

Jessica Eccleston, Andrea Szewieczek

A Secret Garden

The Beauty of Nature has been captured in music throughout the generations and the reflection of the beauty found in nature and humanity are revealed here in this collection of songs taken from Romantic French and English composers of the 20th century.

All composers on this album had to live through at least one or both of the world wars. A time of trauma and destruction. Hence, to be able to escape to find purity, sanctity and life in nature, in the midst of such vast destruction, truly reflects a hope for humanity, in the artistry of the music they created.

I found it fascinating that the 20th Century English composers on this album, for example, John Ireland and Frank Bridge, were heavily influenced by the French Impressionist movement and that Ralph Vaughan Williams (RVW) studied composition with Maurice Ravel for a season in Paris.

There are also other fascinating connections between the composers on this album: a young Herbert Howells met RVW at the premiere concert of "Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis"; Hahn is known to have loved Fauré's music and Thomas Dunhill was married at the same church that John Ireland was the resident organist at!
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Lineup:

Jessica Eccleston - Mezzo Soprano
Andrea Szewieczek - Piano



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Tracklisting

01. A Green Cornfield (2:28)
02. King David (4:22)
03. Aurore (2:23)
04. Au Bord de l'Eau (2:19)
05. Dans la Nuit (1:31)
06. L'énamourée (3:43)
07. Le Secret (2:20)
08. Les Berceaux (3:01)
09. Santa Chiara (2:29)
10. Fleur Jetée (1:25)
11. I Have Twelve Oxen (1:54)
12. Sweet Chance (2:06)
13. Linden Lea (2:33)
14. Mandoline (1:58)
15. Love Went a Riding (1:46)
16. Silent Noon (4:08)
17. The Devine Image (3:04)
18. The Salley Gardens (2:55)
19. A Secret Garden_Poem (1:39)
20. The Cloths of Heaven (2:25)

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The different interpretations of nature found in each song, from serenity to turbulence, is really a kaleidoscope of the variety of human nature and emotions that we all experience. Nature is the one thing that can capture the perfection and beauty of life, and like life, can change drastically and quickly with the different seasons.

While creating this album I was particularly inspired by many countryside walks and wrote the poem "A Secret Garden" to be a reflection on the different stages and perspectives of life as a journey - and the discovery of each person's individual "Secret Garden" - a place of peace and perfection to rest.

All of these songs are very close to my heart and I have grown up singing them or enjoyed discovering new gems in the repertoire. A particular favourite of mine is Howells' "King David", which is a rarity. Howells was known primarily for his compositions of sacred church music and wrote very few songs, but I hope you find, like me, that "King David" is something very special.

After all the time collaborating with Andrea, we are very proud to present to you our CD Album "A Secret Garden" that takes you on an adventure through different scenes in the English and French countryside, and we hope you enjoy the journey!



Jessica Eccleston, Mezzo Sopran

Andrea Szewieczek, Piano

Written by Jessica Ruth Eccleston