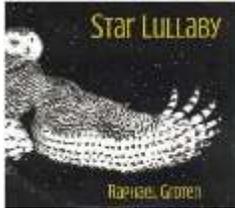


Raphael Groten  
Star Lullaby  
2 Disc Set



There are twenty-nine tracks of achingly beautiful contemporary music on **Raphael Groten's** latest release **Star Lullaby**. The first fourteen are solo guitar on Disc 1 and then they each have a mirror version that is lightly accompanied with an additional bonus track on Disc 2. The combination is brilliant. Frankly, all you need to do is put them on and press PLAY. For your efforts you will receive a plethora of polished, pulchritudinous

pleasures. Groten is a skilled woodworker when he isn't composing music. I have seen his work. He is a perfectionist of the highest ilk. Like his furniture, every song is handcrafted, well thought out, and finished to high degree. They tend to please more than just one of the senses. Like carefully chosen materials, Raphael selects his accompaniment with a great deal of attention. Bassist Michael Manring, cellist Eugene Freisen, Ron Korb on flute, Charlie Bisharat on violin, Jeff Haynes on percussion, Will Ackerman on guitar, and Noah Wilding on breathy vocals. Stalwarts of the industry.

**Dawn** (Disc 1) is a tone poem of flowing phrases that sets the mood for the album. The reverberation resonates from the sound hole filling the mind with a cleansing moment. You can imagine the pale light of the day. Everything is fresh, new, and ready to be explored. Let the music play on.

On the title tune **Star Lullaby** (Disc 1), harmonics fill the space. Groten makes the notes twinkle like gleaming gems in an ebony sky as Manring's bass flows like some kind of liquid voice along with them. We sometimes take comfort in the darkness, but with this song, we are reassured by the glimmering light of every star. We are calm. We are safe. We are loved.

One of my favorites on the album is called **Compassion** (Disc 2). It is a thoughtful, poignant, and finely crafted. There is a memorable, timeless flow about the theme. The spirit is adrift, free, and weightless. It is music in which to get lost.

**Opening** (Disc 2), with a pitter of light percussion, is a journey song. It is a beginning song. You have taken the first step, now the whole world is in front of you. We are bombarded daily with content, input, and documentation. It is sometimes hard to see the opportunities right in front of us, but all it takes is one. One Opening.

Ron Korb's flute takes wing with Groten's guitar on **Fledging** (Disc 2). It is a lighthearted tune. Korb flutters about the main theme while Groten reminds us what freedom is all about. It is a take a chance kind of song that compliments Opening fairly well. You are already on the road, so keep on going.

**Trust** (Disc 2) has a deep beauty to it thanks in part to Eugene Freisen's throaty cello. Raphael's echoing melody is too short for me, but his message of confidence is clear. There are things we don't understand, but they are greater than the self. We should have a little faith.

Raphael Groten's attention to detail is meticulous as always on this recording. In addition, I must acknowledge the mastering and audio purity of the recording by Tom Eaton. The blandishments of the other musicians are complimentary and not over powering in any way. Star Lullaby is one of those rare albums that can temper your mood, help you meditate, or allow you to forget where you are for an hour or so. Better to hit replay and shuffle for the best results. Highly recommended. - R J Lannan, Artisan Music Reviews