

Booklist

Advanced Review – Uncorrected Proof

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The Prophet.

By Khalil Gibran. Read by Kate Reading and Michael Kramer

Apr. 2020. 3hr. Blackstone, CD (9781094148311)

Those wishing to listen to Gibran’s perennially popular spiritual poem have many narrations from which to choose, from to Paul Sparer’s warm, resonant 1985 recording for Random House Audio to Robert Glenister’s spirited, passionate 2014 reading for Naxos Audiobooks. First published in 1923, this proto-New Age classic entered the public domain last year, occasioning a flood of new audio editions of wildly varying quality. This appealing new production featuring husband-and-wife narration team Michael Kramer and Kate Reading stands out from the pack. Reading performs the framing narration, in which varied seekers of the town of Orphalese pose questions on such elemental topics as love, friendship, laws, pain, pleasure, beauty, and religion, and Kramer provides the assured answering voice of Al Mustafa, imparting wise words often wrapped in lyrical metaphors and mystical riddles. Many of these utterances have the familiarity of scripture: “Work is love made visible,” and “Let there be spaces in your togetherness,” and this production gives a sense of gravity to Gibran’s life-affirming and empowering message that will reward—and may require—repeated listens. These brief topical exchanges are pleasingly set off with eclectic musical interludes and accompaniments from the German composer Stefan Frankenberger that range from vaguely Middle Eastern melodies to folksy licks and jazz. The recording also contains a music-free version, although the music works well to clear space for Gibran’s heady pronouncements. Still popular after a century, the book brims with wise words for those with ears to hear, and is a natural recommendation for fans of *The Alchemist*, and seekers

in general.

— *David Wright*