

The Music Scene
September – October 2002

Of Heart and Homeland
Duo Concertante
Atma classique
Five Stars

The musical bond between this Newfoundland-based husband and wife duo is evident upon the very first hearing, making this recording a convincing follow-up to their debut “*À deux.*” One doesn’t listen to a program of violin music here, but to real chamber music, as it should be. For example, the second movement of the Janacek *Sonata*, the *Ballada*, seems suspended between poetry and romance, the fluidity of the piano intertwining intimately with the poignancy of the violin. De Falla’s *Suite populaire espagnole* demonstrates a fine balance between the urgency of the Spanish rhythms, the sheer beauty of the themes (played with great mastery by Dahn, who never forces the sound even in the more dramatic sections) and the liberty, both in tempo and phrasing. In addition to performing the standard repertoire, Duo Concertante has always believed in the importance of promoting contemporary Canadian repertoire. A number of works have been written especially for the duo. On this CD, they include *In Memoriam*, by fellow Newfoundlander Michael Parker. This poignant work, written after the sudden death of three of the composer’s family members, stays highly melodic and easily accessible.

Dahn demonstrates with brio her singing tone, in the raspy lower range of the instrument but also at the very top. Never does she sacrifice beauty of sound for the sake of virtuosity, making it obvious that, for her as well as for pianist Timothy Steeves, impeccable technique never gets in the way of artistry.