

Ralph Zurmühle

Reverence

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The cover art of pianist **Ralph Zurmühle's** new album **Reverence**, a view of a waning image of earth from the moon, says it all. The music is just the evidence. World renowned pianist Zurmühle is Swiss, but his subject matter is universal. Music for silent movies, contemporary and classical works as well as filmscores are just part of his repertoire. I had the satisfaction of reviewing two of his previous releases *As Time Passes* and *Reflections* and I suggest you listen to them for reference and pleasure. Reverence is a twelve track work of contemporary solo piano that acknowledges all that we as human beings hold in high regard or stand in awe of in our everyday lives. There are also other events and small miracles that we need to remember.

The opening tune is called **Earth From a Distance**. The view as I mentioned before is from the moon. How can any human take a breath while watching this spectacular view? Zurmühle's tune is measured and musically eloquent. The melody is synchronized with the rotation of the planet. As you listen, your heart rate slows, your focus widens as you breathe with intention. It is the very definition of mindfulness.

Did you ever think what if? **Opening in the Sky** is bittersweet in tone, but powerful in nature. Ralph's music is the background to a cloud filled night sky concealing a universe of starlight behind it. You look up and suddenly there they are. The stars like twinkling jewels reminding you that every star is a sun. And perhaps, every sun has a planet. And every planet has people like us. This is a song for dreamers.

Those Moments is a warm, nostalgic ballad with a delicate melody that is best shared with another. It is rainy day together under an umbrella song or a table for one that makes your knees touch and your heart ache song. It is a song for lovers when they look back and remember when. Ralph's theme is gentle and sweet.

At Sea is a serious tune. Waves of sound wash to the shore as if produced by a pendulum of salty motion. There is something very dark in Zurmühle's dirge that conjures up the aftermath of a terrible storm and some dreadful event. Whose life has crashed upon the craggy shore and presumed lost on this night? You can almost taste the tang of salt in this composition.

First days of Spring is playing while I literally enjoy the prima verde in my country. Like the tentative growth of new leaves, the tune creeps upward until it forms a music shape in your mind. It is soon joined by other fresh, new growth. In this scenario every piano note is a seed and thanks to this bright, sun filled expressive tune we soon have a garden. Or a meadow. Or even a forest.

One of the more poignant and sensitive tunes on Reverence is Ralph's offering of **Scarborough Fair**, a well-known refrain that has been covered by countless duos and groups over the years. What started out as a traditional English folk song becomes a beautiful aire under Ralph's finely-calibrated solo piano. Each echoing note is a footstep taking by a comely lass that lives only in dreams.

Reverence is respectfully beautiful, but not in a churchly way. Just a hand on your heart, a bow of the head perhaps, and a moment or two of deep thought. The tune is like a slow march representing a journey back into memories of a life well lived, a life respected. Sometimes you can't put into words the feelings that you have for another, a friend, a colleague, a lost love, but Ralph seems to manage handily putting all that sentiment into his elegant music.

Other songs include For a Friend, Ode to the Sun, Pamela's Song, Children's Song, and Hymn for the Ancestors. Every tune on the album seems to strike the right chord (no pun intended) when it comes to respect and appreciation of everyday things and not so everyday things that generate wonder and reverence down to our very souls. Pick a song, sit back, and listen, and let the music fine tune your thoughts. This music makes it effortless and uncomplicated. Excellent.

- R J Lannan, ArtisanMusicReviews.com