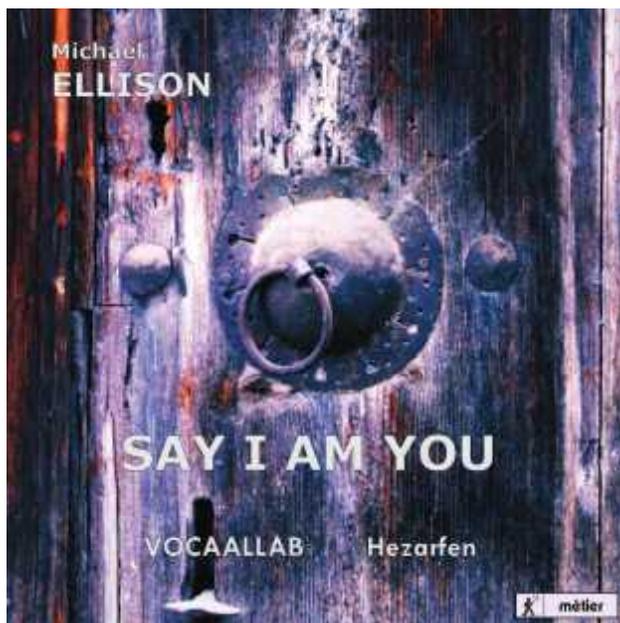




New Release - Press Information



- ARTIST(S):** VocaalLAB; Hezarfen Ensemble; Music Direction Lucas Vis
- COMPOSER:** Michael Ellison
- TITLE:** Say I am You – Mevlâna
An opera based on the legend of Rumi
- CATALOGUE NUMBER:** MSV28539 [Bar Code 0809730853920]
- RELEASE DATE:** 6th January 2014
- PRICE POINT:** Single CD/Standard Case/Full Price [UK Dealer £7.95]

Track Listing:

Tableau 1: I dreamed of a time (Melike); Tableau 2: I've wandered thirsty (Shams); Tableau 3: Mevlâna, Mevlâna (students); Tableau 4: Who's at the door? (Shams, Mevlâna); Tableau 5: The time moves oh, so slowly (Students, Veled); Tableau 6: My dear father (Melike); tableau 7: Did you know, Veled's found Shams (Students, Mevlâna); Tableau 8: It's been 40 days, like he's in a tomb (Students, Mevlâna)

Total Playing Time: 79.53



Repertoire/Product Information:

Principal named characters:

Mevlâna – Arnout Lems (baritone); Shams – Gunnar Brandt-Sigurdsson (tenor); Melike – Ekaterina Levental (mezzo); Veled – Tiemo Wang (baritone); Allaudin – Maciej Straburzy ski (bass-baritone).

Say I am You (2012), a world premiere co-production between IKS V and Rotterdam Operadagen presented by the Istanbul Music Festival, is a contemporary opera by Michael Ellison. It dramatically traces the story of the transformation of Jelaluddin Rumi (*Mevlâna*) from ordinary scholar to ecstatic mystic at the hands of wandering dervish Shams-i Tabriz.

Composed for VocaalLab and Hezarfen Ensemble, *Say I am You* is groundbreaking on a number of levels. First, there is the instrumentation, which, with its inclusion of Turkish instruments into the ensemble for an hour-plus drama, creates a sonic landscape absolutely unique to this work. Then there is the use of its dynamic vocal ensemble, a rivetingly powerful five-voice unit realized by VocaalLab which permeates the musical texture with a wide array of vocal utterances, at times representing voices of the 'unseen,' and other times Mevlâna's students. Then there is the casting of an Azeri style *mugam* voice (Gunnar Brandt-Sigurdsson) in the role of Shams demanded by the score, which sharply delineates Shams' character timbrally both from the other soloists Mevlâna (Arnout Lems) and his daughter, Melike (Ekaterina Levantal), and from vocal ensemble, corresponding to the use of *ney* and *kanun* in the ensemble.

The music of **Michael Ellison** defies categorisation, seamlessly integrating contemporary and classical sensibilities with traditional influences into a unique and personal idiom. Described as "beautifully crafted, robust and absorbing" by American Record Guide, Ellison's is a music of colour and contrast, evocative atmosphere and emotional breadth.

Having worked out of the collision of cultures that is Istanbul for over ten years, Ellison's recent work explores the integration of disparate traditions and sonic experimentations into meaningful new forms.

Notable commissions and awards have included the opera *Say I Am You-Mevlana* (2012), co-produced by Rotterdam Operadagen and IKS V and the Istanbul Music Festival, the '*Turkish*' *Concerto K. 219*, for Turkish instruments, cello and orchestra (2008) commissioned and premiered by the BBC Symphony Orchestra with conductor Pascal Rophé, *Kubla Khan* (2011) for the 2011 Istanbul Music Festival, String Quartet #3 (2013) from the Arizona Friends of Chamber Music, Nova Chamber Music Series and the Fry Street Quartet, String Quartet #2 for the Borromeo Quartet.

Co-Director of Istanbul's groundbreaking Hezarfen Ensemble, Michael Ellison teaches composition at the University of Bristol.



Artist Information:

VocaalLAB makes productions at the intersection of music and theatre, resulting in new forms of music theatre. Within a period of ten years VocaalLAB constructed a group of all-round performers from all over the world. Singers who dare to go further than their voice: beyond the voice. Highlights were presentations of *Machinations* by Georges Aperghis during the Operadagen Rotterdam; and *Autland* by Sergej Newski in the Bochum Ruhrtriennale. In June 2010 VocaalLAB performed *A Dog's Heart* by Alexander Raskatov with the Dutch national opera company, De Nederlandse Opera. During Holland Festival 2011 VocaalLAB brought with Asko Schönberg the chamber opera *The Cricket Recovers* by Richard Ayres, directed by Pierre Audi.

Since its formation in January 2010, **Hezarfen Ensemble** has had an enormous impact on the contemporary music scene in Istanbul. It has given countless Turkish premieres of works by composers from around the world, in innovative formats, as well as presenting Turkish works to European audiences in Germany and Holland as well as in Turkey itself. The Ensemble has collaborated with ensembles Yurodny (Ireland), Adaptor (Berlin) and Variancés (France) as well as VOCAALLAB Nederland.

Lucas Vis (b.1947) is considered a specialist for contemporary music. He has worked with important composers such as John Cage, Mauricio Kagel, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Theo Loevendie, Louis Andriessen and many others. From 1976 to 1979 he was principal conductor of the 'Nederlands Ballet Orkest', where he conducted performances of both classical and modern ballet; as guest conductor he has led all Dutch orchestras, such as the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Residentie Orchestra, and the Noordhollands Philharmonisch Orkest in Haarlem, where he appeared on the podium for works from many different eras.

Additional Details & Marketing:

The CD will be fully serviced to all UK classical music press and radio. Advertising will include major classical music magazines and publications.

For more details, and to request a review sample, please contact John Cronin at Music & Media Consulting Limited.