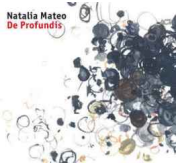


Natalia Mateo - De Profundis (2017)

Written by bluesever

Monday, 02 September 2019 14:54 -

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1 *Bandoska* 2 *Eternity* 3 *Elegja Pielgrzyma* 4 *I Will Always Love You* 5 *Kolysanka Rosemary / Rosemary's Baby* 6 *Unsound* 7 *Prayer* 8 *Eksploracja Paranoja* 9 *Dziwny Jest Ten Świat* 10 *Francois Villon-Modlitwa* Double Bass – Felix Barth Drums – Fabian Ristau Electric Bass – Christopher Bolte Guitar – Dany Ahmad Piano – Simon Grote Saxophone – Sebastian Gille Vocals – Natalia Mateo

There's a saying 'we drink from our own wells' and that is what singer, composer and bandleader Natalia Mateo surely does on this album. Her life experience, culture and distinctive approach come together to make a highly individual recording. Born in Poland in 1983, but raised in Austria and these days regarding Berlin as home, she draws together disparate strands (jazz, Polish folk music and the singer/songwriter ethos) and makes of them a satisfying oeuvre. Her debut album for ACT was *Heart Of Darkness*, which appeared in 2015. Her choice of material then was more mainstream than on this present disc. She also sings in Polish more frequently this time around. Her fellow musicians on this recording have played together as a regular band over several years, the exception being the German tenor saxophonist Sebastian Gille who joins them here. Born in the same year as Mateo, he has already accumulated an impressive c.v.

My particular favourites on the disc are *Eternity* and *Kolysanka Rosemary/Rosemary's Baby*. Mateo has added a line of her own to supplement William Blake's single verse on *Eternity* and, with Ahmad and Grote, provided the tune. She demonstrates that she can effectively use her voice as an instrument as she scats in the early part of the track. This is a sultry vocal performance too and the group performance is excellent. *Kolysanka Rosemary/Rosemary's Baby* is Krzysztof Komeda's theme from the Polanski movie of that name. Komeda's film music and compositions are rightly valued in his native Poland. The trumpeter Tomasz Stanko, for instance, has often recorded them. Mateo's rendition of this beautiful melody is superb while Simon Grote impresses on piano. Not far behind for quality is *Eksploracja paranoja/Explosion, paranoia*. The lyrics are by Mateo and are printed side by side in the liner notes in both Polish

and English. I suspect they lose something in translation in that, in English, they seem oblique and cryptic (that may be what's she's aiming at, however). Nevertheless, there's something about the piece which connects in a vital way with the listener. Mateo comes across rather like a torch singer, her voice compelling and impassioned, on Bandoska, a heartfelt lament about the drudgery of work and a longing for the sun to go down. Elegja pielgrzyma/Pilgrim's Elegy has a certain breathlessness about it as she sings, this time, of a failure in love. Even in the desperation she evokes, there's a hint of eroticism. Special mention should be made of the splendid guitar accompaniment provided by Dany Ahmad on this track.

We're on familiar territory with the country singer Dolly Parton's I Will Always Love You, a big hit for Whitney Houston subsequent to Parton's original recording. On this occasion, it takes a full two minutes for the theme to emerge. What we have is a powerful, unusual, idiosyncratic cover of the song. Mateo's singing on Unsound put me in mind of another ACT artiste, Viktoria Tolstoy, never a bad thing. The nimble rhythm section are to be applauded here and creative pianist Grote is at his best. Saxophonist Gille contributes throughout but I especially appreciated his empathetic playing (and the skill of electric bassist Christopher Bolte) on Dziwny jest ten świat. Maybe Prayer could be construed as overly theatrical but François Villon-Modlitwa, a further lament delivered with feeling, has a surprise for listeners at the end. This comes in the form of a couple of extra minutes of a vocal chorus sung in German.

The title of the album, De Profundis, means 'out of the depths' in Latin. For Natalia Mateo it is an appropriate title since she is anything but superficial. She sings from the heart, with her strong and versatile voice, and seems completely authentic in her approach. Her choice of material is very personal and, at times, may not suit everyone but her talent is indisputable. ---James Poore, musicweb-international.com

Wprawdzie Polacy nagrywali już pod szyldem ACT Music, jednak nie słyszałem jeszcze wydanych przez tę niemiecką firmę nagrań w języku polskim. „De profundis” takie zawiera i to zarówno nowe, jak i pochodzące z odległej historii. Polski evergreen to niewątpliwie „Dziwny jest ten świat” Niemena. Kołysanka z „Dziecka Rosemary” zadebiutowała wprawdzie w Ameryce, w horrorze Romana Polańskiego, ale skomponował ją Krzysztof Komeda. Warto jej posłuchać z polskim tekstem. W programie znalazły się też światowe hity, wśród nich filmowy przebój „I Will Always Love You” autorstwa Dolly Parton, a spopularyzowany przez Whitney Houston. Prawdziwy muzyczny tygiel. Nad wszystkim panuje polska wokalistka, od lat mieszkająca w Berlinie. Mateo nie tylko śpiewa. Skomponowała także premierowe piosenki i połowę z nich zaaranżowała. Można, co prawda, zgłosić pewne zastrzeżenia do jej wersji

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przeboju Niemena, ale trudno poprawić doskonały oryginał. Ciekawie natomiast wypadła kompozycja Dolly Parton, zinstrumentalizowana zupełnie inaczej niż w oryginale. W stworzeniu pomysłów podkładów pomogli Mateo utalentowani instrumentalisci. Wyróżnia się zwłaszcza grający na perkusji Fabian Ristau, ale również gitarowe solówki Dany'ego Ahmada zasługują na uwagę. ---Grzegorz Walenda, hi-fi.com.pl

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