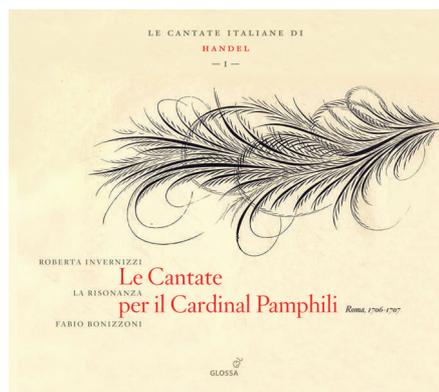


GCD 921521
 New release information
 June 2006

The Italian Cantatas by Haendel La Risonanza / Fabio Bonizzoni



Georg Friedrich Haendel
 Le Cantate per il Cardinal Pamphili

Roberta Invernizzi, soprano

La Risonanza

Isabel Lehmann, Emiliano Rodolfi,
 David Plantier, Oliva Centurioni,
 Elena Telò, Gianni de Rosa,
 Caterina dell'Agnello, Rebecca Ferri,
 Vanni Moretto

Fabio Bonizzoni, harpsichord & direction

Glossa GCD 921521

NEW RELEASE

Full-price digipak

Programme

Georg Friedrich Haendel (1685-1759)
 Le Cantate Italiane, vol. 1
 Rome, 1706-1707

1-7
 Tra le fiamme (Il consiglio), HWV 170

8-11
 Pensieri notturni di Filli (Nel dolce dell'oblio),
 HWV 134

12-22
 Il delirio amoroso (Da quel giorno fatale),
 HWV 90

23-28
 Figlio d'alte speranze, HWV 113

Production details

Total playing time: 66'14

Recorded in Brescia, Italy, in 2005
 Engineered by Adriaan Verstijnen
 Produced by Tini Mathot
 Executive producer: Carlos Céster
 Booklet essay by Ellen T. Harris
 Design 00:03:00 oficina tresminutos
 English - Français - Deutsch - Español



NOTES (ENG)

The chamber cantata flourished in Italy as a counterpart to public opera and oratorio, cultivated by aristocratic patrons for their personal enjoyment. Perhaps because of its essentially private origins, this pervasive Baroque form remains little known today. During his years in Italy (1706-1710), George Frideric Handel composed nearly 100 cantatas for a series of important patrons, but they have tended to be passed over in favour of his larger operas, oratorios, concertos and orchestral suites. The plan of La Risonanza to perform and record all of the cantatas with instrumental accompaniment (about one-third of the total) is therefore of signal importance for all music lovers, as it will bring this extraordinarily beautiful music once again to life (2006-2009). This first disk presents four remarkable cantatas from early in Handel's Italian period: *Il delirio amoroso*, *Tra le fiamme*, *Figlio d'alte speranze* and *Pensieri notturni di Filli*. Given the intensity, maturity and beauty of the cantatas, it is no surprise that Handel found them useful throughout his life, but now it is finally possible to bring these remarkable works out of Handel's workroom and give them their own long-overdue hearing.

NOTAS (ESP)

La cantata de cámara floreció en Italia como contrapartida a la ópera y al oratorio públicos, patrocinada por los mecenas aristocráticos para su propio disfrute. Quizá debido a sus orígenes esencialmente privados, esta forma barroca de amplia difusión sigue siendo relativamente desconocida hoy día. Durante sus años italianos (1706-1710), Georg Friedrich Haendel compuso casi 100 cantatas para una serie de importantes mecenas, pero se ha tendido a dejarlas de lado en beneficio de sus óperas, oratorios, conciertos y suites orquestales, todas ellas de mayores dimensiones. El proyecto de La Risonanza de ejecutar y grabar todas las cantatas que cuentan con acompañamiento instrumental (aproximadamente un tercio del total) es por tanto de importancia trascendental para todos los melómanos, ya que le devolverá la vida a esta música de extraordinaria belleza (2006-2009). El primer disco presenta cuatro notables cantatas de los inicios del periodo italiano de Haendel: *Il delirio amoroso*, *Tra le fiamme*, *Figlio d'alte speranze* y *Pensieri notturni di Filli*. Dadas la intensidad, madurez y belleza de las cantatas, no es ninguna sorpresa que Haendel las encontrara útiles a lo largo de su vida; ahora, por fin, es posible sacar estas obras notables del taller de Haendel y concederles una audición más que merecida desde hace tiempo.

