

REGARDS SUR L'INFINI

KATHARINE DAIN soprano



SAM ARMSTRONG piano



Review Classic

Mercilessly beautiful palindrome program

Classical

Katharine Dain, Sam Armstrong

Regards sur l'infini

7 Mountain Records

★★★★

Peter van der Lint November 20, 2020

The American Katharine Dain is a special soprano. Versatile too. She shone as Mozart's Donna Anna with the Orchestra of the 18th Century, and with the

Netherlands Student Orchestra she surprised in February of this year with a scorchingly sung 'Liebestod' from Wagner's 'Tristan und Isolde'.

And then everything was locked. Dain describes very nicely in the CD booklet what that did to her and her musical partner Sam Armstrong. In the first weeks they locked themselves in to thoroughly study the song cycle 'Poèmes de Mi' by Olivier Messiaen (intended for a recital later). But the weeks turned into months, and the recital never happened.

And then the plan for this CD matured. The Messiaen cycle is right in the middle here. It is also preceded by French songs by Kaaija Saariaho, Henri Dutilleux, Claude Debussy and Claire Delbos (Messiaen's first wife). And after the Messiaen cycle, songs by the same composers follow, but in reverse order. So a palindrome program. And what a!

Dain herself wrote the excellent explanations and you can hear her special involvement with this music in every song. Armstrong is her equal partner in everything. Just listen how desolate he plays those sparse notes in Delbos. That music is a discovery and Dain sings mercilessly beautifully. Everywhere on this CD, by the way, with Messiaen's cycle as the right middle and high point.