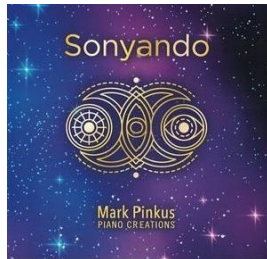


Mark Pinkus

Sonyando



There is something secretive and romantic about **Sonyando**, the latest release from contemporary pianist **Mark Pinkus**. The musical sense is that it is from another time and another place when men and women were quite proper. When I listened to these dreamy tracks of piano, I imagined Sunday afternoons in the parlor taking tea or long walks along the boulevard that bisects the park and all of its forested paths. This is an album for lovers and nostalgics. It is a chronicle of a love even though it only lasted a short while, it spanned two lifetimes.

The first song, **Compatibility**, has a comforting melody with a balance of warmth and intimacy. It voices that little spark that you get whenever you see her or she sees you. It is music that says here I am, now take my soul. Pinkus incorporates many artistic and classical elements in this music. On **Morning Tears** Mark uses a tinkle on the ivories to craft a sweet, sad song that touches the soul like a first kiss. The idea that you love and are loved can be so overwhelming, that tears are the only way to communicate your happiness. These are tears of joy. Mark does this very well with the piano's emotionally rich notes.

**Fire in Relationship** is my favorite of all the tracks. The music is anguishing with deep emotion. The classical blandishments imbue it with an Old World vibe, but the melody is fairly modern. Like any relationship there are doubts, pain, and misunderstandings on the one hand and tenderness, warmth, and love on the other. In this tune they are mixed like a tossed salad, but they end up being passionately palatable. Slight whisperings of Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata are surreptitiously woven into the song **Trust in the Divine**. This is one of the more serious songs on **Sonyando**. Heavy bass notes convene to announce the power of faith while the higher registers rise above to be used as prayers. The tune balances out well as an offering of gratitude.

One of the lighter tunes on the album is a piece called **Through the Eyes of Love**. It has a popular ring to it, simple, true, and memorable. We can be silly, or angry, or stupid, or worse yet, wrong, but love always forgives us. This rhythmic, vibrant tune is a theme song for all lovers. This tune reminds me that Herman Hesse once said, "*If I know what love is, it is because of you*".

The torch song **Sonyando**, is an impassioned effort of intense emotion. This is another tune in which Pinkus infuses that Old World impression. It reminds me of a time, the turn of the century really, when vows were sacred and devotion was a promise kept. This expressive theme is soul stirring and poetic. **Dream of the Lotus Flower** is poignant and melodic. It is the anthem to some sad story told a thousand times by a lover with hope in their heart. The music is measured and ardent. The bloom unfolds and we have a story. There is beauty and depth. And there is love in this intricate offering.

A resounding gong, a glass harp, and a series of single notes defines the ending. The final cut, literally, is called **The Silence Between Us**. There is no argument here. No misunderstanding. There is just no us anymore. This creates a silence deeper and wider than any broken heart can endure. It is a soul made out of glass that has been carelessly dropped and broken. There's no fixing this.

The entire album is an undeniable testimony to what comprises contemporary music. It has been infused with a great deal of passion. Mark Pinkus using his piano as his own voice has discovered, smiled, laughed, cried, and lost in a single lifetime. This what the journey sounds like in his seventeen vignettes in which the heart has been the star. Highly listenable.

-R J Lannan, Artisan Music Reviews