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DIANA ROWAN BLENDS CLASSICAL AND FOLK ON THE HARP

August 2, 2005 (Berkeley, CA) -- Diana Rowan, a Bay Area harp player, has released her brand new album "Panta Rhei". The CD contains 13 tracks of traditional Celtic and Mediterranean music arranged lyrically and powerfully, for the harp, accompanied by traditional world instruments and vocals. The CD release coincides with numerous concerts and performances Diana is expected to play later this year. "'Panta Rhei' is a brilliantly conceived program, mixing the familiar and (for most of us) the exotic, shifting from contemplative to dancelike, to romantic, from solo to ensemble, from vocal to instrumental," Mitch Landy of Folk Harp Journal writes. "Upon hearing each selection, one never has the thought, 'oh, another one of these.' It is, of course, excellently mastered, and beautifully packaged."

Diana Rowan's unique sound reflects her unusual upbringing – born in Ireland, she has lived in Washington D.C., Belgium, and the Mediterranean island of Cyprus before making her permanent home in Berkeley, California. Diana's classical training - she holds a Master's Degree in Performance - instilled a lifelong love of J.S. Bach, Franz Schubert and Claude Debussy, among others, which combined with her studies in Celtic and Mediterranean/Middle Eastern music creates a compelling, timeless, and original sound.

"My music melds my major influences – classical, Celtic, and Mediterranean music – into a cohesive whole," Diana says. Fans of Savina Yannatou's intricate arrangements, Kate Bush's passion, Lunasa's drive, Loreena McKennitt's cosmopolitanism, and Ross Daly's refinement will find a home in her music. "I love to combine genres that on the surface do not have much in common, as they highlight each genre's power even more," she adds. "I see classical music as idealistic and striving, pushing the boundaries of creativity and definition of beauty, while folk music celebrates and explores reality by calling forth profound ancient knowledge and archetypes – both genres yearn to understand what it means to be human, but from different vantage points. Putting these genres side-by-side, to me, cross-fertilizes and creates synergy."

Diana loves to bring out the intense, more strident side of the harp, in addition to the instrument's better-known sweetness. She brings unusual repertoire to the harp, and uses arranging techniques that cross genres : for example, arranging a Greek song with techniques pioneered by Debussy, and using Turkish ornamentation in a Celtic piece.

“I want to expand the boundaries of harp playing and repertoire, and set a style and sound all my own,” Diana explains. “I want to further research both classical music and the folk genres of Celtic, Mediterranean and Middle Eastern music in order to glean a more profound understanding of the similarities and differences, both of which complement each other. I want to heighten the expressiveness of the harp, and bring out colors and textures that have not been heard before. I want to create something meaningful and enlightening for people, something truly moving and honest.”

“Diana celebrates the allure of the islands and the dynamic cultures that thrive along the sea through a well-arranged selection of song sets with intriguing names likes “The War & Peace Set”, “The Teasing Set” and “The Holy Trinity”. The rich textures of folk music from Ireland, Scotland, Greece, Cyprus, Israel and Eastern Europe weave a subtle spell as Diana draws on contemporary as well as traditional arrangements...this CD is a treat,” Shawna Spiteri of Harpbeat sums up.

For more information and review copies of “Panta Rhei”, please contact Diana Rowan at 510-559-9660 or Diana@sirenharp.com or Diana@pantarheicd.com

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