

Progression: The Quarterly Journal of Progressive Music

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LAURA SIERSEMA
Talon of the Blackwater

Style: Jazz/Folk/Art-Rock/New Age

Inspired by church singers and jazz greats like guitarist Pat Metheny, Laura Siersema brings the power of her crystalline voice and compositional skills to bear on her third release. Fluid, poetic vocals ride high in the mix. The performances are mainly the product of Siersema and Jay Hovnanian (producer/engineer/synthesizers), but are augmented by T Lavitz (Dixie Dregs) and other skilled players.

The understated accompaniments are at times brilliant. Siersema takes the traditional spiritual “Wade in the Water” and makes it her own with a ghostly arrangement reminiscent of Daniel Lanois's work. “My Eye This Flower in Julep Runs” brings to mind Mahavishnu Orchestra's “Smile of the Beyond” vocal section, an indication of the timbre and clarity of Siersema's voice and the album in general. The excellent 14-minute closer “Along the Fenway” features cellist Eugene Friesen (Paul Winter Consort) and is strikingly beautiful.

The pace of these compositions is slow and deliberate, and tunes like “Who Will Pass this On veer toward lounge music. But the stream-of-consciousness quality of Siersema's lyrics trumps this album's minor shortcomings.

by Rick Tvedt