

Mara Gibson

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Select Recent Reviews:

IDRS (International Bassoon Society), celebrating 50 years, volume 44, January 2022

“Bassoonists will be thrilled to hear such imaginative new rep for the first time.”

“White Ash (played by the incredible Megan Ihnen and Darrel Hale as a part of the song cycle Galatea’s Dream) is a haunting meditation on motherhood based on the poem (by Rebecca Morgan Frank).”

“(Escher Keys) is a fantastic new concerto for bassoon and chamber orchestra... resulting in a work that is highly inventive and often surprising. As the bassoonist, Hale demonstrates tremendous ability and creativity in his performance, and I would suspect his performance will stand as a definitive resource for future interpretations. Between the imaginations of Hale and Gibson, I found this music to be deeply thought provoking. I recommend listening to this music in darkness or with eyes closed. Doing so myself inspired many different scenes and images in my mind’s eye, leading to an experience that was both emotional and profound.”

Fanfare Magazine, (May 28, 2021), Galatea’s Dream and Escher Keys, Not To Be Missed, Huntley Bent.

“Strikingly imaginative.... Both works stretch the audiences’ mind, which aligns Gibson with one strand of the avant-garde, in its role as boundary breaker, but her style isn’t defiant, shocking, or based on a manifesto.... Gibson’s music abstractly engages the three narratives, accentuating their mood of existential isolation, as felt by women.”

“Gibson’s program notes (for Escher Keys) on the theme of “double meanings and contradictions” extend far beyond the cleverness of Escher’s optical tricks. She has a bent for synesthesia (the merging of one sense with another, as when we call red a hot color or tangerine a loud one)... She transforms these surreal perceptions into music rich in color and timbral effects.”

“... her deeply conceived musical creations mirror loneliness and the artist’s antidote for despair, which is beauty in words and music. Something profound about the human condition troubles and inspires Gibson, and everyday words like “time,” “space,” and “breath” acquire metaphysical overtones. What she has accomplished, especially in Galatea’s Dream, is equal to Britten’s songs set to the sonnets of John Donne. Beyond the limits of spacetime, something invisible hovers, and it is up to us to name it as terrifying or divine.”

Full review: <http://fanfarearchive.com/ntbm/articles/gibson-dent.html>

Megan Ihnen & Alan Theisen present... (June 15, 2020), New Orleans, LA.

*Mara Gibson is a composer possessing inexhaustible imagination, sensitivity, and collaborative spirit. Her composition for us, **The Clockmaker's Doll**, is an integral part of our touring theatrical recital *Black Meridian*; we simply cannot imagine that program without Mara's emotionally powerful contribution. She is a generous asset and ally to any institution, partnership, commission, colleague, student, performer, friend, or organization associated with her.*

Lory, Dan (10/15/2019), Half-notes: Secret Sky, Chicago Composer's Orchestra, Chicago, IL.

*In "**Secret Sky**," Mara Gibson shows us that by surrendering to the sounds of a specific place, we open doors to places in our hearts that sit unexplored. To paraphrase words of Rumi that were an inspiration to Mara: With no eyes, we have seen. With no feet, we have walked. And the veil has been removed.*

Full review: https://www.chicagocomposersorchestra.org/half-notes/secret-sky/?fbclid=IwAR0zjcWTkQZ2OL1Uud_5bQKN9hc-ebNYHIP3AUdO7363dNdLIvWK32bv1c

Rosenberg, Donald, (1/26/18), Gramophone Magazine.

Mara Gibson writes music filled with all manner of images and associations. The repertoire on this recording was mostly inspired by poetry and paintings, though the results are rarely slavish in depicting specific events or atmospheres. What binds these pieces are Gibson's concise handling of musical materials and her spectrum of sonic approaches.

Full review: <https://www.gramophone.co.uk/review/gibson-sky-born#.Wmu4lnNsQgg.facebook>

Harris, Holly, (12/28/17), Winnipeg Free Press, Winnipeg, Manitoba. Canada.

*American composer Mara Gibson's second album *SKY-BORN* with Navona Records is a gripping response to a variety of artistic sources, showing her deft hand and unflinching approach to music-making.... While not wholly for the faint-of-heart, this new album displays a compelling contemporary voice with a restless imagination, able to morph other forms of artistic expression into daring, musical odysseys.*

Full review: <https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/arts-and-life/entertainment/music/new-music-460940173.html>

Martin, Mel, (12/1/17), Audiophile

Though influenced by literary works, the entire disc has energy and emotion that will grab listeners and involve them. This is a disc that demands attention, and I think listeners will be amply rewarded with a memorable musical experience.

Full review: <https://www.audaud.com/mara-gibson-sky-born-navona-records-review-by-mel-martin/>

Borotan, Marcal, (11/29/17), Sonograma Magazine, Barcelona, Spain.

A new concept of melody.... Her version of sound spurs us to listen to her music with a mentality that accommodates sound experiments. We must listen with a pure instinct without prejudice, with the desire to know, explore and discover with our own ear. The composer turns sound into a fascinating event to reveal beauty in a world of noisy ugliness.

Full review: <http://sonograma.org/suplement-de-discos/sky-born/>