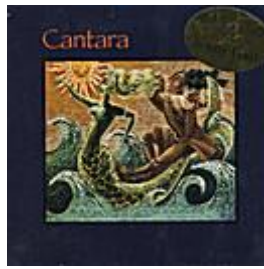


Mp3 Jenny Gall - Cantara



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A new look at women's music from Australia: 'the sounds you will hear are clear, fresh, colourful and thought-provoking.' Traditional and electroacoustic music meet in a recording of rare beauty. 11 MP3 Songs WORLD: Australian, WORLD: Celtic Details: A colleague once remarked, "There is no Australian women's folk music." As an Australian woman folk musician with a grandmother who was a fiddle player, I found this a bit difficult to swallow; but certainly, the predominant image of our folk music is a very masculine one. This CD airs the kind of music Australian pioneer women played and sang, and aims to shed light on their hidden emotional lives. I've drawn on the music manuscripts and diaries of Scottish born Georgiana McCrae, who came to Australia in 1840, and I'm also using field recordings from the National Library of Australia: there's a wealth of information in the background noises on the old tapes as well as the actual music. This gave me clues about how these women used their music to express the unsayable through their lullabies and work songs. We've used the background sounds heard in field recordings as a sound art element to reflect the domestic performance of the original recordings. Sally Sloane needed to sing many of her songs at the sink when John Meredith recorded her in the 1950s: the familiar setting helped her remember all the words! Singing a song like The Female Rambling Sailor while you wash the dishes can transport you to another time and another world. For women the piano was very much a bush instrument and there are some wonderful tales of pianos being carted to the most remote locations, suffering dreadful damage: but the owners steadfastly refused to be discouraged from playing their beloved instrument! To honour these women, piano and voice are the mainstays of this recording, though they sometimes go through some intriguing electronic transformations.... Here's a recent review by Barry McDonald: Jenny Gall, in collaboration with musician and sound artist Ian Blake, has here produced a recording of Australian women's folk music that is much more than a fine and inspiring

aesthetic experience. This CD of nine songs and two instrumental tracks is also intellectually and artistically challenging, surprising, and at times slightly unsettling. It is strongly unified by its consistent reference to the essential paradox and ambiguity of life. That this is an essence which is at once contemporary and also generations deep, is convincingly expressed by Jenny's seamless juxtaposition of modern piano-based composition (Blue Fox; Gwen Harwood Impromptus) with traditional pieces like A Bhanarach Donn a Cruidh and As Sylvie Was Walking. Right throughout this beautifully crafted album, the ancient is integrated with the modern, the innovated with the long-inherited, the organic with the synthetic. While Jenny employs symbolic ballad poetry as her main communicative vehicle, ingenious musical support is provided by settings that tightly combine elements as starkly traditional as the unaccompanied voice, with those as experimental as random digital sound generation. Typical of this treatment is her performance of the 'magical' ballad, Green Bushes, where the obscurity of a mythological narrative of death and regeneration is emphasised by the radical ambiguity of Jenny's interpretation of the song's rhythm and tonality. Worlds of meaning both personal and universal - are further implied by sound effects woven through what is a typically non-standard musical arrangement. The choice of material here reflects also the paradox of a European-Australian identity. Classic lyrics of the bush such as The Reedy Lagoon and The Stockman's Last Bed both performed in ways which give them new life and meaning alternate with ballads like The Female Rambling Sailor and The Bonny Bunch of Roses that exhibit far more explicitly their Anglo-Celtic provenance. That all these songs were learned by Jenny from field recordings of Australian women singers, and the fact that all are performed in a similarly contemporary and convention-defying manner, suggest that the tale of the stock-camp or river bend must be taken together with the portrayal of the elemental forces of love, loss, and ambition, as contributing equally to the expression of a fundamental Australian feminineness. The sounds you will hear on this recording are clear, fresh, colourful, and thought-provoking. Sung voices of varying timbres are interwoven with the thick complexity of pianos, the simple plucked poignancy of the harp, the brash throatiness of trumpet and trombone, and the smooth richness of clarinet, viola and string bass. Other sounds no less pleasing - are far harder to classify, having their origin in the infinitely surprising realm of electronic creation.

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