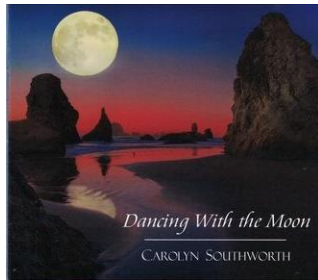


Carolyn Southworth  
Dancing With the Moon



I admit I had to look at the cover several times as I listened to this album. The last time I reviewed pianist **Carolyn Southworth**, her music was lighthearted lullabies. This time the music was so surprising, I had to go check my genre chart. Southworth offers up everything from contemporary to Celtic to, dare I say it... jazz within these entertaining fifteen titles. There are poignant solo piano tunes and warm orchestrated numbers and who knew that being a selenophile who brings about such delightful music? Carolyn Southworth apparently.

The opening number is **Vermillion Sky** and mirrors the cover art of the recording. Southworth is a noteworthy photographer as well as a talented pianist, so I am sure some of her inspiration comes from her photos. Carolyn captures the colors of twilight on film and in vivid musical notes. But more about *Twilight* later.

**Dancing With the Moon**, the title tune, frees the spirit to do whatever it wants. It's okay to dance with yourself. There is music. There is light. There is life. Carolyn's modern-day fusion is contemporary piano and soft strings with a touch of violin lead by Kelly Marie Johnson. The result is a waltz powered by bright moonbeams and sweet sentiments.

Remarkable is Carolyn's cover of the 1966 ballad by Simon & Garfunkel called **Scarborough Fair**, but it really edges towards the original music by Frank Kidson's Traditional Tunes (1891). The tender refrain wanders off familiar territory and into Southworth's imaginings, but that is what makes it particularly noteworthy.

**Undercurrent** is a bit livelier than most tunes on *Dancing with the Moon*. The energy is intoxicating and with a touch of Celtic glee. This is actually quite a production number à la Lanz that has a complex melody. It brightly benefits from many an exhilarating blandishment from a light ensemble and Carolyn's polished piano performance.

**City Lights** is a jazzy, late night number. The streets are rain soaked, the clubs are full, and daylight won't be around for hours. It's a film noir musical, with popping percussion, pounding piano, and wailing electric guitar. Light strings in the background give it a touch of sophistication. This lady has versatility.

What I thought at first was a melancholy theme turned out to be an anticipative quail of comfort. With a swish of ocean waves in the background, the orchestral piece, **Safe Harbor**, offered a sense of security for the spirit. The song was on Carolyn's 2016 *By The Sea* album and it is quite memorable. It put me in mid of the thousands of Irish travelers that saw Boston Harbor, Ellis Island, and Nova Scotia for the first time. Could this be home?

**If You Could Hie to Kolob** is a song based on intense faith. Southworth's reverential treatment of a hymn established by the Book of Abraham (of the Latter Day Saints) is inspirational. The

song is a sweeping epic of piano and orchestra with a characteristic strength that goes right to the soul. The power is evident no matter what your religion. Music and faith when combined have that singular ability to speak to your soul in a universal language.

The final cut is a vocal version of the song **Twilight**. It features the sweet voice of Kathy Sanborn. Through Carolyn's music, you can feel the heat of the day waning, the stars twinkling on, and the sun giving her farewell performance for the day. The incredible performances of legendary guitarist Paul Speer are peppered throughout the album and they add spice to the blend as in this number. Sanborn's delivery is smooth and silky in a song that plays like a lullaby.

Fifteen tracks is a lot of music. After you hear them however, you realize that moonlight has a strong effect on the spirit. Time means very little, but the music means everything. Carolyn Southworth's music is comforting and inspiring. Put Dancing With the Moon on and let the music carry you away. You'll have plenty of light to dance by. – R J Lannan, Artisan Music Reviews