



*Elena Sartori directs an immaculate performance*HARMONIA MUNDI

On record: Classical

Hugh Canning, David Cairns, Paul Driver and Stephen Pettitt
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Album of the week

FRANCESCA CACCINI

La liberazione di Ruggiero dall'isola di Alcina

Allabastrina, La Pifarescha, cond Elena Sartori

Glossa GCD923902

Caccini's remarkable opera was staged in Brighton in 2015, but its release on disc in this exemplary Italian performance is a great new baroque discovery for me. The composer – daughter of Giulio Caccini, one of the leading musical players during the marriage celebrations of Maria de Medici to Henry IV of France in 1600, at which Francesca may have sung – was raised in the heady atmosphere of opera's early days. This version of the Alcina story (1625) was commissioned by Maria Maddalena of Austria for the wedding of her daughter to the crown prince of Poland – the prologue is a debate between Neptune and...