

Joe Kenney

Reflections on Inner Transformation



All is not what it seems in relation to **Joe Kenney's** newest release, his fifth, called **Reflections on Inner Transformation**. One would look at the cover art and think deeply meditative, but I have learned long ago not to judge in that manner. Instead, I play the music. Joe's album is a generous sixteen tracks of contemporary and jazz tunes combined with a classical motif with just a hint of New Age music. This delightful mixed bag of audio craftsmanship is entertaining for many and appropriate for all. I was able to enjoy the music at any time of the day and many times it made for a great background of reading and writing. It is even better for old fashioned woolgathering.

As per the album title, every track is a Reflection, as in track one which is called **Reflection, No. 1 Courage**. Courage comes in many forms and this musical representation arrives in a most gentle way. Joe's tune is a welling up of the spirit and a tender release. **Reflection, No. 4 Commitment** is a somewhat bold promise. The strong, flowing rhythms form a memorable pledge, one with the heart and soul in the foreground. This one had an interesting mix of classical elements and contemporary blandishments that were well balanced and it is offered much like an anthem.

Reflection, No. 6 Respite rendered in boogie woogie flair gave the mood a bit of levity and fun. Joe's riffs had an obvious improvisational feeling that blended several styles and eras. There might even be a touch of ragtime hidden in the notes. More than just an upbeat waltz, **Reflection, No. 9 Depth (Dakota's Dance)** is a story song made to delight the ears. One can almost feel the joy in Joe's rendition. The body more than just sways around. It twirls and swirls to the music as if to say a good time was had by all. One of the more contemplative tunes on Reflections on Inner Transformation is called **Reflection, No. 10** or Mirabelle's Minuet. This one is a bit more dainty that its predecessor with a lighter phrasing and a sweeter motif.

Literally, on a serious note Kenney offers up **Reflection, No. 13 Presence**. It is a modern piece with a modicum of jazz. The overall theme is a thought provoking memory or an introspective experience. This is the kind of music that takes you somewhere or gives you that far away feeling, pushing the world away so you can have the time with yourself. One of my favorites. **Reflection, No. 15 Catharsis** is a post classical tune with great depth that again, offers up a contemplative surrounding for the listener. Is almost as if the music is saying "What if?" to the soul. And the soul answers back "Let's go there and see". This is a beautifully balanced tune that most represents the main theme.

The final track is called **Reflection, No. 16 Transcendence**. The music imparts an intangible and indistinct quality to it as if we are in a daydream. This may be the world we were looking for in all these reflections. And of course, now we don't want to give it up.

Philadelphia pianist Joe Kenney is an award winning composer who is the founder of the Joe Kenney Band, a group that plays all over the United States. I think that Kenney did a commendable job of incorporating his jazz influences into the contemporary world. All sixteen tracks flow well together and the theme is supported by every track. You can play this anytime and be satisfied, no matter what your genre preferences are. Joe covers them all. Highly listenable. - R J Lannan, Artisan Music Reviews