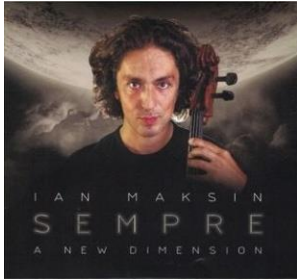


Ian Maksin
Sempre



It is a welcome change to hear the cello in the front row instead of the back. Cellist and composer **Ian Maksin** brings his instrument forefront on nine gorgeous tunes that revive the Romantic period from around the world. This mid-century musical European vacation is evocative and passionate with just a touch of nostalgia for good measure. Maksin crosses over several genres on his latest album titled **Sempre**, including light jazz, classical, and contemporary. There are no boundaries for this musician. Maksin, born in St. Petersburg, Russia is an international performer, but he seems to have enough time to volunteer his talents for hospitals, schools, and orphanages. Musicians tend to be a giving lot. **Sempre** is Maksin's sixth album to date.

On the first delightful cut and title tune, **Sempre**, Ian strokes the cello and blends in rhythmic pizzicato blandishments to create a mood of togetherness, forever. This is a warm story with a happy ending in the music. Ian's melody is memorable in such a way that it seeps into your heart.

Get ready for a little jazzy swing on the tune **Blues au Jardin du Luxembourg**. Maksin combines the old world sound with the future in this lazy afternoon tune of stylistic leisure. It is a fun tune guaranteed to make you think of a favorite café, an intense blue sky, and a certain brown-eyed lady who only smiles for you. All around are the perfumes and colors of a delightful garden. Drink deeply.

Respiro is deeply emotional and one of my favorites. It is a highly sophisticated tune that reverberates down into the soul. Ian's score has an Einaudi-esque feel to it and the classically infused melody is often sad, but there are moments of hope woven into the music. Just breathe.

Lacrimae Novae or New Tears is another favorite. It is an unusual tune with a cinematic feel to it that is not unwelcomed. The dissonance is inevitable. It is a moody piece, one that has pensive flashes and to balance out the experience, glimpses of anger.

The background accompaniment in **Per me, Per te** is a heartbeat, the melody become the energies of a new found love. The song has a pendulous rhythm while the voice of Ian's cello sings of blissful joy. The track is more than four minutes of acoustic passion.

With its invigorating Middle Eastern percussion (Andrew Mitran) and folkloric influences, **Sunset on the Cascade** turns out to be a showstopper for this cellist. I can almost imagine traveling in the desert, and, just as twilight falls, watching the sun display a red sky filled with golden tinged clouds. If only my dreams were as vivid.

The final cut, **Brand New Page** adds a bit of rock and ethnic elements to a quirky melody. The tune is energetic and completely different from anything else on **Sempre**. The music is ecstatic,

full of life, and has movement in the notes. This definitely suggests that it is time to start anew. And we cannot help but join Ian on his new adventure.

Ian Maksin is an accomplished performer and a talented composer. He balances both tasks well on *Sempre*, doling out music containing emotion versus story and it pays off well. Furthermore, he proves that the cello, with its well-known basso voice can sing in the first row of the musical choir and command our attention and loyalty throughout his presentations. His music is richly textured and humbly beautiful. Highly recommended. – R J Lannan, Artisan Music Reviews