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- [Home](#)
- [Contact](#)
- [News](#)
- [Reviews](#)
- [Discography](#)
- [NL Premieres](#)
- [Books](#)
- [Reports](#)
- [Singers](#)

- [E-mail](#)
- [RSS](#)

[Submit News](#)

NEW CD RELEASES: November 2020





The American-Dutch soprano **Katharine Dain** recorded the CD ' **Regards Sur L'Infini** ' in August 2020 together with the English pianist **Sam Armstrong** . The repertoire considers the turmoil in the present and the need for change. The songs explore the inspiration for the past with its memories and the future with its imagination.

The program has a mirror shape. The first and last song are by Kaija Saariaho, the second and penultimate song are by Henri Dutilleux etc. The CD starts with “Parfum de l'instant” from Saariaho's 'Quatre Instants' and here the CD had a more exciting deserved opening. Dain, on the other hand, takes revenge beautifully with “Chanson de la déportée” by Dutilleux. With an almost displaced sound, it conveys the atmosphere excellently. And the title song of the Dutilleux CD is also a gem! Dain sings the four 'Proses lyriques' by the young Debussy beautifully, intelligibly, expressively and with beautiful legato. Even in the forte of the operatic “De fleurs” the voice remains even.

Central to the album are the nine 'Poèmes pour Mi' with their diverse characters of the young Olivier Messiaen. Hear about the disposition of damnation in “Épouvante”, the almost cosmic breadth of marriage in

“L'épouse”, the intimacy in “Le collier” and the longing for redemption in “Prière exaucée”. Katharine Dain knows what she's singing about and Sam Armstrong has a great feel for her on the piano.

Extremely interesting on both sides of 'Poèmes pour Mi' two songs by Messiaen's first wife Claire Delbos. Here “Dors” and “Ai-je pu t'appeler”, the first and last of eight songs from the cycle 'L'Âme en Bourgeon', which Delbos composed on texts by Messiaen's mother. The songs are minimalistic, but extremely suggestive and graphic at the same time. Goosebumps ! Perhaps the start of a next CD with the songs of Delbos (as far as known there are 16).

Katharine Dain is an intelligent singer and performs the repertoire in a visual and striking way and she is accompanied by Sam Armstrong in an excellent and reliable way. In the CD booklet a nice essay about the repertoire by the soprano and also translations of song texts by herself.

7 Mountain Records 7MNTN-024 (1CD)



***** **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart** (1756-1791) was commissioned in 1771 to write an oratorio for the city of Padua. The 15-year-old composer already had the operas 'La Finta Semplice', 'Bastien und Bastienne' and 'Mitridate' to his name. For the Padua commission he used the libretto of the aziona sacra ' **Betulia Liberata** ' by Pietro Metastasio, which is based on the Biblical story of Judith and Holofernes.

The Aparte label put together a CD release of 'Betulia Liberata' from rehearsals, a live performance and studio registrations, which took place on June 22 and between June 29 and July 1, 2019 at the Seine Musicale concert hall of Boulogne-Billancourt in Paris. . Several studio recordings of the work with soloists such as Hanna Schwarz, Marjana Mijanovic, Walter Berry, Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, Ileana Cotrubas, Cesare Valletti and Peter Schreier already existed and the line-up of this new release is also first-class.

Giuditta is sung by the Italian mezzo **Teresa Iervolino** with the lush timbre of Lucia Valentini Terrani. Listen to her aria “Parto inerme”, as provocative as Judith and defying the wild coloratures. Ozia, the Prince of Betulia, is the Argentinian tenor **Pablo Bensch** . He too has four varied arias and sings with an honest and open sound and tight decorations. French soprano **Sandrine Piau** as Israeli noblewoman Amital - with the provocative aria “Quel nocchier che in gran procella” in the second movement - and American soprano **Amanda Forsythe** in the double role of Elders Cabri and Carmi both sing exceptionally. The Argentinian bass **Nahuel Di Pierro** like Achior, the prince of the Ammonites, has a pleasant, sonorous voice.

The choir accentus expresses the residents of Bethulia in a visual and homophonic way, especially in the polyphonic finals and shows the great talent of the 15-year-old Mozart. Conductor **Christophe Rousset** conjures an active, expressive, colorful virtuoso and neat performance from his Les Talens Lyriques. Sometimes the sound shifts unnecessarily and disturbingly from left to right across the speakers. The CD booklet contains a brief essay by Simon Keefe and the complete text with translations.

Pentatone PTC 5186 836 (2CDs)