

HEROINES of LOVE and LOSS

Giovanni G. Kapsberger (1580-1651)
Toccata Arpeggiata (3')

H. Purcell (1659-1695)
Lead me to some peaceful gloom (Boudicca) (3')

A. Vivaldi (1678-1741)
Cello sonata in G minor-
I. *Preludio. Largo*

J. Bennett (1575-after 1614)
Venus's birds (3'45)

A. Vivaldi
Cello sonata G minor-
II. *Allemanda. Andante*

B. Strozzi (1619-1677)
L'Eracilito Amorooso (8')

A. Piccinini (1566-1638)
Ciaccona for theorbo

C. Sessa (1570-1619)
Occhi io vissi di voi (1'30)

Anonyma 1600's
The willow song (4'40)

I N T E R V A L

B. Strozzi
Lagime mie (9')

F. Caccini (1587-1640)
Lasciatemi qui solo (7')

A. Vivaldi
Cello sonata in G minor-
III. *Sarabanda. Largo*

L. Vizzana (1590-1662)
O magnum mysterium (4:15)

H. Purcell
Dido's Lament (4:30)

A. Vivaldi
Cello sonata in G minor- IV. *Giga. Allegro*

Anne Boleyn (...)
O death rock me asleep

YouTube

YouTube

RUBY HUGHES soprano
MIME BRINKMANN Cello
JONAS NORDBERG Theorbo / Lute
Released on BIS Records

INTRODUCTION

RUBY HUGHES

'Love and Loss' in various manifestations plays the principle role in this trio recital program. The music of the 16th and 17th centuries has always fascinated me, especially in its intimate and revealing chamber music. The universal themes of love and loss were often at the heart of the composer's message, which would be at times earthbound, tragic and full of woe, or overflowing with elation and an otherworldly sense of the spiritual.

Jonas Nordberg and I have collaborated and performed regularly as a duo partnership in recital and recordings throughout Sweden, the UK and Europe. Our project 'Heroines of love and loss' is a celebration of female Italian composers and classical Heroines, mostly of the 17th century. It was premiered in Stockholm Kulturhuset together with the renowned Kenneth Kvanstrom Dance Company. Further performances of variations on this program have included the Lockenhaus International Festival in Austria (broadcast for EUB and ORF), at Change Music festival in Kungsbacka (broadcast for P2), and for the Försaparkett concert series in Stockholm.

Throughout this program and on our recording for BIS Jonas Nordberg and Mime Brinkmann play multidimensional roles, sometimes as soloist, sometimes supporting the voice in playful counterpoint. This trio of plucked and bowed instruments with voice is one of the richest, most dramatic and expressive of musical combinations.

In this repertoire we are often experimenting with sound and colour in relation to the words, and are astonished to always discover an abundance of possibilities within the dynamics of the trio. Scores in the 16th and 17th century were often not fully realised and this allows us ample room for improvisation and spontaneity.

The music we researched and eventually chose spans the late 16th and the 17th century, beginning with Caccini, Sessa and Bennett who form the bridge between the late renaissance and early baroque. We also have a much earlier lament attributed to Ann Boleyn as well as the anonymous 'Willow song' with no exact date confirmed.

Francesca Caccini and Barbara Strozzi, were true musical pioneers as composers and performers and wrote magnificent music for the voice. Very little music remains of the Benedictine nuns Lucrezia Vizzana and Claudia Sessa but in these rare examples we hear their natural affinity for writing deeply moving and spiritual music.

We were inspired to perform and record these rarely heard Italian gems together with 17th century songs and laments of celebrated classical heroines. Our aim in making this selection is to cast a spotlight on our favourite female composers by putting them together with already celebrated classical heroines of that time. It would be wonderful to see these brave female pioneers brought out of relative obscurity and placed alongside the more celebrated composers in recital.

REVIEWS

"A Diapason d'or award? An contradictory accolade for a recital without sunshine or luxury, where dark trouble and subtlety reign. 'Udite amanti' shows Ruby Hughes capable of great heights even in the shadows, conjuring lugubrious melismas that never drown out the text...The youthfulness of the timbre within the tormented songs of love give this album a unique atmosphere and aura, even amongst the many laments recorded in the last decade... How we love to suffer with the music, and with them!"
Gaetan Naulleau, *Diapason d'Or Magazine* (translated)

"She has a warm, almost mellow voice, well suited to this enterprising selection of 17th-century songs [...] to all of them Ruby Hughes brings an exemplary understanding and stylishness."
Richard Lawrence, *Gramophone Magazine* (Editor's Choice)

"Soprano Ruby Hughes has just released an album of 17th-century songs by and about women, showing off her virtuosity and subtlety as a performer and unlocking the deeply personal, soulful heart of this rarely performed music. Hughes seems able to direct a winding, melisma-strewn phrase with total conviction and uncanny humanity. Her phrasing is full of delicious surprises: a little glissando, a whispering pianissimo, a diminuendo on an upward scale, a touch of breath to highlight the text's sensuality."
Andrew Mellor, *Opera Now*

"Ruby Hughes's soprano has an effortless beauty: pliant, subtly expressive, never forced. She captures the chaste fervour of the sacred works...Brinkmann and Nordberg proffer aptly spontaneous continuo realisations, varying timbre and texture and adding discreet embellishments according to the poetic moment. Their playing in the instrumental pieces is equally refined"
BBC Music Magazine



