

Matthew Labarge

Music from the Long Quiet



What kind of music captures your spirit and relaxes your body and it doesn't have to be listened to at a high volume? **Music from the Long Quiet**, the latest release from pianist **Matthew Labarge**, has that power. Even at moderate levels this solo piano recording draws you in and introduces itself as a lifelong friend. Make no mistake. Whether by magic, or faith, or science, this music has power. The album is nine tracks of atmospheric, mood smoothing, contemporary soundscapes. Every time I listened my heart rate slowed as did my inner clock. I could not ignore the nascent beauty of this music. In a word, it is transcendent.

Appropriately offered, the first track is called **Begin**. This measured, sedate track sets the tone and keeps echoing the conception of all the other tracks. Slow down and give yourself some of that time. This deeply thoughtful tune embraces your mind like a warm blanket. It is a comforter made out of emotionally-rich musical notes destined to be an heirloom.

Like some unforgettable European ballad, the tune called **Regret**, puts its mark on your heart. It is a most pensive piece, with a not quite subliminal message to never end up regretting. Take that turn on the path, open that first page, or most importantly, tell them how you feel.

Quiet, the subject of it all, allows you to drift weightlessly in a world of your own making. There is a strong bass counter point to the main theme that is uplifting without you being aware of it. Most of the music on this album is like that. Unintentional in a good way.

Compassion is one of the lighter tunes on *Music from the Long Quiet*. It is an everyday theme, a memorable flow that glides along in a carefree manner. No worries here. And that's as it should be. Compassion is more important than many things and yet it costs very little. A hand outstretched, a smile at the right time. A prayer for all.

One of my favorites is called **Redemption**. Let's just ponder that word for a moment; redemption. It can mean salvation or absolution, but it can also allude to a peace of the soul. Labarge's soft, gentle cascade of somber notes touches your soul and allows for that kind of peace. It is a hymn without being one.

Cathedral, in this case is not a towering building made out of oak and stained glass. Here the roof is made out of sky. The walls are the forest. The sun shining down through the leaves makes up the stained glass. And it is vast, boundless, and open to every soul. Matthew's solo piano is awe-inspiring as it suggests that there is a place for everyone here.

The finale is called **Songbirds**. The bittersweet tune doesn't have a single chirp in it, but it does have sense of comfort. The tone suggests that everything is alright and you can settle in for the night. The tempo is an andantino, a slow march off into the quietude.

These days we may have lots of time on our hands, but what to do with it? Matthew Labarge suggests we give over to the quiet. To relax. And to contemplate. Without saying so, he gives credence to the concept of mindfulness. Holding onto that perfect moment and squeezing every nuance of peace we can out of it. This album is his testimony to that kind of peace. I can't say what this music will do for you, but it allowed me to embrace my spirituality in a new way. I told you this music is powerful. Highly recommended. – R J Lannan, Artisan Music Reviews