NOTES (FRA)

La cantate de chambre fleurit en Italie sous l'impulsion des mécènes appartenant à l'aristocratie qui désiraient une musique pouvant être goûtée dans une sphère moins publique que l'opéra ou l'oratorio. Et c'est sans doute à cause de cette origine essentiellement privée que cette forme baroque, très en vogue à l'époque, est relativement peu connue aujourd'hui. Durant ses années italiennes (1706-1710), Haendel composa une centaine de cantates pour une série de mécènes importants, qui ont été reléguées au bénéfice de ses opéras, oratorios, concertos et suites orchestrales, c'est-à-dire, des œuvres possédant toutes de plus grandes dimensions. Le projet de La Risonanza d'interpréter et d'enregistrer toutes les cantates avec accompagnement instrumental (environ un tiers du total) est donc d'une importance transcendante pour tous les mélomanes, puisqu'il redonne vie à cette musique d'une beauté extraordinaire (2006-2009). Le premier disque présente quatre cantates remarquables, datant du début de l'époque italienne de Haendel : *Il delirio amoroso*, *Tra le fiamme*, *Figlio d'alte speranze* et *Pensieri notturni di Filli*. Étant donné l'intensité, la maturité et la beauté des cantates, il n'est pas surprenant que Haendel les ait trouvées utiles, et ce, tout au long de sa vie ; à présent, nous pouvons finalement faire sortir ces œuvres remarquables de l'atelier de Haendel et leur offrir l'interprétation qu'elles ont bien méritée depuis longtemps.

NOTIZEN (DEU)

Die Kammerkantate, von aristokratischen Mäzenen zu persönlicher Erbauung gefördert, hatte ihre Blütezeit in Italien gerade als Kontrast zu öffentlicher Oper und öffentlichem Oratorium. Vielleicht ist es auch in ihren wesentlich privaten Ursprüngen begründet, dass diese durchdringende barocke Musikform auch heute noch relativ unbekannt ist. Während seiner in Italien verbrachten Jahre (1706-1710) komponierte Georg Friedrich Händel fast 100 Kantaten für eine Reihe bekannter Mäzene, doch wurden diese Werke oft übergangen zugunsten größer dimensionierter Opern, Oratorien, Konzerte und orchesterlicher Suiten. Das Projekt von La Risonanza, sämtliche Kantaten mit Instrumentalbegleitung (etwa ein Drittel der Kantaten insgesamt) aufzuführen und aufzunehmen, ist deshalb für alle Musikliebhaber von größter Bedeutung, wird hier doch dieser außergewöhnlich schönen Musik neues Leben verliehen (2006-2009). Die erste CD präsentiert vier bemerkenswerte Kantaten aus den ersten Jahren von Händels Italienaufenthalt: *Il delirio amoroso*, *Tra le fiamme*, *Figlio d'alte speranze* und *Pensieri notturni di Filli*. Angesichts von Intensität, Reife und Schönheit der Kantaten verwundert es nicht, dass Händel sie über sein ganzes Leben hinweg als nützlich empfindend, doch nun ist es endlich möglich, diese bemerkenswerten Werke aus Händels Arbeitszimmer zu holen, und ihnen selbst längst überfälliges Gehör zu verschaffen.

Fabio Bonizzoni

A portrait



After recordings of lesser-known Baroque figures such as Bernardo Storace and Giovanni Salvatore, Fabio Bonizzoni has more recently turned his attention to acknowledged giants of the time. The Milanese harpsichordist and organist (he also finds time to teach in conservatories as diverse as Trapani, Lugano and The Hague) has introduced us to his view of keyboard *Sonatas* by Domenico Scarlatti and to a thrilling reading of Bach's *Goldberg Variations*.

Now comes an exciting new recording project, one set to unfurl over the years remaining before the 250th anniversary of the death of Georg Frideric Handel. In it, Bonizzoni and his chamber orchestra La Risonanza will be joined by leading singers specializing in the music of *il caro Sassone* for a series of recordings devoted to the secular-texted Italian Cantatas with instrumental accompaniment written by Handel when he was in Italy. In parallel will be an extensive run of concerts, with various festivals (initially in Italy, France and Belgium) taking the series complete.

Bonizzoni explains his reasons for embarking on this series as being many and various: "A long time has elapsed since I first began thinking about this project. I am much taken by its novelty, its unique character in the recording industry, as well as the sheer numbers – and quality – of the people who have joined me in this venture. Nevertheless, the strongest motive for this emotion comes from being conscious of presenting to the public of true music lovers some of the most beautiful pieces of music ever composed. My long fascination with Handel grows indeed with every cantata I prepare, study or teach. Without detracting from the quality of his later operas, I believe I am in a position to affirm that, once he left Italy, his musical language was already mature and the composer was in full command of his most typical expressive means."

The series of recordings of secular cantatas focuses on a brief (but intensive) Italian period in Handel's career during 1706-09. Why was the Halle-born composer in Italy and what did he do there?

