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VAUGHAN WITH VOICES No. 2

SARAH VAUGHAN

featuring the Svend Saaby Danish Choir

arranged and conducted by Robert Farnon

Charade

It Could Happen to You

How Beautiful is Night

Blue Orchids

It is not usual for a recording director of a session to write the notes about the resultant disc; but since I feel so strongly about this musical experience, I wanted to tell you directly how it came about and why I consider this to be one of the most remarkable fusions of singer, arranger, orchestra and voices I have ever heard.

Robert Farnon, originally from Canada, now lives in Guernsey. He is in constant demand for film scores and a variety of recording assignments; and more to the point of this record, he is revered by every arranger I know. There is no one who equals Farnon's skill and imagination in writing for strings. To other arrangers, Farnon is known as "The Guy", because he has so authoritative a command of his materials, no matter what kind of writing assignment he accepts.

The key word to describe Farnon's arranging, as you'll hear in the settings he has created for Sarah Vaughan on this album, is *sensitivity*. It is a sensitivity which involves a thorough knowledge of the capacities of violins as well as a warmth of feeling which infuses the way he organizes an arrangement and the harmonic colours he chooses.

I've known and admired Farnon's work for many years, and so has Sarah Vaughan. One of her dreams has been a chance to record with a background designed by him, and finally the time came when she was in Copenhagen in October 1963, during a European tour. Farnon welcomed the opportunity, and he also suggested what proved to be a brilliant addition. For the past five years, he has been writing occasionally for a uniquely pliable and resourceful vocal group, a choir led by Svend Saaby which performs often on Danish radio. They possess an extraordinary control of dynamics, accuracy of pitch, and a seamless kind of blending which makes them so satisfying to write for.

My rôle was to assemble these components—Farnon, Sarah Vaughan, the choir, and the orchestra. As you'll notice, unlike on other string dates for a vocalist, there are no drums or guitar here. The basic factor which makes for a cohesive unity in these performances is the organic substance of Farnon's scores. In other words, there was no need for the support of the usual rhythm section since the writing itself provided the propulsion and made the rhythmic shaping of the performances inevitable.

In approaching the standards selected for the occasion, Farnon re-created them with a freshness and originality of conception which brings, I feel, a new dimension of structure and mood to each of these songs. I needn't elaborate at this point in her career about Sarah Vaughan's musicianship and about the nonpareil quality of her voice. But, I would like to point out that there are exceedingly few singers with the capacity and the imagination to take full advantage of Farnon's quality of writing. As a performer, moreover, who is concerned with continually exploring new dimensions in her work, Sarah also possesses the kind of flexibility that allowed her to blend so naturally into the surroundings constructed by Farnon. What happened here, however, was a flawless marriage of a voice of unusual quality with a writer who was able to capitalize on the full expressive scope of that voice.

The last word I can describe what happened it to say that Robert Farnon wrote for Sarah Vaughan as if he wanted to marry her. He enveloped her with the velvet of affection and respect. She responded in kind, giving back to Farnon everything he expected of her. The instrumentalists and the choir were also caught up in this reciprocal flow of what I can only call love—the love of a musician for a challenge which will enable him to utilize all the skills he has to their maximum extent.

Quincy Jones.

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