

Wai Kapohe, Harper provide contrasts in Spanish songs

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>Canciones
espanolas;
Deborah Wai
Kapohe (sop);
David Harper
(piano); Trust CD
MMT2038

By Bryan James

THE Morrison Music Trust sponsored the production of this recording of Spanish songs by the fine Invercargill-based soprano Deborah Wai Kapohe and the New Zealand-born, London-based accompanist and vocal coach, David Harper, and what an excellent recording it is.



(Cradle song) has a most engaging piano part while the voice dreamily drifts over an almost continuous legato line that Ms Wai Kapohe exploits with skill.

She has a voice whose mezzo notes are especially full, dark and rich and most suitable for this music. One can readily hear how much she enjoys singing these songs, for they are very suitable for the particular sound she is able to achieve.

No recording of Spanish songs could be complete without some contribution

from the many written by Enrique Granados, and the artists have selected five brief items from the *Tonadillas* including, in complete contrast, the brief flourish of *El Tra la la y el Punteado* (The tra la la and the strong of the guitar) and the magnificent *El Mirar de la Maja* (The gaze of the Maja), with its wonderful line "for your eyes are like lightning, and with their burning passion, they destroy me".

But there are many contrasts on this disc

which ranges very widely, from Xavier Montsalvatge's *Five Negro Songs* and Fernando Obradors' classical Spanish songs, to the Castillian songs of Jesus Guridi.

There are a few moments of technical uncertainty from Ms Wai Kapohe, and some lack of mastery of breath control here and there, but overall this is a recording many will treasure, for here is a singer whose voice is well matched to the music and who performs it with elan. David Harper's piano proves a most effective support and not a note seems out of place in emphasis or feeling.