

Carla Patullo

So She Howls

carlapatullo.com



Using a wondrous mix of instruments and voices, composer **Carla Patullo** gifts us with her new album **So She Howls**. I have never heard of the application of the human voice referred to as howling, but after listening to this album it makes perfect sense. The sometimes visceral, sometimes seraphic utterances are as basic and emotional as you can get. The album is nine tracks of eerie, beautiful, complex contemporary music. Collaborators include the Grammy nominated vocal group Tonality, violinist Lorenza Ponce, and the Scorchio Quartet which features Martha Mooke. Also on the album is Grammy Award-winning violinist Lili Haydn. **So She Howls** is a combination of music and lyrics that sound very much like primeval poetry by an anguished soul. There is a lot of excellent music on this album, but there is also an equal amount of pain. The passionate themes are driven chiefly by prestigious artists that know their way around violins and by others who know how to adeptly use the human voice as a lead instrument.

The album begins with a dreamy tune called **If You Listen**. Beautifully sad, this sublime introduction to the work is a flowing, musical object d'art of blowing winds, anguished violins, and a heavenly voice in search of sanctuary. It seems neither heaven, nor earth can offer a place for this wandering soul to rest.

The title tune **So She Howls** is a journey into a world of darkness and pain. It is as if the wayfarer has tried every direction, including an introspective excursion to quell her pain, and yet the destination is always on her horizon in an endless, unreachable goal. The music is shadowy and full of despair.

**Calling You** is a canticle of intensifying voices that rise to the heavens, echoing the call for help to an ignoring, indifferent God. No matter how many times she sends up her prayer, the answer never seems to manifest itself. What is a soul to do but despair? **Calling You** is a combination of gorgeous violin and light orchestral nuances and a vocal that defies description in its angst and frustration.

**To Forest Scenes**, featuring Lorenza Ponce and Tonality, is a soundscape of fragility beyond comprehension. The air is rarified and cool. From mossy understory to towering pine, green fills our world; the color of safety, the color of new growth. Like spring time it is a new beginning. Don't be confused. It is not a do over. It is another chance to sink our roots and reach for the sky. Once again, full lush orchestrations and layer upon layer of violin textures softer than velvet and stronger than stone embellish this tune. It is a favorite.

**Without Noise** is anything but, but in a good way. In my world noise equals music and this transcendent theme with a simple ending is packed with emotion. The aural vision describes

what may be behind the veil for one or for many. More than frightened, yet curious the journey continues as the soul comes to a mystical door that is ajar. And now what?

Patullo's tune **Earth** must have been the music playing when God(s) created the planet. Everything from a tinkling music box to a deep and sorrowful violin mixes to allow the sun to rise, the earth to spin, and the world to exist. Earthly, uplifting "howling" and textures of angelic singing combine in this song of birth and rebirth. It is all quite beautiful.

**And Love** swells into being. It reminded me of a single line in the Hail Mary prayer, specifically, *Hail Mary, full of grace*. Now I have heard the sound of full of grace. Violin and voice combine to define a sense of being surround by love in all its manifestations. Every note is an embrace. Every small silence is a divine breath. It is comforting. It is heartening. It is more than reassuring.

Carla Patullo's more than poignant music touches the soul so deeply that I caution the listener as to when it is utilized. This is one of those albums that, on a rainy day, fills your heart and soul with dreamy textures and soft sounding fantasies. Be prepared for your heart to be sad. But also be prepared for the discovery of joy. Highly listenable. - R J Lannan, ArtisanMusicReviews.com