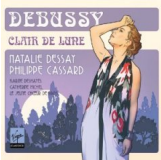


Natalie Dessay - Clair De Lune (2012)

Written by bluesever

Monday, 18 June 2012 16:57 - Last Updated Thursday, 24 October 2013 18:28

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1. *Nuit d'étoiles* 2. *Pantomime* 3. *Claire de lune* 4. *Pierrot* 5. *Apparition* 6. *En sourdine* 7. *Fête galante* 8. *Romance (L'Ame évaporée)* 9. *Les Cloches* 10. *Rondel chinois* 11. *Flots, palmes, sables* 12. *La Romance d'Ariel* 13. *Regret* 14. *Le matelot qui tombe à l'eau* 15. *Coquetterie posthume* 16. *L'Archet* 17. *Romance* 18. *Les Elfes* 19. *La Damoiselle élue*
Natalie Dessay - Soprano Karine Deshayes - Mezzo-Soprano Le Jeune Choeur de Paris
Henri Chalet - Chorus Master Catherine Michel - Harp Philippe Cassard – Piano

Natalie Dessay has an instinctive understanding of Debussy's idiom and a combination of passion and delicacy that makes her an ideal interpreter of the composer's distinctive vocal style. In this recording, made in 2011, Dessay's voice doesn't always convey the supple ease floating above the staff that characterized her work around the turn of the century. She sounds terrific when she can cut loose with exuberance and plenty of volume, as in *Flôts, palmes, sables*. It's her in her approach to the upper register at a quiet dynamic level that she comes across as less secure. Those moments are few, though, and overall Dessay's singing is beguilingly sensuous and her insights illuminating.

One of the chief attractions of the albums is the inclusion of the premiere recordings of four songs unpublished songs Debussy wrote when he was 20, that had only recently come to light. They fit seamlessly into the composer's song output and are likely to become standards on Debussy song recitals. The most distinctive is the ballad, *Les elfes*, the composer's longest song and one of his most dramatic, which makes extreme coloratura demands and has a wonderfully eccentric piano part.

The album also includes *La Damoiselle élue*, a cantata using a translation of a poem by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, for soprano, mezzo-soprano, women's choir, and piano.

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Pianist Philippe Cassard is a fully equal collaborator in the endeavor and brings an acute sensitivity and intelligence to the accompaniment. Mezzo-soprano Karine Deshayes and Le jeune chœur de Paris deliver lovely performances in the pastel-hued cantata. Virgin Classics' sound has a warm, natural ambience, excellent balance, and is clean and clear. ---Stephen Eddins, Rovi

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