



ANTONIO: Lotti – Caldara – Vivaldi

aud 97.809

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## Gramophone (2023.08.01)

Three Antonios – Vivaldi, Caldara and Lotti, all close contemporaries, all pupils of Legrenzi - supply a snapshot of 18th-century Venice in this uneventful recital from British countertenor Alex Potter and German baroque ensemble la festa musicale.

The centrepiece is Vivaldi's Nisi Dominus, and the recording is also bookended by two concertos by the composer. Commercially it makes sense, but with no shortage of top-notch recordings of psalm-setting, it seems a shame to retreal musical ground when (as Potter shows us in tantalizingly small mouthfalse) there's so much else to uncover.

Potter's Vivaldi is nicely sung, coloratura tidy if a little querulous at times. But it's all fairly undifferentiated. Tempos, mood and articulation are mellow to a fault - even though something like the explosive opening to 'Surgite' - and la festa musicale find less of the detailed textural shading and characterisation here than we hear in the concertos and stand-alone instrumental movements. There's little bite anywhere from the band (who match Potter's rounded, warm tone), but there is a lovely fragile sheen to the Largo of the Concerto in G minor, as well as an attractive glow in the Introduzione from Caldara's Gionata (even if battle-inspired rhythms and fanfares seem to ask for something more forceful).

The Gionata movement is one of a variety of recording premieres, including two further instrumental sinfonias and instrumental episodes by Caldara (notably the melting, bittersweet opening from Le gelosie d'un amore utilmente crudele) and most substantial - two sacred cantatas by Lotti: Sacri amoris aurate amate and Aurae lenes quae prata fovetis. The slow second aria from the latter, 'Quaerit bene', is a highlight, its graceful, languishing lines suiting both Potter and ensemble well. As a contemplation of martyrdom, however, it could have invited a less controlled performance.

There's nothing less than attractive here, but equally little that compels with any urgency.

Caldara · Lotti · Vivaldi Caldara Ave regina caelorum. Le gelosie d'un amore utilmente crudele. Gionata - introduzione. Le profezie evangeliche di Isala Lotti Aura e lenes quae prata fovetis. Averte faciem tuam. Sacri amoris aurae amate Vivaldi Concertos - RV15S, RV157. Nial Dominus, RV608 Alex Potter contentra: La Festa Musicale Potter counterten La Festa ite (AUDITE97 809 • 74° • T)



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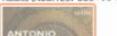
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## Caldara · Lotti · Vivaldi

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