At that time Italy was probably the place that every artist wanted to visit; the cultural and artistic life there was the most exciting in the whole world and also the most innovative with all the new developments happening there. This was particularly the case in Rome, with the extreme richness of the Papal Court being able to attract the best artists from all over the world. Naples, as well, with its Bourbon court and its link with Spain had a very lively artistic life (as did Florence in the times of the Medici). Venice, on the other hand – with the development of the public theatre – was able to offer a challenge to a composer in not only being acclaimed by the upper classes but also by the, so to say, "men in the street". These cities were exactly the ones where Handel was to visit between 1706 and 1709. He arrived in Italy not exactly completely unknown, but definitely when he left the peninsula he was much more celebrated, probably as the most acclaimed composer of the time given that the success of his final Italian work (the opera *Agrippina*, given in Venice in December 1709) was simply amazing. Working on the music he wrote there in those times is absolutely fascinating as it shows the incredible creativeness of a real genius. He comes to Italy, absorbs all the input from the famous composers working there (think of Corelli, Scarlatti, Pasquini, etc.), he takes all those elements and keeps experimenting with them, building up a new language. I think that the 'genius' aspect lies in the fact that his experiments never sound as experiments but always as accomplished masterpieces. And with the enthusiasm that a young man can have, in every new page that he writes, he seeks and finds a new instrumental or expressive solution. It is really just incredible what he does there. I believe that he was never so excited himself later on in writing his music. In his Italian works he is really fond of being able to invent, every page, a new astonishing solution.

Your preparation for these recordings has taken you back to the original sources. Does anything that you have discovered there suggest to you a possible performing approach that is fresh and different?

First let me point out that this musicological research and, I would say, re-reading of sources is not a thing I am doing on my own. I have had the great chance of doing this, with the help of some of the most eminent Handelian experts in the world (Ellen Harris in Boston, Steffen Voss in Hamburg, Karl Böhmer in Mainz and many others). But to come to your question though: absolutely yes! We are particularly lucky in knowing a lot about the circumstances of the composition of those cantatas – usually these pieces were composed for a specific occasion and often we know which one it was. Not only that, we know that the pieces were written for particular patrons of Handel in Rome (mainly Cardinal Pamphili, Marchese Ruspoli, Cardinal Ottoboni) and we often know who were the musicians performing in their houses.

I have said before that Handel was experimenting with every page: I want to add that he had very well in mind the people he was writing for and I believe that he was adapting his musical/technical solutions to every specific occasion. Although I share the idea that, for instance, the number of players of a work can be varied according to the hall where one is going to perform, recordings offers us the possibility of not taking care, in a way, of this fact as you can 'create' a particular acoustic with a particular way of placing microphones. What changes, then, if you have an orchestra of, say, two, three or six violins, is the sound. In the case of those cantatas, I believe that it is very important – and fortunately possible – to reconstruct with good approximation the number of players who took part in every single performance. And I believe that adhering to that number has two very important (and I would say new) results. Firstly, the 'sound' of our recording can really approach the sound Handel not only 'had in mind' but that which he really 'heard'. Secondly and even more important, his music can appear in all its genius as it exploits to the limits the expressive capacity of a certain group of instruments. It is astonishing to see how the information we can get about the size of the orchestra for a certain cantata fits the music of the cantata itself and how well the music is written for exactly that very group.

How do you see the importance of the texts for these cantatas and who will be singing on this first recording?

Handel wrote most of those cantatas for the entertainment of three people in Rome – the Cardinals Pamphili and Ottoboni and the Marchese Ruspoli. Admittedly, not very much is known about the texts. Ellen Harris has prepared an article for us to accompany this recording and there (as in her book, *Handel as Orpheus* – Harvard UP) she points out that texts of those cantatas are very refined, very cultivated. Additionally, they offer various possible readings. Next year a yearly course will be starting in the University of Cremona (the only Faculty of Musicology in Italy and which is giving scientific patronage to our project) which will be devoted to the texts of these cantatas. Perhaps we will soon know more! Handel had in Rome some of the best singers of the time. All the cantatas are very demanding from the technical aspect (the first volume presents two very challenging pieces: *Delirio amoroso* and *Tra le fiamme*). Of course, the main purpose of Italian baroque is touching the heart of the listener and this has to be an important priority for a good singer: to convey all the emotion of the text. For the first recording we have the Italian soprano Roberta Invernizzi [an acknowledged Baroque expert, especially in the music of Handel] as the soloist. I like to think to her in the way that Handel probably thought about Margherita Durastante, who was one of the most acclaimed singers in Rome at the time, and probably the one who sang many of the cantatas we are going to record. She's really a great artist and I plan to have her quite regularly recording with us in the future.