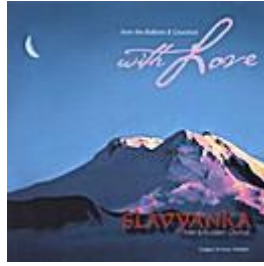


Mp3 Slavyanka - With Love From The Balkans And Caucasus



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Folk, composed and orthodox church music from Georgia, Armenia, Macedonia and Bulgaria in which deep bass voices and high tenors lift you with their expression of the Slavic soul in song. 18 MP3 Songs

WORLD: Eastern European, WORLD: World Traditions Details: From a recent concert review by Rajna Klaser: It is remarkable to hear Russian Orthodox Christian music performed by Slavyanka's men with such conviction and excellence, and then realize they are not Russian or even of Russian descent. It is hard to fathom the time and pure will power invested in the learning and understanding of this foreign tradition in order to reach this level of excellence. Though labeled an amateur choral ensemble, Slavyanka is a well-balanced chorus of considerable strength and superb musicianship, with a vast Eastern European repertoire and exciting programming designed by director Gregory Smirnov. A contemporary "Our Father" by Vladimir Licina, a young Serbian-American composer, features a haunting baritone solo, while the choir provided a richly colored background. "In Thy Kingdom" by Bulgarian composer Khristov was the highlight of the program. The piece was appealing, with an abundance of folksy open fifths that alternated with complex harmonic progressions, which in turn were resolved in three-octave unisons creating an eerie sense of infinity. The choir reached its zenith in this piece, building up to the central point of the text, the joyful "raduysya" ("rejoice"). Slavyanka rejoiced with force at this point, savoring each enunciation of this word as if it were the prayer itself. Slavyanka's diction was excellent throughout the concert, but what set this piece apart from the rest of the program was the particularly tasteful phrasing and attention to the text. Another powerful piece was Mokranjac's "Blessed be the name of the Lord," featuring the fine characteristics of old Serbian folk chants. Slavyanka's superb tuning, clear, bell-like open sound during the forceful, dynamic climax, and a sudden switch to a

shimmering, yet serene, prayerful closing amen attest to this group's superb musicianship. (Rajna Klaser is a Ph.D. candidate in the UC Berkeley Department of Music, with an emphasis on ethnomusicology.)

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