

'Liaisons'

Cimarosa Il matrimonio segreto - Sinfonia; Perdonate, signor mio **Haydn** Quando la rosa, HobXXIVb/3. Signor, voi sapete, HobXXIVb/7. Vada adagio, Signorina, HobXXIVb/12 **Mozart** Le nozze di Figaro - Giunse alfin il momento...Deh vieni, non tardar; Un moto di gioia, K579. Così fan tutte - Una donna a quindici anni. Voi avete un cor fedele, K217. Ah se in ciel, benigne stelle, K538. Chi sà, chi sà, qual sia, K582 **Salieri** Armida - Tremo, bell'idol mio. La scuola de' gelosi - Sinfonia

Chen Reiss *sop* **L'Arte del Mondo / Werner Ehrhardt**
Onyx © ONYX4068 (56' • DDD • T/t)



**Solo recording debut from
a 'one to watch' soprano**

What a stimulating assemblage of arias, and in intelligent, standard-setting performances. Soprano Chen Reiss creates a rewarding vocal cross section of Mozart-era Vienna – not as easy as one might think given the drop in quality between Mozart, Haydn and then everyone else. Resourcefully, Reiss groups her 'finds' – some hardly known because they're one-off arias written for forgotten operas by other composers – around engaging archetypes such as the wily maidservant who controls her master.

Unexpected insights arise at every turn. Some of these replacement arias seem to have been written on autopilot – as much as Mozart ever could be so accused – but sometimes with an air of experimentation, transforming operatic forms and manners from the past. Some of the more unassuming Haydn items feel more like songs than arias – nice tunes with interesting accompaniments that don't attempt any particular character portrait but which foster a new appreciation when heard alongside established ones.

Neither Salieri nor Cimarosa is all that flattered by comparisons, but Reiss makes them feel like worthwhile companions, always looking to find their specific character and never falling into soubrette cuteness. The opening Salieri aria shows her using the lightest of voices – in contrast to Haydn's 'Vada adagio, Signorina', with her sounding almost like a mezzo-soprano. My favourite moment is how wonderstruck her Susanna sounds while absorbing the beauties of the night in the Act 4 *Figaro* aria.

Reiss's coloratura shows none of Cecilia Bartoli's aspirating that can have a splintering effect in vocal runs; hers are all of a piece. Trills are excellent. The one disappointment is Reiss's conservatism with ornaments (there are few). Then again, she may not need them with her interpretative resources. The orchestra under Werner Ehrhardt's vigorous direction has a nice, woody sound, refreshingly devoid of gloss.

David Patrick Stearns

