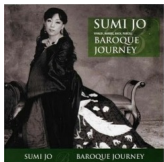


Sumi Jo - Baroque Journey (2007)

Written by bluesever

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1. *Nulla In Mundo Pax Sincera* (Antonio Vivaldi) 2. *Agitata Da Due Venti* (Antonio Vivaldi) 3. *Bist Du Bei Mir* (Johann Sebastian Bach) 4. *As Steals the Morn Upon the Night* (Georg Friedrich Handel) 5. *Where'er You Walk* (Georg Friedrich Handel) 6. *Ei! Wie Schmeckt Der Kaffee Sube* (Johann Sebastian Bach) 7. *Music For a While* (Henry Purcell) 8. *Let the Bright Seraphim* (Georg Friedrich Handel) 9. *Sposa Son Disprezzata* (Antonio Vivaldi) 10. *Fairest Isle* (Henry Purcell) 11. *Lascia Ch'io Pianga* (Georg Friedrich Handel) 12. *Seufzer, Tranen, Kummer, Not* (Johann Sebastian Bach) 13. *I Know That My Redeemer Liveth* (Georg Friedrich Handel) Sumi Jo – soprano English Chamber Orchestra Giuliano Carella – conductor

It has been awhile since CD consumers have heard from the great Korean coloratura soprano Sumi Jo, who has been out of the record market but maintaining a busy concert schedule, particularly in Asia and Europe. Baroque Journey is Jo's full-length foray into Baroque repertoire, although some of her previous albums have contained material culled from the Baroque, particularly *La Promessa* (1998), *The Christmas Album* (1999), and *Prayers* (2000), so she is hardly a stranger to the medium of the Baroque aria. Partnered by the Concertgebouw Chamber Orchestra under Henk Rubingh, though accompanied only by anonymous lutenist on Purcell's *Music for a while*, these recordings were made in late 2005 in Hilversum, but are only making their way out in late 2007. A lot of water has gone under the bridge since *Prayers*; Jo's old label, Erato, has disappeared from view and Atlantic Classics, which used to administer it, is gone, too, reorganized as Warner Classics & Jazz. In a way, Jo is lucky that the successor firm is continuing to release her recordings, though in another way the label is lucky to have maintained the professional interest and attention of such a superlative singer. Does one balance the other?

For her part, Jo sounds splendid on this whole recording, even in the ultra-difficult Vivaldi aria "Agitata da due venti" from the opera *Griselda*, nailed by labelmate Angelina Reaux in its equivalent version from the opera *Bajazet* in Fabio Biondi's set of that work for Virgin Classics. Here, and only here, Jo opts for some shortcuts, and no one can blame her. However, in less

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explosive fare is where one will find Jo in her element, particularly in her reading of Stölzel's "Bist du bei mir," which Jo picked for the project despite that it's a sacred solo aria and thus a little off the beaten path of her "journey." Annotator Kenneth Chalmers refers to it as an "interloper," but it may well be the best thing on the album.

The recording is likewise sub par; it is rather quiet and distant, whereas in Baroque literature accompanied by chamber groups some degree of intimacy is always a plus. However, the listener might be so glad to see Sumi Jo recording again that one would be inclined to set such matters aside and enjoy her glorious voice. --- Uncle Dave Lewis, Rovi

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