

Bill Douglas

Quiet Moon - Solo Piano



For more than three decades, **Bill Douglas** has been composing and performing wondrous neo-symphonic and contemporary music. His newest offering is called **Quiet Moon - Solo Piano**. He is a multi-instrumentalist (bassoon, piano) that crosses musical genres like the kindly winds that cross over the North American plains. Jazz, classical, and ethnic categories are definitely part of his wheelhouse. He has collaborated with master clarinetist *Richard Stoltzman*, played with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, released fifteen albums, and contributed to countless other albums. His music exudes gentleness, warmth, and highly listenable beauty. I first heard his music on an album called *Earth Prayer* back in 1999. I have been a fan ever since. *Quiet Moon* is a fourteen-track album of contemporary glimpses of nature, myths, and reveries.

**Angelico** is the first track. Perhaps it is musical reflection of the beauty found in a Fra Angelico painting. The deep colors, the fine details and especially the ethereal qualities are all present in this gentle tune. Douglas' melody is memorable and poignant and a clear welcoming to his album.

**Woodland Path** is an unforgettable walk into the verdant forest with Bill's inimitable sense of calmness utilizing an idyllic melody. You're going to be a spectator to the beauty of nature in every fern, every brook, and every wildflower. Each one will have a story to tell.

Bill takes on the mythological **Lady of the Lake**. Starting out like royal march, the song changes into ballad of long ago when kings were kind and ladies were loyal and magic was in the air. The water comes alive and we witness the sword that will make a man a king. Every note makes a ripple that will change things forever.

The tracks **Intermezzo** and **Autumn Twilight** contains some veiled classical elements that add to the flow of the music. No matter how many times I listen to the album, I always come back to *Intermezzo*. There's something beguiling in the music. Even though its title suggest a pause in the activity, I can feel new energies being created. There is also a fragility to it, as if this short hiatus has a deeper meaning to it. *Autumn Twilight* has a soft, rolling tempo. Each note becomes a star in the night sky. There's the sweet smell of dew on golden leaves amid waning light. The many of us that do not use a paper calendar to tell the seasons, can feel the changes that are coming.

Off the west coast of Ireland lays a trio of small islands called the Aran Islands. **Return to Inishmore** is quick visit to those rocky shores and blue skies of a land where time stands still. The cliffs offer a panoramic perch to view the sea and the stone walls are a constant companion on every roadway. Bill's composition is the guide to every secret place on the island. Just listen and take the first step.

There is something melancholy about the ballad called **Amethyst**. The purple gem itself is cloaked in myth not only in western society, but also in ancient lore. On the one hand, Amethyst symbolizes Jesus Christ, and on the other, a Greek God's plaything. Douglas' melody is an audacious dance of sorrow and spirit. The air spirals around notes that touch the heart in deep places, the soul, even deeper.

The final tune is the title song **Quiet Moon**. Bill crafts a mysterious soundscape for a night when clouds obscure that silver orb for a minute or two and then the light that finally shines is a brilliant testament to the balance, the push and pull, of things unseen. It is the ocean tides, the human heartbeat, and the blood rushing through veins. Shining in the black night, the moon has always been a symbol of hope in the return of light on the next morn.

Bill Douglas' themes are consistent on every song and frankly, I liked every track. There is a moody blush to many of the tunes, but then there is an emotional richness that abounds. There is subtle charm of traditional Irish music scattered here and there balanced with a solid sense of the contemporary genres as well. Highly recommended.