

**Marcus Bosch**  
**Capella Aquileia**  
Giuseppe Verdi: *Oberto*  
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## **Oberto, conte di San Bonifacio, Verdi**

Anna Princeva (*Leonora*), Katerina Hebelkova (*Cuniza*), Daniela Baňasová (*Imelda*), Adrian Dumitru (*Riccardo*), Woong-Jo Choi (*Oberto*), Czech Philharmonic Choir Brno, Cappella Aquileia, c. Marcus Bosch. Coviello Classics COV 91702 (two CDs)

*Oberto* (1839) was the first of Verdi's operas, and as we know he developed steadily and miraculously; nevertheless, the essential qualities of a dramatic composer were there from the start. As Ansgar Menze writes in his liner notes accompanying this live set from the 2016 Heidenheim Festival, 'No scene is boring; not a single bar sounds artificial'. As it is a live recording there is inevitably some stage noise, but not so much as to detract seriously from listening enjoyment.

The festival's artistic director conducts a young cast of reasonable quality, motivating them, and the efficient orchestra and chorus, with a keen sense of musical style. Two-timing Riccardo is sung by Adrian Dumitru, his light-lyric

tenor (he's mistakenly listed as a baritone in the cast list) of genuine promise but suffering from some uncertain moments. The Korean bass Woong-Jo Choi sounds limited in the title role while equally suggesting real potential. As *Oberto*'s dishonoured daughter Leonora, Anna Princeva is the best of the principals, attacking her role with confidence and making something convincing out of it both vocally and dramatically. As her rival-turned-ally Cuniza, Katerina Hebelkova offers a tremulous but expressive mezzo. Daniela Baňasová is a pungent Imelda. The libretto drops the stage directions and at one point the English translation mistakes the sex of one of the characters.

GEORGE HALL