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WORLD
TRACK 8



Belonoga Through the Eyes of the Sun

Elen Music (58 mins)



Solar power



Bulgarian singer Gergana Dimitrova will be familiar to many as a member of the women's vocal ensemble, the Eva Quartet. For this solo project, she has retained the Bulgarian singing style, sensibility and harmonic language developed over the second half of the last century, while setting it in a floating, impressionistic sonic space, cunningly combining and confusing acoustic sounds with electronic ones, her affecting voice emerging from flickering sonic backdrops of animal-like moans and whines, chiming keyboard sonorities and instrumental flurries. It's a contemplative music that takes its time; even when a groove takes hold, the music never hurries, and Dimitrova and her collaborator Aleks Nushev set fragmented accordion and *gadulka* (bowed lute) lines against lush, sometimes grandiose textures, developing slowly and surely over the duration of the piece.

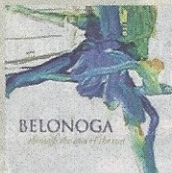
The musicians are unafraid to mix styles, native and otherwise. 'Shopski Yenge', for example, juxtaposes fragments of rural song, typified by grinding close harmonies and piercing drones, with didgeridoo, the dark boom and rattle of a frame drum, and fluttering sampled nonsense syllables spun into a sequenced line. Each level of the music moves at a different speed. It's a highly effective, beautifully imagined and refreshing recording, and a worthy successor to previous releases by this pioneering label.

KIM BURTON

◀ TRACK TO TRY *A Wedding at the Camel Caravan*

Leipziger Volkszeitung 22.2.2014

Kaval, Duduk, Rahmentrommeln und weitere Instrumente des Balkans, darüber die sehnsuchtsvolle



Stimme der Bulgarin Gergana Dimitrova, die sich für ihre die Welt umarmenden Musikprojekte Belonoga nennt. „The Arch“ hieß ihr erfolgreiches Projekt mit Hector Zazou. Nun hat sie sich zu Eigenem emanzipiert, hat komponiert und eine auch Electronics einbeziehende gar nicht kleine Band zusammengestellt, die unter ihren ebenso opulenten wie sinnlichen Vokalisieren einen dichten Soundteppich webt. Der ist gleichermaßen archaisch wie modern und von rhythmisch insistierender Intensität. Das zieht Horizonte auf und integriert fremde Elemente der australischen Aborigines oder afrikanischer Pygmäen. Doch ihre Stimme bewahrt diesen World Beat vorm Beliebigen. *uste*

Belonoga: Through The Eyes Of The Sun
(Elen Music)



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Belonogata: Seen Through the Sun's Eyes, a new album of Gergana Dimtirova

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Folk singer Gergana Dimtirova has released her first solo album. Its official presentation is due in November as part of the Sofia Vocal Festival.

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The singer's first name (Gergana) coincides with the name of the heroine in the celebrated poem by classic Petko Slaveykov, The Spring of the White-Legged Girl. Her album has been entitled Belonoga (White-Legged). It consists of about 10 tracks and offers a few stylistic experiments. For example, a melody from the Bulgarian Rhodope Mountain has been ornamented with an aborigine tune. Some basic singing practices of a Pygmy tribe have been combined with intonations from the Shopp region, Central Western Bulgaria. In her journey across various cultural strata, the singer takes her listeners to the beginnings of the human efforts to convert sound into art. At the same time, she makes good use of the potential of present-day technology. This daring advance into the territory of world music is hardly surprising. **Apart from her work in the Mystery of Bulgarian Voices Choir, Gergana has been actively involved in Eva Quartet.** A year ago the chamber group presented the project The Arch produced by Hector Zazou. In it the Bulgarian quartet performs music jointly with more than 50 guest-musicians from 14 countries. "This acted as great inspiration for all of us, and as to me, it was a step towards my first solo album", Gergana admits.

„Belonogata is not just a collection of songs and creating them was a long process that took four years. With sound engineer Alex Noushev we started work in the studio back in 2008. He arranged all tracks. As work proceeded, new ideas started coming, and I realized that I had to release all my creative energy.”

The full title of the album is Belonogata: Seen Through the Sun's Eyes. Songs from various folklore regions have been included in it.

“There is a song from Pirin, a Rhodope one, and a Shopp one too. Well, I have added a Northern song, because I come from this part of Bulgaria. In the performance of traditional melodies I have used various timbres and vocal registers plus a few singing techniques. I was willing to reveal the wealth of the human voice. It could be strong and aggressive at times, but also refined, gentle and sophisticated.”

Each of the tracks has its unique story. Through the Mountain is a token of reverence for Radka Koushleva. I am a great admirer of her songs, Gergana Dimitrova admits. In this case the Rhodope melody has been



combined with some performance techniques of Australian aborigines. Wedding in the Caravan has been inspired by a documentary film about an old-time wedding ritual.

All arrangements of the songs have been made by Alex Noushev.

“We made a very good team. We were together creating and editing in the studio. Alex easily grasped my ideas and developed them with his brilliant arrangements. I have been firmly supported by my husband Kostadin Gentchev, founder and leader of the groups Bulgara and Diva Reka (Wild River). He is one of the instrumentalists in the project. A guest-performer is Armenian singer and ud-player Haig Yazdjian. In some of the songs you can listen to Violeta Petkova (rebec), Dimitar Tishev (accordion), Dimitar Hristov (pandore) and to Greek multi-instrumentalist Vangelis Karipas. He was invited for the percussions.”

English version Daniela Konstantinova

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