

Kori Linae Carothers

On A Cold Frosty Morning

Koritunes.com



We had a little bit of snow the other day and it reminded me of how much I like winter music. There is something pleasing to the spirit about the clear, cold fresh air and the way the world sparkles, if only for a short time, with its new coat of white. All it needs is the right music behind it. It was a good time to listen to **Kori Linae Carothers** album **On a Cold Frosty Morning**. It's the kind of gentle music that doesn't really need a holiday to enjoy. This ten track album of traditional and contemporary music serves up wonderfully just about any time.

Kori starts with an unassuming intro to the old standard **What Child Is This**. The more than familiar melody, along with violin by Charlie Bisharat, comes in to tell the story older than history. Delicate English horn by Jill Haley announces the news as Kori's unpretentious piano carries the tune along in a regal manner. This has no resemblance to the regular versions of this song and it is now turned into a musical vignette.

Like some grand uncle, Eugene Freisen's cello voices a story song called **Christmas in Vermont**. Gather around the fireplace and hear the yarns mixed in with the very sweet memories. Kori's piano song is one of nostalgia, of simpler times, and the gift of love wrapped up in a big red bow.

One flake does not a flurry make, but when they decide to come all at once you have **First Snow**. This is a lighthearted tune featuring the vocalise of snow angel Noah Wilding and Kori's stately piano mixed together to commemorate the world in a new white cloak. Everything is clean and pure and dressed to feast the senses.

Usually when people ask what the most famous Christmas carol is, the answer comes up Jingle Bells. Not for me. One of my favorite Christmas songs, which I think we should play all year long is **Coventry Carol**. This part hymn, part classical piece, and one that is often misunderstood, is such a consolation on a dreary winter's day. The music, the actual melody is what is comforting and it seems my hearts hums along with Carothers's piano as if invited to be in the choir.

This version of **Past 3 O'clock** is new to me. The watchmen in the old city call out the hours, promising everyone is safe and everyone is at peace. The news of the Birth is written on the stars on this clear, cold night. Bisharat's violin is the humble herald and Kori's piano takes second chair as this tender carol warms the heart. Note that the very first verse of Past 3 O'clock contains Kori's album title (*On) a Cold Frosty Morning*.

**Gésu Bambino**, another standard is rendered as a solo piano tune with a passionate aire. It loses its Christmassy guise and turns into a post classical piece that is far too short for this listener. The lyrics are like poetry from a forgotten century, but Kori's interpretation brings them to mind. *"When blossoms flowered 'mid the snows, Upon a winter night, Was born the Child, the Christmas Rose, The King of Love and Light."*

The final cut is called **Crystal Fields** and it comes from Kori's debut album *Trillium* in 2009. Back then it featured Eugene Freisen and Jeff Oster. The current version has, once again, Eugene Freisen and the newer addition of Jill Haley. I reviewed that album and I went back to see what I had written and if I may, I will include a short quote.

*"Crystal Fields is a beautiful beginning to the album. Scintillating points of light are clearly projected throughout the tune, which features the talents of **Eugene Friesen** on cello and **Jeff Oster** on flugelhorn accompanying Kori's memorable score."*

Her re-imaging of this quiescent, unassuming tune is still beautiful, but now the light is somewhat more subdued as if time has refocused the light to that of the light from within.

See, not just Christmas songs, but songs to bring warm comfort and quiet joy to the soul at any time. Ten peaceful tunes that are gifts to the spirit when you need them the most. On A Cold Frosty Morning is enhanced by the talents of several artists and co-produced by Will Ackerman and engineer Tom Eaton who both make an appearance on this earnest collection of mostly un-holiday music. Highly listenable. -R J Lannan, Artisan Music Reviews

