

Bella Terra



*Let my song be as simple
as the waking in the morning,
as the dripping of dew from the leaves,

simple as the colours in the clouds
and showers of rain at midnight.»*

Rabindranath Tagore

In my wanderings through song and poetry over the last ten years, I have come across stony paths, dusty trails, paths strewn with flowers, pathways across land and sea, and almost invisible trails, where it was very easy to lose my way...

Bella Terra is the result of a long process of maturing and research. It all began at home, singing and playing with a group of friends, as I started out on a search for sound and music, for the voice and the harp, for freedom and rhythm; above all, it began with a passion for the simple but essential little things of everyday life. The Catalan poet Miquel Martí i Pol taught me to appreciate the world around us, the world he describes with such great love as well as pain, but, above all, filled with a desire to live each moment, day by day, to discover the secret of things both visible and invisible, loving them whole-heartedly for what they are.

Bella Terra is a collection of various poems that I have set to music over the years, and it is born out of my hope for a world where there will be more light, love and mystery, a more open and Mediterranean world. It reflects all the different kinds of music I have heard, as well as my years of musical training, weaving harp and voice into a single instrument.

The twelve poems included in *Bella Terra* have a delicate thread running through them, linking them to a single common experience: living the present moment here and now, the tenderness and passion of love, the almost lost innocence of the child-adult, the strength and evocative power of the sea and of dreams «in the distant reaches of a deep and voiceless night» (Salvador Espriu), which lead us to the brink of life's mystery and uncertainty.

A subtle mood of nostalgia pervades the song to love and lovers and to life's eternal voyagers such as “El mariner” (The sailor), “El viaje” (The journey, dedicated to my father), and also the song to the seeing eye and to the object of sight, “Els ulls” (The eyes, dedicated to my mother); and at the end of the journey, we are borne away by mysterious night to a whirlpool where «there is life and death, both immutable. The rest is mere words» (Miquel Martí i Pol).

The tradition of singing and playing one's own accompaniment on the harp, a tradition that lives on in Ireland and some South American countries, has been lost elsewhere in Europe, despite the fact that it was a highly popular and widespread practice up until the Baroque period. The present collection is a modest attempt on my part (and I am not the first to have embarked on that endeavour) to fulfil the dream of combining voice and harp, their complementary yet contrasting sounds fusing to form a single breath and a single expression. I am privileged to have been joined on this quest by a group of long-standing

friends, all of them exceptionally fine and unstinting musicians. *Bella Terra* (which is also the name of my home village) looks forward in hope to a more balanced world, in which men and women will realise that there is «but one syllable from certainty to uncertainty: savour this moment and prize it dearly, for all our life is equal to this one moment» (Omar Jayyam).

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