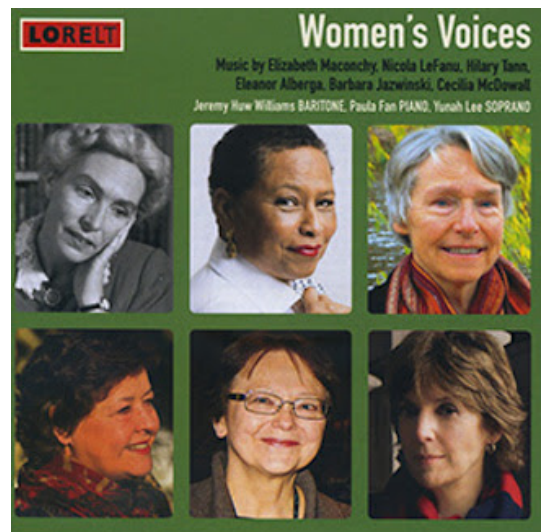


WOMEN'S VOICES

Vocal Music by Women Composers

Jeremy Huw Williams baritone
Paula Fan piano
Lauren Rustad Roth,
Timothy Kantor violins
Molly Gebrian viola
Theodore Buchholz cello



LORELT LNT143

This collection of vocal settings by six women composers, is coloured by their musical upbringing in a period in the 20th century, when lavish tonality tended to be frowned on. Actually, none of the music is completely atonal, indeed some is definitely tonal, but stretched to its outer reaches.

Elizabeth Maconchy (1907 – 1994) was inspired by composers like Bartók, Alban Berg and Janáček. Her 'Four Shakespeare Songs' all feature the 'astringency' mentioned in the accompanying programme note but she still manages very skilfully to mirror and indeed amplify the moods of her very different texts. Compare the brooding darkness of 'Come away death' with the electrifying agility of both voice and piano in 'When I was and a little tiny boy'.

Maconchy's daughter, Nicola LeFanu's piece, 'The Swan' is described as a 'scena'. Both stunningly imaginative and quite filmic it uses sections of a Latin medieval text and a modern English exposition by Fleur Adcock. Some of the text is spoken by Jeremy Huw Williams, other sections sung with considerable dramatic ebullience against an expressive piano background.

Welsh composer Hilary Tann sets three poems by Gwyneth Lewis on the story of Saint Melangell who saved a hare being chased by hunters by hiding it beneath her skirts. She uses a quartet of strings, as backing. Soprano Yunah Lee is used in some respects like an extra instrument. The music is more tonal in its expression.

More tonal still are the four poems set by Jamaican born composer Eleanor Alberga based on colourful pictorial texts.

'A Girl by the Ocean' by Barbara Jazwinski sets a poem by her daughter Maria. It is dramatic,

and very much on the modern side.

Cecilia McDowall's settings of three poems by Dylan Thomas, though still modern, are the closest to more tonal music, possibly the most instantly appealing music on the CD. The others need repeated listening demonstrating the difference between popular and classical music. Listen to popular music and it is the same each time you hear it. With modern classical music, each listening reveals something new and often impressive.

ALAN COOPER