

# Concert Reviews

Vivaldi *L'Olimpiade*: St. John's, Smith Square. 19 May 2012

Lufthansa Festival of Baroque Music

La Serenissima

In the entirely timely choice of staging one of the most popular librettos of the 18th Century, with over 60 baroque and classical composers having worked to this text, Adam Chandler and La Serenissima bring us the story of Metastasio's *L'Olimpiade* set to a lavish score by Vivaldi. The plot revolves around the Olympic Games in Ancient Greece where our hero Megacle fights for his life against a backdrop of amorous rivalry, mistaken identities, suicide attempts and unrequited love, although despite this the story ends with two marriages! Although this was a concert-performance, and indeed the UK premiere,

the cast led by Stephen Gadd successfully carried a lively sense of the drama which was kept thoroughly afloat by the impressive energy and tempo flowing from founder Chandler's bow to the talented ensemble under his direction. One of many highlights included the aria *Siam navi all'onde argenti* delivered with fire and gusto by Mhairi Lawson singing the

part of *Aminta*, where all of that delicious playing and singing converged perfectly. Vivaldi's operas are now making something of a comeback, although he is no Handel in terms of his operatic genius, his score is as one would expect rich, rewarding and bursting with moments of pure brilliance.

Tahl Holtzman



Ensemble *La Serenissima*