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Review | Music

Stratospheric outbursts and sultry sighs

✎ Joep Stapel ⌚ 10 december 2020 ⌚ Leestijd 1 minuut

When they quarantined together in mid-March, soprano Katharine Dain and pianist Sam Armstrong thought it would be for a few weeks. That turned out differently. Free from deadlines, the friends practiced French songs for months. *Regards sur l'infini* is the fruit of that strange period, a magnificent album about turning moments and existential epiphanies, cleverly programmed cyclically. At its heart is the love cycle *Poèmes pour Miwho* Messiaen composed for his first wife, Claire Delbos: ecstatic pianism, stratospheric outbursts, sultry sighs and pure beauty. A great find are two unknown songs by Delbos about imminent motherhood (from a cycle on poems that her mother-in-law wrote when she was pregnant with Messiaen). Especially 'Ai-je pu t'appeler de l'ombre' is breathtaking - an a-cappella singing melody, followed by a bare piano line. The songs of Debussy, Henri Dutilleux and especially Kaija Saariaho are well chosen and beautifully performed.

REGARDS SUR L'INFINI



Klassiek

Katharine Dain & Sam Armstrong

Regards sur l'infini

