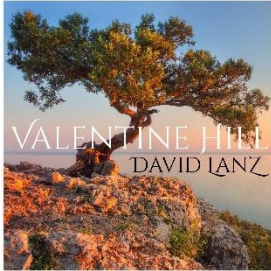


David Lanz

Valentine Hill

davidlanz.com



Art many times inspires art. Such is the case for legendary pianist **David Lanz's** newest album **Valentine Hill**. A simple poem written to his beloved was the motivation for David Lanz's release of more than a dozen tracks of contemporary piano musings written in a style that he made popular back in the eighties. Simple, elegant, and poignant, the music comes full circle. Lanz, one of the major contributors to contemporary and neo-classical music, has been successful for over four decades. He was the first New Age performer I saw live at the beginning of my writing career and if you'll pardon the pun, the "impressionism" still remains strong. This gifted tunesmith adds an emotional foundation to every tune, and in the case of Valentine Hill, a remarkable touch of romanticism.

Lanz is the king of ostinato in where he finds a run and builds layers and layers creating a memorable melody. Such is the theme for the title tune **Valentine Hill**. It's an easy climb into the sunshine of love in David's romantic ballad. Valentine Hill may be some imaginary place, but the love is real enough. Every ascension is a beating heart that rises as reliably as the sun.

*"And there will be diamonds and roses of red,  
songs full of love and sweet words to be said  
And when we return from Valentine Hill,  
Two hearts now renewed from taking their fill."*

Elegant and flowing, the tune **Passages and Portraits** is reminiscent of David's earlier works for Cristofori's Dream in the sense that the music has an old world feel to it that is tenderly shepherded into modern daylight. Pictures from an old photo album are held and treasured not just in the fingertips or the eyes, but deep in the heart. Paired with words remembered, the golden memories fall like autumn leaves.

I could easily imagine an orchestra adding to the beautifully nuanced solo piano theme in **The Bittersweet**. Sometimes the heart tricks the memory into remembering something that was different or unexpected, but finds fondness therein nonetheless. David's impassioned music makes it easy to accept the charade.

Steeped in mellifluous beauty, **She Walks in Joy** is the most poignant and inspirational piece on Valentine Hill. Listening to this glorious tune, I imagined Galadriel as she walked through the darkened forest, a queen of all she surveys. Sunshine touched her shoulders like dappled gold cloak, shadows faded into light, and love was like an aura about her. My heart could not help but follow.

Imagine the piano in a vast, open expanse of desert under a star filled sky. Every note played has an equivalent star that shimmers just for it. **When Stars Appear** is David's acknowledgment of that magic moment when darkness takes over the day and the sparkling jewels of the night's sky arrive to foster lover's dreams.

**An Evening Blessing**, one of my favorites on the album, harbors what I think is a secret lullaby. The music is soft and delicate, the tune is sweet and gently mesmerizing. The perfect song to make a pair of twin little ladies find their path to dreamland.

David's final tune is impassioned yet, nostalgic. **And Again More** is the hope of continuation. How can love be at its zenith, yet still grows with each and every minute. The rapturous music proves that love is boundless.

Lanz' Valentine Hill, although made up of fourteen distinct pieces, is really one big love poem to Kristin Amarie, the true love of his life who not only stood as muse, but co-wrote on many of the tunes and created the album art. It is a rare thing when two hearts beat as one, the same words are spoken by individuals, and where separate thoughts become the same dreams. But it does happen. Maybe if we find our own Valentine Hill, it will happen for us. Beautifully romantic, excellent music. - R J Lannan, [ArtisanMusicReviews.com](http://ArtisanMusicReviews.com)