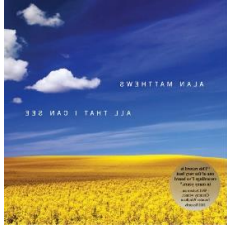


Alan Matthews

All That I Can See



Alan Matthews is probably one of the most musically eloquent composers on this planet. His contemporary piano conferrals are vibrant, harmonious, and most of all, emotionally driven. His latest album **All That I Can See** is eleven tracks of solo piano fare even more fascinating than his two previous albums *The Ineffable* and *Denial's End*. The subtle hint at jazz, the quiet expressiveness of a post classical ambience, and the flawless execution of his themes all add up to a wonderful experience that bears repeating.

The recording starts with the title tune **All That I Can See**. This may be Matthews' idea of what the big picture is up to now. No yet at the top, he recounts his journey so far. From his musical vantage point he can see not only the bumps in his roads, but the smooth sailing he has done. The track defines the album and what you hear is what you get, which is a certain refinement to a memorable melody. You realize this too, could be you.

Embracing Gray is a song I can get my emotions into. I love the somber mood of a rainy day. One that has a lead-colored sky and the undercurrent of electricity in the air. Alan's song is a time lapse of scudding clouds, heavy mists, and a brusque wind just waiting for a chance to blow away the fallen leaves. That dusty dervish is only a moment away.

On a Whim has a bright complexity that unfolds into a happy theme. There's quite a bit of tentative emotion in the notes, but the ending is one we can all live with. It's a midtempo motif for taking the first step, crossing that bridge, and turning a page.

Just about all of the songs on Alan's album are slow to medium tempo making you mentally and emotionally slow down with him and enjoy the view as you go along. This is especially true on the tune **A Quiet Walk**. Pick your own season and choose your scenario. The music will be just perfect for it with just enough poignant phrasing to put a spring in your step, mentally that is.

One of the tunes that is imperturbable is called **Finding the Feeling**. Alan's ballad is relentless in its search to discover the right phrasing and it does. The mood is light, yet dynamic with a smooth flow and a hopeful message. It is the kind of song you start playing at three a.m. and wait to meet the rising sun. Then it all makes sense.

The last song on All I Can See and a favorite for me is called **Ode to Why**. The melody rolls along like wispy smoke searching for an opening to escape in a closed space. The sensuous composition is fluid and flowing and it has just an underlying hint of sorrow. Maybe the question is never answered.

Alan Matthews scores another winner with All I Can See. It wins for me because of its touching melodies that never stray far from the message. Every instrumental track is thought provoking, cultured, and finely calibrated. Put it on and get ready to get lost for a while. Maybe you'll see the sun come up too. Highly recommended. - R J Lannan, Artisan Music Reviews