

Niamh Parsons with Graham Dunne: The Old Simplicity

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NIAMH PARSONS WITH GRAHAM DUNNE The Old Simplicity Green Linnet 1232

Ireland's Niamh Parsons is blessed with one of those divine voices; she could sing the phone book and it would sound glorious. A decade or so ago she was reminiscent of Sandy Denny, but over the years her voice and taken on its own lovely hue, and she's become a discerning mistress of song, equally at home with contemporary and traditional material. Accompanied by guitarist Graham Dunne (one of the most sympathetic collaborators she's had), the emphasis here is firmly on contemporary music, setting out the stall powerfully with "1917 (The French Prostitute)" by David Olney, a stark song quite worthy of Jacques Brel. There are the pieces by Alistair Hulett, all good, but one, "He Fades Away," is sublime. Parsons does it perfect justice, keeping the emotion in control and letting the words speak for themselves. It's a showstopper of a performance, and actually towers over everything else on the record--both a good and bad thing. There's not a bad cut here. Dunne gets to show his talent on a couple of instrumentals, and on "Blue Murder" Parsons sings unaccompanied with Kat Eggleston. Everything is neatly rounded out by takes on the old "Poor Irish Stranger" and the well-known "Ye Rambling Boys of Pleasure." Once again Parsons proves herself to be the most expressive and delightful Irish singer of her generation.--CN