
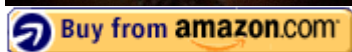


a ELISABETH HOLMERTZ & FREDRIK BOCK: Love Songs Re-Spelled • Elisabeth Holmertz (sop); Fredrik Bock (Baroque gtr, thb) • LAWQ LWC 1018 (66:12 )

WALLUMRØD The Forester. LE COCQ Chaconne . STROZZI Non Occorre. Magrime mie. Sete pur fastidioso. La Travagliata. Sino alla morte. TORGET Oh, My Tears, What Holds You Back? CORBETTA Partie de chaconne. BRUN My Star. COHEN Hallelujah



Elisabeth Holmertz and Fredrik Bock perform together frequently as a Baroque duo, and what they have compiled on this disc is a group of songs by the Italian Baroque composer Barbara Strozzi (1619–77), two chaconnes by Baroque composers played by guitarist Bock, and then some contemporary songs, most of them composed for them in a Baroque or pseudo-Baroque style. They have a clear chemistry between them that makes each one sensitive to the nuances of the other, and they have put together an interesting disc of very unusual repertoire.

It is appropriate at this point to observe that reactions to singing voices are more personal than just about anything in music. It is with that caveat up front that I note that I find it impossible to enjoy this disc. Holmertz is, for me, almost a caricature of the modern Baroque singer, using vibrato sparingly (very, very sparingly). The problem is that when you use very little, or no, vibrato, you had better be dead-center on pitch, and that is not always the case here. Sometimes it is clear that Holmertz is bending the pitch for expressive purposes, leading into the center slowly. But to my ears, that doesn't work without sufficient vibrato to at least hint at the true pitch while easing into it.

I find the thinness of tone and the monochromatic nature of the singing wearing after a while (and not that long a while). The songs are mostly very attractive, though mostly of a similar, rather wistful nature—and despite Bock's excellent contribution and the performers' obvious love for the material this is not a disc I will return to in the future. You might try to sample it to see if you react differently.

The recorded sound is very clean and perfectly balanced. The texts are not side-by-side, which makes them difficult to follow, and the notes are not as helpful as they might be. Henry Fogel

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