

Vicente Avella  
Rising  
Pandora's Boombox Records

From a single piano to a singular experience.



It wasn't long ago, merely five years, that I reviewed another album by **Vicente Avella** and liked it very much. Since then he has taken a leap from fine pianist to incredible orchestrator. If you ever wondered what the next level is in neo-classical music, then look no more. His new album **Rising** is a musical work of art. It is a collection of eleven contemporary tracks that are overflowing with texture, verve, and passion. Along with a small group of musicians, Avella has managed to turn music into a phenomenon.

The first cut **Yours** is achingly ardent. It is the sound a heart makes when it surrenders to love. The score is slow and heart rendering to the point that one can imagine the tears of submission. The strings (Eclipse Quartet) and piano dance around in a weightless waltz. You can feel them swirling, or maybe that is the rotation of the earth itself under your feet.

One of the two really long cuts on **Rising** is **For Always (8:57)**. It is the song of promise. The music flows and falls. It envelops you like water covering a city after a night of rain. The beautiful symphonic piece is romantic, but it has the secret property of energizing the spirit and giving it hopefulness.

**Rising** is a song of awareness. It is the tipping point where you know what comes next. Vicente's melody takes turns meeting the challenge and overcoming it and adds a short time of celebration. You can rise to the occasion, rise from the ashes, or rise about your tribulations. This song is the third one.

**Relentless** is bold and powerful. It has a touch of the cinematic in it that makes it that much more affecting. Perhaps Avella was suggesting a lifelong search, a pursuit that that will never end, but that is imperative to the heart.

**Looking Up at the Sky** is my favorite of all if I have to choose. It is the longest cut at over ten minutes, but the story seems to go on and on and in a most wonderful way. There is power and grace in this song, but there is also a driving force that is palpable. It is heavier than its title suggests, maybe even darker, but sometimes the sky is full of gray clouds and strong winds. It segues into the next song rather well. The more subdued tune is called **Beyond**, but it still had a kind of electricity to it. It starts with a simple riff and builds in intensity. Piano, strings and ethereal voice heightens and then ascends musically until it reaches the heavens. This is a song in where the clouds part and the sun once again, commands the sky.

The final cut is called **Turning Off the Noise**. The very title is an enigma as this album contains only the most refined and emotionally rich kinds of music. Avella's unassuming tune is the point at which only the good is accepted, the positive is allowed, and the loved are welcome. When it is all said and done, or in this case, composed, only the music remains.

I admit I liked every cut on *Rising*. I cannot praise Vicente Avella enough for the amount of time, thought, and talent it took to compose this music and make it a reality. Credit goes out to the Eclipse Quartet, Tom Peters on bass, Jim Lum on guitar, Brad Dutz on percussion and vocalists Kelci Hahn, Audra Nakane, Cindy Torroba, and Kristin Soni. Avella should be placed beside other notable contemporary composers like Ludovico Einaudi and Helen Jane Long for his adroit conversions of simplicity to complexity and piano to passion. Every song lends itself to public performance. And I would be the first in line to buy a ticket.

Rating; **Excellent**