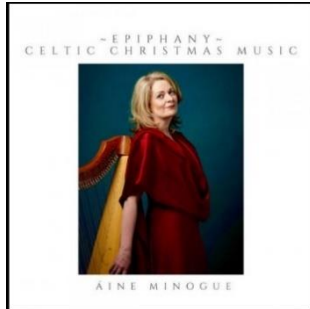


Áine Minogue  
Epiphany: Celtic Christmas Music



I have reviewed **Áine Minogue** a number of times and her unique brand of Celtic compositions never disappoint. Ever. Her latest album is a twelve track reverent mix of instrumentals and vocals called **Epiphany: Celtic Christmas Music** that will warm the heart of any who hear her dulcet voice and melodious harp playing. Her arrangements have an innate gentleness, a natural warmth that soothes deep down in all the crevices of the soul. It can be played often for renewed gratification. Voice, harp, cello, flute, and lots of Christmas magic combine to make this album memorable. Joining Áine is multi-instrumentalist Séamus Egan, cellist Eugene Freisen, and a familiar voice from previous Minogue albums, Alasdair Halliday.

Áine opens the album with the title track, **Epiphany**. It is the musical unveiling of the Christ child to mankind by the Magi. Minogue has this whispery, soft, sweet voice that is just perfect for storytelling and singing and it is such a comfort. This duet with Halliday is heavenly. Then she offers a blissful harp rendition of **O Come Emmanuel**. Freisen's cello plays gently along making this tune delicately beautiful. Another wonderful instrumental is **Harp of Heaven**. It possesses a wonderful cross-genre feel to it as if Celtic, jazz, and classical became the three wise men who make a song on their way to Bethlehem. Next is a vocal called **Christ's Child Lullaby**. It is a glorious song with sparkling harp and melancholic cello and tempered by Halliday's strong, clear voice to accompany them.

Next Áine performs the familiar tune, **What Child is This** on harp in an amazing solo performance. I still hear this music as Greensleeves in my mind, but the sentiment is unmistakably reverential. It is astounding how the notes resonate and fill the spirit with love. Another blissful instrumental is **One Night in Bethlehem**. The echoing tune has a sweet sadness, a bittersweet experience for the heart, but not unwelcome.

Finally, Áine's version of **Oiche Chuain** (Silent Night). It too, is an instrumental, but really most hearts can supply the words. The soft, emotionally slow tempo sounds like a music box that was just opened by a hopeful child. It could be the child in all of us.

Áine Minogue's combination of original and traditional tunes on *Epiphany: Celtic Christmas Music* is just right if you are wanting a gentle, sublime Christmas music soundscape. Highly recommended. - R J Lannan, Artisan Music Reviews