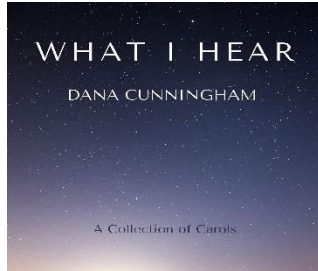


Dana Cunningham

What I Hear



Never have I heard music with such fragility, such honesty. That is my first impression of pianist **Dana Cunningham**. Today she offers up her four track EP called **What I Hear**. My second impression is that I would like to hear more from this innovative artist. Her first track is appropriately **Do You Hear What I Hear**. No flowery riffs here. No unnecessary arpeggios. Just clear, concise interpretations of familiar music that contains an abundance of emotion. After hearing her rendition of this song you may think that you are hearing it for the very first time. This song was originally a call for peace and it is as poignant today as it was in 1962.

Begging from the old English folksong Greensleeves, **What Child is This** is dear to many at any time of the year. Cunningham takes a meandering view at the keyboard as she travels the roads of faith and love. The same road those hopeful shepherd's took so long ago.

We Three Kings is rendered with a contemporary feel to it, as if the familiar melody is somehow cached in this new theme. A surprising dimension of melancholy is imbued by the cello of **Max Dyer**. It has the feeling of something optimistic, something wonderful. It is the gifts of the Magi that everyone needs in their own lives right now. Not the aromatic herbs and coins of an ancient world, but the true wealth of Hope, Peace, and Love. This was my favorite on the album and I played it extensively.

Every time I hear the carol **Hark! The Herald Angels Sing**, my mind goes directly to the year 1946 and the movie *It's Wonderful Life*. Sure it is bit corny, but it reminds me of what is really important in life. Family. Fast forward almost seventy-five years later and lo and behold, family is still the most important part of our lives. Especially today where family has many meanings and lot and lots of variations. Cunningham's evocative, circuitous rendering reminds me of that good news of afore and of that Miracle of a tiny family seeking shelter. Love withstands the centuries no matter where you are from. Dana Cunningham's emotionally rich music rounds off all the edges of nostalgia for the listener and it is the respite and comfort we need from the harried world we live in today. Four tracks is just not enough, madam. Highly listenable. - R J Lannan, Artisan Music Reviews