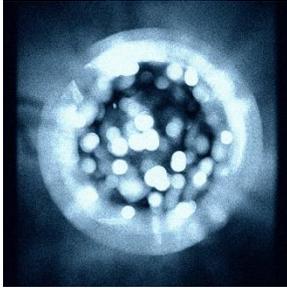


Kevin Keller

Evensong

kevinkeller.com



Contemporary composer **Kevin Keller's** latest release, an album called **Evensong** appears to be a fantastic eight track foray into modern day vespers. What were once mainly musical liturgical prayers uttered upon the hours like a melodious clock are transformed by an electronic keyboard, strings, and an organ and with a limitless imagination tempered by creative talent into a singular sonic experience. Keller, as a composer, is unique in the fact that he is consistently inconsistent. I have been reviewing him for ten years and as for his albums, well, no two are alike. His music has a lot of similar qualities however such as their complexity, expansiveness, and virtuosity. Let us pray.

All the tracks are numbered as Evensong. **Evensong 1** is the beginning. It is dawn. It is birth. It is all light. A drone, a distant voice, and flutters of sound combine with a church organ at medium registers of sound blended with a flowing melody. A cello enters on stealth mode leaving only a memory of resonance behind.

A clacking echo of sound as if speeded up permeates the intro to **Evensong 2**. Pulsating beats and an angelic chorus combined with exhilarating strings continues the theme. There is a lot of energy here. A great deal of activity. And in the margins, an impression of growth. The multiplication of complex cells, the growth of green wood, the gaseous expansion of stars are all represented in this piece. Evolution.

Blind eyes walking through a forest of doubt is the idea behind **Evensong 4**. Sometimes the path is clear, and at other times there are a number of obstacles. Soaring, impassioned singers in a medium tempo canticle with bright, conceptual orchestration swells until once again, we are out of the woods so to speak. Keller's beautiful calliope in this piece is like the brightest light you could imagine, giving us back our direction.

Evensong 5 is the most complex of all the tunes. There is a lot happening in the music with a mixture of vibes as well as subjects. Still in evidence is the beautiful, but modern day seraphic chorus. The theme takes on some kind of urgency and a deep, somber sense of serious misunderstanding. The music shifts from light to dark, finally resting in darkness.

Melancholic strings and echoing voices blend in **Evensong 7**, the saddest of the eight track work. There is a great sense of loss. A tragedy of the soul. Paradise Lost perhaps. Has man stumbled beyond the point at which heaven and earth balance? Keller offers a beautiful piano piece within the mournful melody.

In Kevin's final track **Evensong 8**, there is a kind of requiem. A farewell before the beyond becomes a reality. It is a tearful prayer. Somber themes mixed with a woeful chorus of plainchant

suggest at the concept of purgatory. But it is not what anyone expected. A place for waiting, for judgement, and for disposition of our very souls.

Helping Kevin Keller on this gorgeous, transcendent production are Angela Pickett on viola, Laura Metcalf on cello, Sarah Zun on violin and the voice talents of Katherine Wessinger, Danya Katok, Elisa Singer Strom, and Wendy Baker. Evensong is a life cycle. From birth to-not death-but to an emotional state of being, of an enlightenment, of bliss attained. Keller, through his evocative contemporary themes, takes the listener through every readily known stage of life, birth, growth, awareness, faith, doubt, and finally, acceptance. However, throughout this thought provoking, sculptural work consideration must be given to the hidden concepts. Delight mixed with joy. Doubt combined with disaster are also part of this cycle. Kevin Keller's spiritually rich music reveals all. Excellent work.

-R J Lannan, ArtisanMusicReviews.com

Prayers from the deepest part of the soul are the subject of contemporary composer Kevin Keller's new release Evensong. From keyboard to plainchant, this artist offer vespers of a different kind. My review is at www.artisanmusicreviews.com