


MUSIC OPERA CHOICE

From the heart of Vienna

Christopher Cook admires the expressive brilliance of Chen Reiss



A MOVING RECITAL:
Chen Reiss shines in
Mozart and Haydn



LIAISONS

Arias by Cimarosa, Haydn, Mozart & Salieri

Chen Reiss (soprano); L'arte del mondo/Werner Ehrhardt
Onyx 4068 55:48 mins

BBC Music Direct £13.99

Chen Reiss has been turning ears for a while now as Gilda in Verdi's

Rigoletto. Her new CD reveals a singer as much at ease in Mozart's Vienna as in Verdi's Mantua as she performs an inspiring programme of arias and overtures by composers working in Austria at the end of the 18th century. There's winningly sung Mozart, including his arias written for others' operas – such as Galuppi and Martin y Soler – as well as Salieri, Haydn and Cimarosa. Despina's aria from *Così fan tutte* ('The School for Lovers') is set beside Salieri's overture to *La Scuola de gelosi*, and Susanna's wedding (*The Marriage of Figaro*)

next to Galuppi's *Le Nozze di Dorina*: the same themes explored by different composers.

Reiss is a properly pert Despina (*Così*) and an affecting Susanna – in 'Giunse alfin il momento...' there's that shadow of doubt about how happy the morning after the wedding will be. Her attention to detail in the recitative is scrupulous, curling the voice around the most telling phrases while the aria is decorated ever so discreetly and invested with the purest tone.

Haydn too sparkles for her, in arias written for other composers' operas performed at Esterhaza. The composer finds a winning

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melody for 'Signor, voi sapete', written for Anfossi's *Il matrimonio per inganno* where one can hear this young girl's heart fluttering with anticipation. But it would also be a brave mistress who crossed the clever servant in 'Vada adagio, Signorina' from Guglielmi's *La Quakera spiritosa* – Reiss's diamond bright coloratura is a mighty weapon in this skirmish between warring women.

All told, this is a beguiling combination of top-drawer musicianship and fresh ideas about opera in Enlightenment Vienna.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★



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