



Music: Classical & Opera
June 21, 2007

Album review
Bridget Kibbey

★★★★★

Love Is Come Again (self-released)



Even with the classical recording industry on a shaky foundation thanks to megacorporate disinterest and the demise of Tower Records, artists who issue their own music run the risk of having their efforts dismissed as vanity projects. But harpist Bridget Kibbey is far from a hobbyist: She has played Carnegie Hall alongside Ian Bostridge and Dawn Upshaw, and performs astounding feats on a regular basis with the International Contemporary Ensemble. No doubt she could have held out for a label deal, but why bother?

Everything about *Love Is Come Again*, from its unconventionally attractive packaging to Adam Abeshouse's exquisite recording, attests to Kibbey's professionalism and imagination. Perhaps *inspiration* would be a better term, given this program of underexposed works by innovative composers moved to write for the instrument after encountering a major player.

À la Française, the first of André Caplet's *Divertissements*, offers the frilly ripples one would expect in a solo-harp recital, but Kibbey's range of touch in the second, *À l'Espagnole*, forecasts subtler pleasures ahead. Performances of Germaine Tailleferre's Sonata, Benjamin Britten's Suite for Harp and Elliott Carter's *Bariolage* are technically assured and full of character. In *Every Lover Is a Warrior*, the promising young composer Kati Agócs spins folk materials into a powerful, ruminative suite. Add it all up, and calling this a strong contender for the year's most distinguished debut CD doesn't seem like an overstatement. (Available at bridgetkibbey.com)

-Steve Smith