

REVIEWS

MAGNATUNE MUSIC (www.magnatune.com)

I have never reviewed a record company before, but not letting such a thing stop me, here we go! Magnatune are a revolutionary new internet based label. They are revolutionary in many ways, how about these for starters? They let you decide how much you want to pay for recordings; they let you hear the whole album in hi-fi quality before you buy, for free and as many times as you wish to (great if you work a lot on a computer like I do); and they encourage you to copy it and give it to three friends; are those enough reasons? All the music on this page is from them and they have a very wide range of excellent recordings available in lots of different styles. Music is available on a physical CD posted to you or as an instant download. And by the way, I am not getting anything for writing this - I just like their fresh approach to music (and their recordings) so much that I want to support them. *Nick*



SILVER

Beth Quist
Magnatune Music
CD: (Your Price). Length: 65.26 mins.
Reviewer: Nicholas Breeze Wood

Beth is a singer-songwriter mixing her own Middle Eastern and Indian inspired music with ambient soundscapes that never get mushy or New Age. Her music is often ethereal, with a very textured mix of interesting instruments and drones over which she sings. She has a strong, beautiful voice and she uses it to very good effect in this sweeping, open-sky music.

Notes are sadly nonexistent on the CD cover, which is a shame as I would have liked to have known what she played and if anyone else is playing with her, but the music does speak for itself and I have already downloaded her other two albums from Magnatune and enjoyed those just as much.

Available from www.magnatune.com
More information about her can be found at
<http://home.earthlink.net/~quistian/id1.html>



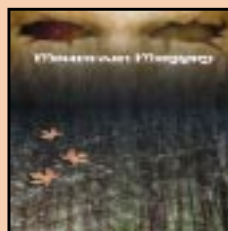
A L'ESTAMPIDA

The Dufay Collective
Magnatune Music
CD: (Your Price). Length: 66.35 mins
Reviewer: Nicholas Breeze Wood

I've had this CD for many, many years and it is one of my all time favourite medieval music recordings. The Dufay's are truly outstanding and this, their very first album, will blow your socks off.

It contains instrumental music from France, Italy, and England dating from the 13th and 14th centuries and is the most wicked, wild, passionate and downright loud recording of this music I have ever heard. The music ranges from the sublime to the neo-demonic, and throughout is faultless and stunning, being a showcase for the amazing multi-instrumental musicianship of the group. Simply great fun - play it VERY LOUD!

Available from www.magnatune.com
More information about them can be found at
www.dufay.com



MOUNTAIN MIRROR

Mountain Mirror
Magnatune Music
CD (Your Price). Length 42.45 mins
Reviewer: Nicholas Breeze Wood

Imagine a deeply brooding heavy metal band with slow, powerful atmospheric music and lots of distortion on the guitars... now take away the electric guitars and give them acoustic ones and tell them to sing songs about death, demons and despair. Are you getting the picture? Good - but don't be put off.

Atmospheric but not pretentious, very interesting to listen to, a bit like Pink Floyd in places and a little like Nick Drake in others, I've never heard acoustic metal before, complete with strings, to add a chill factor. Very unique and surprisingly accessible, and you don't have to be a Goth or wear black to enjoy them either.

Available from www.magnatune.com
More information about them can be found at
www.mountainmirrors.com



STAR OF THE SEA

Stellamara
Magnatune Music
CD (Your Price). Length 49.04 mins
Reviewer: Nicholas Breeze Wood

I've been looking for albums that combine medieval and Balkan/Arabic music with modern ambient music for many years, and this is by far the best I have ever come across.

Starting with a C13th Spanish song to the Virgin, the CD goes on to other non-medieval pieces which keep the right feeling. Played on oud, saz, drums, fiddles, synth drones, cello and capped by the extraordinary voice of Sonja Drakulich, the album is a sheer delight to listen to. Sonja's voice is like an angel with feet planted firmly on the ground, and she reminds me of the singing of Martá Sebestyén from the Hungarian group Muzsikás who sang the theme for the film 'The English Patient'.

With a great sense of authority, creativity and integrity, Stellamara have taken an 800 year-old sound world and brought it here and now in a vital way. Quite fantastic!

Available from www.magnatune.com
More information about them can be found at
www.stellamara.com



SILENT WINGS

William Brooks
Magnatunes Music
CD (Your Price). Length 46.08 mins
Reviewer: Nicholas Breeze Wood

This Oklahoma wordsmith is an acoustic guitar-based blues-folk-rock singer-songwriter, who at times reminds me of Nils Lofgren. Mellow songs that kick when they need to. Good stuff!

Available from www.magnatune.com

