



ELIZABETH WATTS DELVES INTO THE OPERAS AND CANTATAS OF SCARLATTI SENIOR



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Nowadays it's dashing Domenico, composer of so many finger-pleasing harpsichord sonatas, who immediately comes to mind when Scarlatti is mentioned. Yet it was his father, Alessandro, who was the famous one in the 18th century – as master of the aria and founder of the Neapolitan school. The majority of his output was for voice – some 600 cantatas, 30 oratorios and more than 100 operas. English soprano Elizabeth Watts is determined to bring him into the limelight again with this CD, recorded last year for the harmonia mundi label with The English Concert and director/harpsichordist Laurence Cummings.

For Elizabeth the last few years have been a major undertaking, unearthing scores that have been buried and neglected in archives and libraries. With the help of Cummings, she has come up with a CD repertoire that embraces the range of Scarlatti's vocal compositions – all of them technically and artistically demanding. "It's been a major undertaking to put all this music together for the disc, to find the scores and to learn 16 technically very difficult arias, many of them Da Capo," comments Watts. "It's a great challenge but hopefully, by the end of it, many more people will have heard of this neglected composer."

Several of the pieces do not exist as modern recordings. The darkly tragic opera *Mitridate Eupatore*, with its complex harmonic palette, is considered a masterwork and yet is unperformed and unrecorded; Watts and the English Concert offer three arias, the lament *Cara tomba del mio diletto*, *Dolce stimolo al tuo bel cor* and *Esci omai* with high-flying coloratura pitched against dazzling violin solo. Perhaps the most challenging and breathtakingly virtuosic aria on the disc is that from the serenata, *Erminia*, written especially for the extraordinary young castrato Farinelli.

The Borletti-Buitoni Trust gave Elizabeth Watts an Award in 2011 and is pleased to be supporting this project.



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Alessandro Scarlatti (1660-1725)

Con eco d'amore

Arias from operas and cantatas

A battaglia, pensieri *

Con voce festiva *

Correa nel seno amato: Ombre opache

Endimione e Cintia: Se geloso è il mio core *

Eraclea: A questo nuovo affanno

Erminia: Qui, dove al germogliar...Torbido, irato, e nero

Griselda: Figlio! Tiranno! O Dio!

La Santissima Vergine del Rosario: Mentr'io godo

La Statira: Io non son di quei campioni

Mitridate Eupatore: O vane speme!...Cara tomba —

Dolce stimolo — Esci omai **

Non so qual più m'ingombra: Nacque, col Gran Messia

Scipione nelle Spagne: Ergiti, Amor

Tigrane: Sussurrando il venticello

Venere, Amore e Ragione: D'amor l'accesa face

Elizabeth Watts soprano

* with Mark Bennett trumpet

** with Huw Daniel violin

The English Concert

Laurence Cummings director & harpsichord

Elizabeth Watts studied singing at the Royal College of Music, London. She was the winner of the 2006 Kathleen Ferrier Award and the Song Prize at the 2007 Cardiff Singer of the World competition. She is a former BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artist, recipient of a Borletti-Buitoni Trust Award (2011) and took part in the 2014 Last Night of the Proms. Her critically acclaimed debut recording of the Schubert *Lieder* was followed by an equally acclaimed disc of Bach Cantatas (harmonia mundi), a programme of Richard Strauss *Lieder* with Roger Vignoles, and a recording of Bach's St Matthew Passion with the Academy of Ancient Music led by Richard Egarr. She appears with the leading UK orchestras and further afield with the Netherlands Philharmonic, Orquesta Sinfonica di Barcelona, RIAS Kammerchor Berlin, Bachakademie Stuttgart and the Akademie für Alte Musik. She regularly appears at opera houses including the Royal Opera, London; Welsh National Opera; Theater an der Wien; and Teatro Real, Madrid and at recital venues including London's Wigmore Hall and Amsterdam's Concertgebouw.

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The Borletti-Buitoni Trust (BBT) was founded in 2002 and helps outstanding young musicians to develop and sustain international careers with awards that fund tailor-made projects. To date BBT has supported 90 highly successful individual musicians and ensembles from 29 countries and is currently determining the next selection of award winners to be announced early in 2016. www.bbtrust.com