monteverdi, Haydn, Handel, Telemann, and J.S. Bach (the 'Hunting'

and 'Coffee' cantatas at the Leipzig Bach Festival), all in stagings by the director Eva Buchmann. Operas by such composers as Mozart, Verdi and Cherubini featured in his seasons with the Netherlands Symphony Orchestra, which included a visit to Switzerland with productions of *Don Giovanni* and Rossini's *La Gazzetta*, again directed by Eva Buchmann. De Vriend has also conducted opera in Amsterdam (Nederlandse Reisopera), Barcelona, Strasbourg, Luzern, Schwetzingen and Bergen.

In the Netherlands he has presented several television series and is well known for his appearances on a variety of other programmes about music. In 2012 he received a prize from the national station NPO Radio 4 for his creative contribution to classical music.

This High Definition Surround Recording was Produced, Engineered and Edited by Bert van der Wolf of NorthStar Recording Services, using the 'High Quality Musical Surround Mastering' principle. The basis of this recording principle is a realistic and holographic 3 dimensional representation of the musical instruments, voices and recording venue, according to traditional concert practice. For most older music this means a frontal representation of the musical performance, but such that width and depth of the ensemble and acoustic characteristics of the hall do resemble 'real life' as much as possible. Some older compositions, and many contemporary works do specifically ask for placement of musical instruments and voices over the full 360 degrees sound scape, and in these cases the recording is as realistic as possible, within the limits of the 5.1 Surround Sound standard. This requires a very innovative use of all 6 loudspeakers and the use of completely matched, full frequency range loudspeakers for all 5 discrete channels. A complementary sub-woofer, for the ultra low frequencies under 40Hz, is highly recommended to maximally benefit from the sound quality of this recording.

This recording was produced with the use of Sonodore microphones, Avalon Acoustic & Musikelectronic Geithain monitoring, Siltech Mono-Crystal cabling and dCS - & Merging Technologies converters.



NORTHSTAR
RECORDING
by **BERT VAN DER WOLF**



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This production is also available as High Resolution digital download at www.spiritofturtle.com

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