

Aga Zaryan - Umiera Piekno [Beauty is Dying] (2007)

Written by bluesever

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1. *Kalinowym Mostem Chodziłam*; 2. *Warszawa Widziana po Raz Trzeci*; 3. *Wiersz o Nas i Chłopcach*; 4. *Miłość*; 5. *Żoliborz*; 6. *Umiera Piękno*; 7. *Kolęda Warszawska*; 8. *Piosenka o Powstaniu*; 9. *Miłość (Repryza)* Artists: Aga Zaryan - vocals Michał Tokaj - piano Michał Barański - bass Łukasz Żyta – drums

"Beauty is Dying, recorded in the summer of 2007, is Aga Zaryan's first album on which she sings in Polish. On it she is backed by a jazz piano trio, enhanced by a 17-piece string section with harp and oboe. The album contains nine works by Polish poets, depicting scenes of Warsaw at the time of the '44 Uprising in commemoration of the 63rd Anniversary of the Uprising. All songs on the album were selected and sung by Aga herself to original music composed and arranged by pianist Michał Tokaj. Her personal connection to the project stemmed from her family history - her grandmother was a liaison officer and her grandfather had fought in the Kryśka group. The album has been described as lyrical and pulsing with emotion, the delicate string section and laid-back jazz trio melding perfectly with Zaryan's singing. The album received rave reviews, including the following critique from Newsweek's Mariusz Cieślík in August 2007:

The most pleasant musical surprise of recent months. An album recorded to commemorate the anniversary of the outbreak of the Warsaw Uprising could have been expected to be a somewhat bland, rather a musical gesture of patriotism. But this recording by arguably Poland's most interesting jazz vocalist of the younger generation is truly moving. The songs, with texts by participants and witnesses to the Uprising (Krystyna Krahelska, priest Jan Twardowski and Anna Świrszczyńska, among others), make quite an impression. In the finest of them, "Miłość" / "Love", Zaryan approaches the level of master vocalists in the vein of Ewa Demarczyk. These excellently sung pieces, arranged for strings with a jazz rhythm section, contain not one trace of mediocrity of any kind.

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On August 4th of that year, Aga performed a concert of pieces from Beauty is Dying at the Warsaw Rising museum. The concert was broadcast live on Polish Public TV and Radio, and attendance was so high that traffic in the immediate vicinity of the venue was gridlocked for hours, as a vast and steady river of people converged on the park. The culmination of the event saw over seven thousand people listening to Zaryan's performance in concentrated silence. The concert went down in history as somewhat of a sociological phenomenon as the audience spanned four generations, with first-hand witnesses to World War II, who were being honoured at the event, along with their children and great-grandchildren. She went on to give concerts of Beauty is Dying in prestigious concert halls and venues throughout Europe.

Later in 2008, Zaryan was accorded the Polish recording industry's highest honors - The Fryderyk Chopin Award for Beauty is Dying as the year's the Best Poetic Album. Later that year her live concert album Live at Palladium was released as a double CD-DVD album. Guitarist Larry Koonse, bassist Darek Oleszkiewicz and percussionist Darryl Jackson flew in from Los Angeles to join her onstage at the Warsaw venue for the concert, which was described as subtler than her previous concerts. The main body of the repertoire was comprised of songs from the albums Picking Up the Pieces and My Lullaby, some of them with completely new arrangements that took shape over the course of the tour. The album was a commercial, earning triple platinum status. " --- polish-jazz.blogspot.com

Płyta "Umiera piękno" ukazuje się z okazji obchodów 63. rocznicy wybuchu Powstania Warszawskiego. Liryczny charakter płyty, utrzymany w poetyce jazzu, ma pokazać "ludzką" twarz Powstania – miłość, radości życia, jego smutki, codzienność, a także uniesienia patriotycznej walki w Powstaniu Warszawskim.

Na płycie znajduje się dziewięć utworów autorstwa Krystyny Krahelskiej, Józefa Żywiny, Anny Świrszczyńska, ks. Jana Twardowskiego, Miry Grelichowskiej i Elżbiety Szemplińskiej. Adze Zaryan w studio towarzyszy trio w składzie: Michał Tokaj – autor muzyki (fortepian), Michał Barański (kontrabas), Łukasz Żyta (perkusja) wzbogacone brzmieniem dodatkowych instrumentów: harfy, oboju i sekcji smyczków. --- muzyka.onet.pl

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