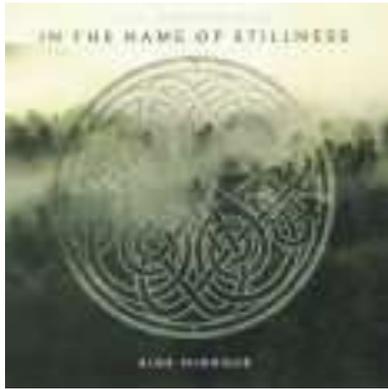


Áine Minogue
In the Name of Stillness
Little Miller Music

Let the Quiet Descend



It is mid-winter and there is no better time to listen to harpist **Áine Minogue** and her new album **In the Name of Stillness**. Minogue's music has always had a meditative quality to it, but this Celtic composer adds more than a note of ethereal delicacy to the ten tracks of her latest offering. It makes them sound like prayers. The results is a rare genre of music in today's world called "soaking music", that is, music that has the quality to spiritually bridge the soul of man with the mindfulness of God. This music most certainly has those qualities and more. With the talents of a half dozen additional musicians, Áine invites us to a world that is inspired by the music, but surreptitiously created in our own minds.

The eponymous initial track, **In the Name of Stillness** is an open door to a journey that is uniquely our own. As in a black winter night sky, Áine's harp sparkles with the scintillation of a million stars. Only with this melody, there is no distance, there is no cold. We can feel the warmth spreading throughout our spirit.

Womb of the Word features the clarinet of **Tom Hill** and the cello of well-known cellist **Eugene Friesen**. The circumambient tune arrives like a musical mist. The melody is pastoral, quietly flowing in to every recess of your body and soul. There is a sweetness to the tune, a bit of comfort from the Olde World.

In the Name of Silence had a wondrous pensive quality with a balance of weightlessness and seriousness that waxes and wanes like any honest moon. This particular track to me, had a resonance that could be felt as well as heard. Once again Hill's clarinet added a lyrical element that added to the circumstance.

I know a little bit about solitude, for I am a solitary person. Áine's tune **In the Name of Solitude** is a kaleidoscope of ever-changing sound. I imagined myself high up in a revolving tower that, every time it came around and faced north, the landscape completely changed. It was a scene painted with what ifs and covered in hope.

The Sitting Pilgrimage is somehow familiar to me. I had heard the tune many years ago performed by Steve McDonald, but this version is much more wistful, more poignant. This was my overall favorite on a favorable album. There is no irony lost on me when I looked outside to see it snowing as I listened. The white blanket was fresh, clean, and cathartic, just like the music.

Another of my many favorites on the album is called **Quiet Absence**. It is the only live track, but its presence is quite remarkable. The reflective song suggests nothing is lost, but that we ponder things most dear to us whenever the spirit uses memories to fill the silences. Our thoughts are never louder than when silence abides in us.

There are two versions of **Home of Belonging** on *In the Name of Stillness* and I favor the longer of the two at over six minutes. It is an orchestral composition with a certain depth that evokes a sculptural suggestion. It has the warm texture of a crackling hearth, a streaming mug of tea, and a feeling of family that always has and always will endure over distance and time.

Truly, you can enjoy Áine Minogue's music at any time of the year no matter where you are. Its magic seems to work at any hour. The music offers introspective intervals of quiet that allow you to hear your own dreams. *In the Name of Stillness* is part of a series of Minogue's recordings called *Celtic Meditation Music* and it certainly lives up to its name as well as its promise.

Rating: Excellent