



## SARA MINELLI

### NEW RESONANCES

EMA Vinci Records © 2018

Minelli opens the album with one of two pieces by fellow Italian Alessandro Solbiati. *Anthos* is sparse, exploiting the mellow sound of the alto flute with extended techniques. As required of any well executed performances of contemporary compositions, Minelli warms the listener up to her technical prowess, a mere taster of what's to come... almost without noticing, the album transitions into its second track. Brian Ferneyhough's *Cassandra's Dream Song* is defiant, within seconds announcing its arrival. Minelli is not the first to tackle this challenging piece, and so its presence on this album, for me at least, serves as an opportunity to explore her interpretation of it through the female gaze. Ellen Waterman's 1994 examination of *Cassandra's Dream Song* from a feminist perspective raises interesting questions over the composer's inspiration, and Waterman interrogates the masculinities and femininities of performance choices—the performer is at liberty to restructure the piece.

*Florentine Breaths* is unlike anything I have heard before. Jonathan Cole has masterfully tapped into the breathing skills of the flute player, creating an ethereal piece that Minelli brings to life. The halfway point of the album brings us back to Solbiati, whose *Anthos* opened this album. By contrast, *As if to land* takes the listener on a flight (excuse the pun), with idioms reminiscent of birds, almost playful at times, and really taking off energetically in the last few minutes. Now, my Italian isn't great, but a quick attempt at translating tells me that Sciarrino's *Come vengono prodotti gli incantesimi?* has something to do with spells. The piece captivates with percussive key work, bubbling like a potion in a cauldron, accented by the breath. The latter section of this piece really evokes a sense of magic brewing.

The final two tracks on *New Resonances* are quite different from the rest of the album. Minelli brings in electronics in both *Nove* and *Oltre*. Synth-like injections permeate Magini's *Nove*, adding many new textures, and intertwining electronics with the flute. *Oltre (Narcissus)* by Giuliani utilises electronics in a contrasting way, using triggered flute sounds alongside Minelli's solo line, creating the effect of multiple electronically manipulated flute voices at times.

Overall, this album successfully shows off Minelli's skilled capability to handle contemporary repertoire, and makes an interesting listen as well as an example for students of contemporary music.

**DILJEET BHACHU**