

Andy Iorio
Awakening



Contemporary composer and pianist **Andy Iorio**'s latest album, **Awakening** is a tribute album, plain and simple. In this ten-track present-day musical odyssey, he pays thoughtful and focused homage to the modern composers; Ludovico Einaudi, Hans Zimmer, Philip Glass, Max Richter, and many more. It just so happens that these musicians and maestros are my heroes as well, so for me the album is a win-win. Iorio's album centers on popular Einaudi themes and he does it very well, picking up nuances from *Divinere* and *Islands*. What every track on the album has in common is boldness. Additionally, many of the tracks have an evident cinematic feel to them. Think trailer music, but that is what grabs us and drags us into the story, does it not. *Awakening* is ten such stories, each one with a different attribute.

The first cut is called **Ascend**. And it does. The rising motion of the music is fluid, deliberate, and perhaps painful. It is as if every step, every movement is an ordeal. A trial. And yes, we ascend. The strong tempo of the piano is balanced with the moderate strings to make a journey of challenges a bit easier. Ever onward. Ever upward.

Awakening, the title track has that strong Einaudi influence that offers audaciousness in a complex melody. The violins sound sympathetic in the way we hear sympathetic resonance. There is a lot of subliminal text to this music. Iorio's theme has energy and color bursting out everywhere. Perhaps the calmest piece on *Awakening* is **Reverie**. The tune is solid mix of solo piano and emotion. You can drift pretty far with this one as the landscape of your mind takes shape, evidencing your innermost thoughts. They are for the most part happy ones as the music suggests, but there are dreams in there that have not fully formed and questions remain.

Release is a modern symphony piece, an overture that is strong, sober, and dynamic. It is the music of acceptance, of surrender, of recognition of the great things life has to offer. It is a sense of freedom. When you listen to this music, you can feel that there is so much more to come and it is exciting and wonderful. Andy's tune **Bittersweet** is one of my favorites. It is solemn and beautiful. It is like snow melting. Or day turning into night. It is the music of transformation or of change that heralds something new, something different. The only sad part is never opening the door, or not taking the first step.

The final cut on *Awakening* is called **Solace**. It begins with a bright piano riff, a soothing sentiment that is supported throughout the piece. It is music that immerses you in an extraordinary circumstance of calm and quiet and splendor. The music just rolls along, drawing you in, and adjusting to your moods in a friendly sort of way.

I liked all ten vibrant tracks on *Awakening*. Andy Iorio has taken some well-known influences and parleyed them into an album of ornate renderings. If you like sound tracks, you will like this music. If you like neo-symphonic music, you will like this album. –R J Lannan, Artisan Music Reviews