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## CD Feature/ Florelda Sacchi: "Chiaroscuro Harp"

**Bittersweet and yearning: A soundtrack to lovescenes in little cafes.**

Few



composers are noteworthy performers. There is something inherent to both trades which makes them conflictary instead of complimentary and which implies the strict division of labor typical of the contemporary classical scene. On the other hand, we'd be surprised if Florelda Sacchi didn't have her own thoughts on the subject.

Six years ago, Sacchi made her debut with an EP featuring herself on electric harp and Francesco Mantero on Voice and Percussion and since then, she has confounded almost every expectation as to what might be suitable for a harpist in particular and what a classical instrumentalist should take into her own hands in general. Right now, she is a professor, a writer, a concert organiser, an avid live performer and a recording artist and she has expanded her instrument's language from the

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18th century deep into the realms of modern times, into the oeuvre of Ravi Shankar, Philipp Glass and John Cage.

Most importantly, she has carefully shifted the balance in her collaborational productions, imbuing accompanying roles with a sense of urgency and naturally striving for emancipation where many saw elegant submission. The two discs with her congenial partner Claudio Ferrarini were filled with mutual respect and a powerful sense of freedom – often overlooked prerequisites for an inspiring musical exchange. They were statements of friendship as well and it therefore seems obvious to prolong this relation into her first bigger statement as a composer (discounting the long out-of-print children's story „Una storia scritta in cielo“ from 1999).

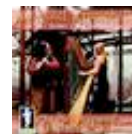
Certainly, the pieces with Ferrarini are among the most immediate moments on „Chiaroscuro Harp“. Never one to shy away from big gestures, his performance on the sweetly plaintive „Se Sapessi“ gauges both the quiet and passionate ends of the spectrum and is of an impressionist plasticity in the closing „Dea die Giardini“.

On the other hand, Cellist Anais Vitali might be less prominent in her contributions, but acts as the all but invisible force of the album, adding texture, colour, counterpoint and richness – attributes usually associated with the Harp, which makes for an extremely attractive and completely organic inversion. One might have expected Floreleda to approach this extensive array into her own private space in a more egoistical way, but „Chiaroscuro Harp“ doesn't even consider this an option.

What is interesting as well is that the record never settles into a



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Floreleda Sacchi &  
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15 Questions to  
Floreleda Sacchi

pseudo-compromise in between the polarities of her previous output. Instead, it carves out a distinct style possibly induced by feelings of nostalgia and melancholia, probably influenced by the great film music history of her native Italy and philosophically motivated by the twilight state between night and day. Her music is not cinematic by dissolving into epic arrangements and wide open tonal planes, but in the sense that it purifies a singular sensation and a particular sentiment into vivid scenes and expressive lyrical melodies. It is a soundtrack to lovescenes in little cafes, to painful memories in scantily lit rooms and to moments, when the conversation has come to a halt and the eyes of the protagonists, meeting halfway in a frighteningly suspended space, seem to say so much more than words.

Michael Hoppe, who has himself written scores to several feature films, has acted as a sparring partner both for the music and the arrangements and there are several points where their voices meet. And yet, Sacchi's own personality still shines through clearly. She probably could have turned this into a major success by either compressing the recording more or adding even more reverb to lift it to ethereal planes. As it is, it remains in its own mould, bittersweet and yearning, comforting and consoling and working with metaphors instead of spelling everything out.

Rachmaninoff springs to mind as a composer who was equally accomplished as a performer (or vice versa). It makes no sense comparing his work to that of Floraleda Sacchi, of course. But the mere fact that „Chiaroscuro Harp“ has ended up more than just a dignified exercise certainly does not make it seem entirely out of place either.

Homepage: [Floaleda Sacchi](#)

By Tobias Fischer, published 2008-03-11

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