

# De Standaard

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**REVIEW** REVIEW CLASSIC

## Sound colors as medicine

Wednesday, December 23, 2020 at 3.25 am

Music heals: it is a message that we are often beaten with in times of corona. This lockdown record, which soprano Katharine Dain and her recital partner Sam Armstrong studied together in quarantine, also promises a cure for isolation: one that we are only too happy to allow ourselves to be administered. Their French recital absorbs you in a cloud of timbres. Poèmes pour Mi , in which Messiaen reflects on his early marriage, is the centerpiece. Dain's voice seems to reside in the crystalline regions of this ecstasy music. While she makes Alleluia 's humming ritualistically, Armstrong puts Messiaen's granite piano lines, uncut, underneath. The musicians crawled just as deep in the hot-cold Proses lyriques by Debussy and the trembling contemporary sound drawings by Saariaho. But what we are most grateful for is that they also recorded songs by Claire 'Mi' Delbos, Messiaen's first wife: two concise, raw discoveries. (avb)



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