

The Music Scene/La Scena Musicale
Recording Review
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El Dorado

Caroline Léonardelli, harp; Penderecki String Quartet; Joel Quarrington,
bass

★★★★★★ Highest Rating - Must Have!

Perhaps an unconscious reflection of Ottawa harpist Caroline Léonardelli's early training in both France and Canada, this recording bookends works by Canadian composer Marjan Mozetich with pieces by Debussy, Tournier, and Damase. The one departure is the well-known harp showpiece Viejo Zortzico by Basque composer Jesús Guridi. This is smart programming, amply displaying Léonardelli's strengths as both a technician and a melodist. The title track, a Mozetich composition, is accompanied by the Penderecki String Quartet and Joel Quarrington on bass, giving Léonardelli freedom to take a melodic role, a capacity she handles with ease; the harp never loses its sense of linear motion, no matter how dense the underlying texture. Léonardelli's sensitive voicing and phrasing in Songs of Nymphs (also a Mozetich composition) sets the interpretive standard. Léonardelli's tremendous interpretive ability is matched by astonishing engineering and production. Harp recording has come a long way in the past 10 years, but too many harpists with wonderful, rich-sounding instruments have churned out tinny, unsatisfying records. Here, producer Anton Kwiatkowski could trick you into believing you're sitting next to a \$24,000 Lyon and Healy, not your \$240 Sony stereo system. It doesn't get much better than this for solo musicianship or recorded sound.

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