

Rebecca Harrold

Tree of Life

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Following up on her previous successful album *The River of Life*, pianist/composer Rebecca Harrold releases **The Tree of Life** and believe me, the branches of this one are high, wide, and many. Delving into contemporary, gospel, classical, and a few more genres, Harrold shows off not only her compositional skills, but also her versatility as a songstress and performer. The album is seven tracks, some of them longer than four minutes, and chock full of unexpected, pleasing variety.

He Shall be Like a Tree is a lively gospel tune acknowledging that God is a nourishing, shading, protecting, ever expanding entity that blesses all. Despite the southern gospel roots, Rebecca's uplifting tune is adequate for anyone's beliefs. Amen Sister. And yeah, you're going to clap your hands.

Rhapsody is a sumptuous piano piece that could brighten any rainy afternoon. Languorous strings slide through the music like warm breezes. The tune with its lush, lyrical melody is a neo-classical restorative reminiscent of bygone times. Very new old world.

Anything for You comes across like a tune out of a contemporary musical. Yes, there is a quite a lot of variety on *Tree of Life*. The vocal is strong with a double entendre for love and for God and the music is as unforgettable as a favorite show tune. The strong cello (**Eugene Freisen**) backing adds a bit of gravitas to this new standard.

Chorean sounds like something hidden in the Brubeck closet and let out for the night. It is bright, lively, and quite rhythmic. Harrold literally lets her hair down in this jazz infused number that sounds like she's playing piano for friends in her living room and the party is just getting started. Kudos to bassist **Louis Ochoa** for providing the drive in this tune.

Piano Trio No.2, In E Flat Major, Op.100, D.929:II. Andante Con Moto is quite a mouthful for a classical piece. However, it sounds to me like a James Bond theme song and I liked it for that. Right in the middle it dissolves into a tango of the finest kind. Rebecca performs and arranges Schubert's final work with an applied skill. Violin by **Charlie Bisharat** infuses a serious run in the back half, but Harrold's reimagining of this famous work proves once again that some music is timeless.

One of the more notable tunes on the album is the eponymous **Waltz Sentimental**. Sweetened strings swirl around a glorious tune of English horn courtesy of **Jill Haley** combined with Rebecca's refined piano that just makes you lose all track of time. Who would want to leave this idyllic world even for a moment?

Many Ways is similar to *Anything for You* in its double meaning and its delivery. There is an obvious and strong influence of faith in the music and the lyrics. Like many songs based on Eastern religious tenets (this is not) Rebecca in this sort of personal anthem, manages to pledge her heart in such a delicate manner that I found myself a believer in agreement. The song has a bright sax background by **Premik Russell Tubbs** and a multi-layered chorus. This is the kind of song that you wished you could witness live to extract all of its affirmative nuances.

Harrold has put together a cornucopia of positive vibes using multiple genres and does in a palatable manner for any listener. Her lyrics are clean and down to earth and many of the tunes are so memorable you find yourself humming in the background. You're going to want to listen to this again and again. - R J Lannan, ArtisanMusicReviews.com