

Eamonn Karran

Deep Heart's Core



On his latest offering composer and pianist **Eamonn Karran** crosses over several genre's thresholds, but it is a good thing. He delves into Traditional Irish music as is his norm, but then he tangents into electronic, Celtic, and other categories. The amazing result is a finely crafted album called **Deep Hearts Core**. The title is a bit cryptic, as it applies to someone's deepest emotions and desires. Also, Karran's current music suggests an overwhelming sense of yearning. Perhaps this is Eamonn's musical metaphor for the well-known phrase, "The heart wants what the heart wants." These eight tracks of emotionally-tinged instrumentals foster a yearning for love of the heart, love of another human being, and love of the Divine, which for some, may be analogous.

If you walk from Cronin's Yard and then up through Father O'Shea's Gulley, you'll soon get to the summit of Carrountoohil, the highest point in Ireland. The view is more than something. As you look down into the valley you can see where myths and legends were born. Eamonn's song **Carrountoohil** recounts the tales of mothers and babies as they race down the mountain. Irish whistle, piano, pipes, and soft guitar join together to weave the story that is as old and beautiful as the mountain itself. You can hear the crackling of the fire as the stories are told. This is a glorious beginning.

Fair City, musically, seems like a place in the future, but it is actually present day Dublin. Karran pays tribute the city and not (I think) to the long running TV series of the same name. For many living in Ireland it is a lovely city of vivacious, friendly people. Karran's electronic homage is driving and very upbeat, but never strident. This ebullient track epitomizes the well-known "Irish Craic". Yeah, you'll have to look that one up.

A gentle piano intro renders the tune **High King of Cashel** into a warm, thoughtful ballad. Ethereal voice and electronic strings join in acknowledgement of the notable conversion by St. Patrick of the King of Munster, Brian Boru. Sadly, Boru dies at the Battle of Clontarf. Later a particular harp was called *the Brian Boru Harp*, and it is thought to be the oldest harp in the world. The melancholy music is not quite a lament, but the reverence is in there as is the sublime storytelling.

Listening to **Newgrange Rises** we wander into County Meath and visit the monument that abides there. The labyrinthine mound is ancient, dating back more than five thousand years, but the mysteries are fresh in our minds. Karran combines a bit of pronounced percussion, Uilleann pipes, a haunting voice, and a mesmerizing refrain to remind us that there be others that have built sacred monuments older than the pyramids that still stand today.

"Touch a stone only once" is a familiar old adage. Where ever you place it, that is where it belongs. Where ever you go in Ireland, you'll see the walls. Every meter of stony barricade is a foundation for myths and folklore and a solid part of Irish heritage. Eamonn's lush, lyrical Celtic

tune, **The Walls** is eloquent yet, haunting. Soft guitar, piano, and anguished vox femina blend seamlessly into this singularly memorable ballad. One of my many favorites on Deep Heart's Core.

The final track is called **Wings Over Glenveagh**. The place known as Glenveagh is burdened with a dark past although it ended as one of the most breathtaking spots in County Donegal, Glenveagh National Park. Glistening harp and piano create wave upon wave of nostalgia as we re-imagine the tall trees, the azure skies, and the little waterfall at the top of the Upper Glen Trail. Karran's music reminds us why we long for the green hills of earth.

This is Eamonn Karran's fifth recording and fits in nicely with his other remarkable albums. His use of electronics in this album, albeit sparingly, shows his depth and versatility. I dare say that his future offerings will have even more electronic influences. Deep Heart's Core is Karran's moving, masterful gift that lets you dwell in a fanciful world of imagination at a time when the heart, most of all, needs respite.

"The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched - they must be felt with the heart." - Helen Keller. Such is Eamonn's music. Furthermore, it is no surprise that no matter where the Irish travel, they always want to go home again. Highly recommended. - R J Lannan, Artisan Music Reviews