

Renee Fleming – The Beautiful Voice (1998)

Written by bluesever

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01 Charpentier - Louise - Depuis Le Jour 02 Gounod - Faust - Jewel Song 03 Massenet - Manon - Gavotte 04 Dvorak - Songs My Mother Taught Me 05 Flotow - Martha - Tis The Last Rose Of Summer 06 Puccini - La Rondine - Chi Il Bel Sogno Di Doretta 07 Korngold - Die Tote Stadt - Mariettas Lied 08 Orff - Carmina Burana - In Trutina 09 R. Strauss - Morgen 10 Rachmaninov - Vocalise 11 J. Strauss II - Die Fledermaus - Klänge Der Heimat 12 Lehar - Die Lustige Witwe - Es Lebt' eine Vilja 13 Cano - Luna - Epilogo 14 Canteloube - Chants D'Auvergne – Bailero Renée Fleming – soprano Osian Ellis – harp Paul Willey - concert master, violin Clive Greensmith – cello Ian Watson – piano London Voices Christopher Middleton – choir master English Chamber Orchestra Charles Mackerras – conductor Jeffrey Tate – conductor

Sure, it takes guts for a soprano to call an album THE BEAUTIFUL VOICE. But Renée Fleming did it, and the title fits. Fleming, a recognized performer with a wealth of talent, had the luxury of being allowed to program the music she loved--music as gratifying to sing as it is to hear.

With careful and varied support from Jeffrey Tate and the English Chamber Orchestra, Fleming's program is a wash of exquisite music, mostly about love: longing for lost love (in "Marietta's Lied"); first knowing love (in "Depuis le jour"); in youth (the "Jewel Song"); and in old age ("The last rose").

Fleming is at her best here in operatic selections in which the diva halts the action to tell a story, to dwell in a moment, or to draw her on- and off-stage audiences into the action. There is some well-trodden ground here, but long, flowing lines and sumptuous, floating high notes keep the program fresh. In a market glutted with artist-centered albums, THE BEAUTIFUL VOICE is a standout. ---Rovi

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