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ANTONIO SALIERI
Overtures & Ballet Music from:
Armida; Daliso e Delmita; Pafio
e Mirra; Der Rauchfangkehrer;
Les Danaïdes; Les Horaces;
Catalina
Mannheimer Mozartorchester
Thomas Fey
Hänssler Classic- 98.506(CD)

No Reference Recording

Artistic Quality **9/9** *Sound Quality*

Given all the buzz surrounding the play and film Amadeus, you would think that someone would have gotten around to a systematic survey of Antonio Salieri's orchestral music long before now, but it seems not. Billed as Vol. 1, this excellent and intriguing collection of overtures and ballet music takes us from 1771 (Armida) though 1792 (Catalina). It reveals Salieri, perhaps unsurprisingly, as a considerable talent. Some of the overtures are overtly programmatic (Les Danaïdes), tracing the story line in detail. None is terribly long--five minutes about does it--but the music is consistently lively and entertaining.

The ballet music shows the influence of Salieri's older colleague and friend Gluck, certainly not to the former's disadvantage. Thomas Fey offers two substantial suites, from Pafio e Mirra, and Les Danaïdes, and they include some very substantial movements. The concluding Pantomime from Les Danaïdes is particularly interesting in its strongly gestural language. Anyone familiar with Fey's Haydn will readily respond to the powerful combination of technical brilliance and sympathy with the idiom on offer here. The Mannheim orchestra plays very well, and given that the orchestration often is not particularly lavish (this is mostly early Classical period, after all), they find a remarkable amount of color in these well-wrought scores. Fine sonics too. This will certainly be a series to watch, and collect.

--David Hurwitz

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