

Reviews – Diana Rowan/Panta Rhei

Mitch Landy, Folk Harp Journal Fall 2004

This first offering by Berkeley resident Diana Rowan is a delicious piece of work, both in arrangement and performance...

"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. Upon hearing each selection, one never has the thought, "oh, another one of these." It is, of course, excellently mastered, and beautifully packaged...

Shawna Spiteri, Harpbeat Fall 2004

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 like "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. At times, it floats you along on a captivating Ladino love song (like La Rosa Enflorece) then bursts forth into a wild Greek dance like a refreshing shot of sea spray.

Lilting, crystal-pure vocals on another captivating Ladino tune – Yo m'enamori d'un aire – melt into a Balkan hornpipe discovered by Bartók, and finish with a lovely medieval-sounding wedding song from Cyprus. The Celtic tunes represented here are old favorites such as The Butterfly, Drowsy Maggie, Arran Boat Song, Glenlivet and a less-familiar O'Carolan tune, Cremonea...The spirit of these diverse tunes are realized further by the talents of a host of other wonderful, local musicians including Karl Franzen on guitar & whistles; Gari Hegedus and Paddy League on bowed tambur, mandocello, oud, lyra, & violin; Peter Maund on percussion; and vocalist Sonja Drakulich.

John Westling, owner of Sandpiper Instruments and maker of Diana's harp

The very first piece actually made me cry when I first heard it. It was like recognizing all of the potential of the Nova, all at once. It was exactly like the first time I strung one up and played it. I would have to say I was completely overcome with emotion hearing, for the first time, the true brilliance of the harp and listening to its soul. The rest of the CD does exactly what I've always wanted someone to do with the Nova...touch it, feel it, start playing it, and guide it out into the open, then turn it loose and hang on. My intuitive connection with this harp always has suggested that it needs to be let free, to take you on a journey, to change on a whim, then take off again. It's amazing that you have managed to do just that.

Lark in the Morning, CA and WA

Well conceived and executed CD that mixes together styles of Celtic and Mediterranean music. 13 tunes incorporating many of the most important and influential instruments of both musical styles.

Sylvia Woods, Sylvia Woods Harp Center, Glendale CA

Born in Ireland and raised in Cyprus, Diana Rowan melds these 2 traditions in a compelling CD of Irish and Mediterranean music. Diana's harp is accompanied by traditional Irish instruments (whistle and guitar), as well as more eastern instruments (oud, lyra, and bowed tambur). Percussion of both traditions blend in unexpected ways, giving the listener a new experience of their own musical favorites. Diana's voice adds an additional texture to a few of the songs. With the final selection, a medley of the Appalachian spirituals Wayfaring Stranger and Sinner Man along with the Ladino Rosa das Rosas she comes full circle, adding America, where she now resides, to the mix. Give this CD a try. We're sure you'll become a fan.

I listened to your CD this weekend, and was quite enchanted and impressed. I will surely wish to add this to our offerings. Thanks for a truly beautiful and moving CD.
Lloyd Bard, Backroads Music, Marin CA

Your CD has been playing literally for days here at home ...
Lovely and loving and lively and sumptuous and healing/soothing
Best wishes always ...
Corey Mason
Director
worldOneradio+festival
= :)~

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