Kala Ramnath - Luminous (2003)

1 Rag Shuddh Sarang 42:17 2 Rag Multani 23:31 3 Rag Sindh Bhairavi 10:04 Tabla – Kumar Bose Violin – Kala Ramnath

Kala Ramnath has made a name for herself as a prodigiously talented young violinist, one of the most promising instrumentalists to emerge in recent years in North Indian classical music. She belongs to a family which has already produced several renowned violinists: she started to learn the instrument at a very young age under the guidance of her grandfather Narayan Iyer, and has subsequently been trained by her aunt, the well-known musician Dr N. Rajam; Prof. T. N. Krishnan is also a relative. Kala Ramnath has managed to combine this family tradition, moreover, with more than a decade's training under the illustrious khyal singer Pandit Jasraj: many music lovers will have heard her play in the great man's company, in one of their many concerts around the world.

The violin is used in this music, of course, largely as a surrogate for the human voice, and in particular to emulate the khyal style of singing. There have been several distinguished performers in the Hindustani idiom (even if the instrument has not achieved the ubiquity it enjoys in Carnatic music). Kala Ramnath is remarkable, nonetheless, for the extent to which she has been able to reproduce her distinguished guru's vocal style on the instrument. With several recordings and numerous performances behind her already, she looks to be in the early stages of an outstanding career.

Kala Ramnath is accompanied here by a very experienced and popular master of the tabla, Pt Kumar Bose. His father Pandit Bishwanath Bose was a master of the Benares style of tabla who learned from Pt Kanthe Maharaj: after his father's death Kumar was guided by the another Benaras maestro, Pt Kishan Maharaj. He has performed with many leading artists, benefiting from a long association with Pt Ravi Shankar, and is also noted for his versatility, performing on

several types of drum in different genres of music. Here, of course, we hear him in the role of the traditional tabla accompanist, a position he fills with great applomb. ---audiorec.co.uk

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