

Barbara Hannigan - Crazy Girl Crazy – Music by Gershwin, Berg & Berio (2017)

Written by bluesever

Tuesday, 03 April 2018 12:31 -

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1 Luciano Berio - *Sequenza III* 9:00 Alban Berg - *Lulu Suite* 2 I *Rondo* 14:25 3 II *Ostinato* 3:53 4 III *Lied Der Lulu* 2:45 5 IV *Variationen* 3:45 6 V *Adagio* 10:25 7 George Gershwin - *Girl Crazy Suite* 13:10

Ludwig Orchestra Barbara Hannigan - soprano vocals, conductor

No CD can adequately encapsulate the experience of a Barbara Hannigan performance, which must be seen as well as heard in order to appreciate the range of her talents. An avant-garde vocalist of virtuosic brilliance and a conductor of exceptional ability, Hannigan is also a theatrical phenomenon, known to appear on-stage as a Stasi official in dominatrix gear, or as a gum-popping schoolgirl, as in her concert performances of György Ligeti's *Mysteries of the Macabre*. She has also won acclaim for her operatic roles in George Benjamin's *Written on Skin*, and Alban Berg's *Lulu*, where she has presented her characters with terrifying psychological depth. Her 2017 release on Alpha, *Crazy Girl Crazy*, may serve as an introduction for listeners who have yet to hear or see her perform, and the album and the accompanying DVD, *Music Is Music*, present Hannigan as effectively as possible in digital media. Yet for all the extended techniques she executes to perfection in Luciano Berio's *Sequenza III*, and for the powerful lyricism and violence of her interpretation of Berg's *Lulu Suite*, in which she sings and conducts the Ensemble Ludwig, Hannigan also reveals an attractive knack for Broadway standards in the *Girl Crazy Suite*, a fresh arrangement of songs by George Gershwin. Hannigan is successful in all the genres she chooses because her performances are much more than an occasion for showing off, which in her case would be justifiable merely because of her dazzling vocal pyrotechnics and entertaining stage antics. Hannigan is possessed by her music, and she is convincing because she is absolutely committed to putting her voice, body, and personality on the line, with the fearlessness of a tightrope walker. This recording has astonishing clarity and close-up sound, giving Hannigan credible presence and audiophiles a genuine treat. ---Blair Sanderson, AllMusic Review

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Whether singing, conducting, dancing or acting, the Canadian soprano Barbara Hannigan is a constant source of fascination. Alpha Classics is proud to enter her world and her very first album as singer and conductor in 2017: with the Amsterdam based orchestra Ensemble Ludwig, of which she is associate artist.

Barbara Hannigan has devised a programme including Berg's Lulu Suite and Gershwin's Girl Crazy in a Suite newly arranged by the multi award- winning American composer Bill Elliott. To complement these two pieces, she has recorded Berio's spectacular Sequenza III for solo voice.

An outstanding soprano, a distinguished interpreter of the music of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, an all-round artist who creates a sensation on concert platforms and in opera houses throughout the world, Barbara Hannigan has enriched her palette over the past few years by devoting a portion of her activities to conducting. This album in the form of a musical portrait of the artist, is completed by a DVD of a film made by Mathieu Amalric during the rehearsals and recording sessions. It plunges into the heart of the orchestra with a very personal look at the exchanges between conductor and musicians.

Over the next few years, Alpha will accompany Barbara Hannigan in a number of projects from very varied horizons. ---prestoclassical.co.uk

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