

Musical Messengers of the People

Danae Dörken's new CD "East and West" combines Western piano music with compositions from Eastern Europe



East and West

Manolis Kalomiris (1883-1962)

[1] – [5] PRÉLUDES POUR PIANO

Béla Bartók (1881-1945)

[6] – [11] 6 ROMANIAN FOLK DANCES SZ. 56

Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849)

[12] POLONAISE OP. 26 NR. 1

Manolis Kalomiris (1883-1962)

[13] NOCTURNE

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

[14] – [25] 12 LÄNDLER D. 790

Edvard Grieg (1843-1907)

[26] WEDDING DAY AT TROLDHAUGEN OP. 65 NR. 6

Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)

[27] – [34] 8 NOCTURENS FP 56

Manuel de Falla (1876-1946)

[35] DANSE RITUELLE DU FEU

Danae Dörken piano

Ars Produktion // **ARS 38286** // Release date: **July 5, 2019**

Her ability to interpret works of music in both a spirited and sensitive fashion has drawn the attention of the international music scene to the German-Greek pianist Danae Dörken. After having previously recorded solo works by Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, Robert Schumann and Leoš Janáček, the 28-year-old will release *East and West*, an album fusing western piano compositions by Schubert, Grieg, Poulenc and de Falla with pieces by eastern composers such as Chopin, Bartók and the Greek composer Manolis Kalomiris.

For Dörken, a former student of both Karl-Heinz Kämmerling and Lars Vogt, the relationship between east and west has played an integral role not only in her early upbringing but also in her current everyday life. Her mother's family originates from the Greek island of Lesbos while her father's family roots lead to the Federal Republic of Germany in Western Europe. She often commutes between the two countries, although her permanent place of residence is Brandenburg, close to the capital city of Germany, where she lives with her husband and two children. She often spends the summers on the island of Lesbos, where she organises an annual chamber music festival with her mother and sister Kiveli. The festival's concerts feature both long-time musical friends and new acquaintances from all over the world who come together on the little Greek island to perform together. Danae Dörken has made it "her personal mission in this day and age to show that diversity is something that ultimately brings us together and gives us enormous strength." Her choice to combine the works of a broad range of composers such as Schubert, de Falla and Bartók on her new album *East and West* reflects precisely the aforementioned sentiment. The compositions on the album all share the commonality of being heavily influenced by folk music traditions. Dörken explains that "the folkloristic character of these compositions highlight the individual elements of each culture which render the pieces unique and underscore the necessity for them to never get lost."

Chopin's *Polonaise in C-sharp minor* embeds the melancholy of the tunes of Polish folk music, while Bartók's *Romanian Folk Dances* feature the unusual rhythms of the Transylvanian peasant polka. Schubert's *12 Ländler* reflect the melodies of alpine folk dances while *Danza ritual del fuego* by de Falla is reminiscent of guitar performers that can be heard on village squares in Spain. Grieg was also aware of the fact that his inspiration for *Wedding Day at Trolldhaugen* came from the mighty chords that characterise Norwegian folklore. Manolis Kalomiris' compositions are similarly influenced by folklore but by less well-known Greek folk music. Out of all of the composers that Danae Dörken chose to feature on her new album, he is the least well-known. Kalomiris

was born in Smyrna, now Izmir, in 1883. His piano lessons exposed him to the traditions of western art music while his knowledge of Greek folk music was passed down to him through his family. Kalomiris is widely recognised as one of the founders of Greek art music and he described himself as the „musical messenger of his people“. His *Nocturne in F-sharp* minor resembles the compositions of Frédéric Chopin, while his *Five Préludes* feature the skilled intertwinement of a romantic facade comprised of sounds from Greek folk music with chromatic elements. At first glance, the *Huit Nocturnes* by the French neoclassical composer Francis Poulenc might seem a little out of place. While this composition is not directly influenced by folk music, the simplistic elegance of the Nocturnes render them ideal counterparts to the remaining pieces on the album.

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