

Michele McLaughlin
Memoirs



Even though quite a young woman, pianist and composer **Michele McLaughlin** has many memories. She has transformed these treasured times, these teaching moments, these thankful experiences into astounding music on her twelve track contemporary instrumental album called **Memoirs**. I have reviewed Michele a number of times and her music is always a pleasure. This album is no exception. Her straightforward approach and emotional elements are up front in all of her work. When she is happy we know it. When she is not, we know that, too. **Memoirs** is carefully chosen musical vignettes that express her emotions in a myriad of ways.

Using only solo piano, the memories begin with a track called **Thankful** and it sets the tone for the album. Michele takes a sonata like slant to create her sense of joy and gratitude. Life is full of tribulations and recognition of even a small success should be celebrated. Michele has a lot to be thankful for and displays it as an upbeat, happy melody.

Caching some classical features in her music, McLaughlin balances the exuberance of the album with the somber cut called **Dark Moon**. Imagine the clouds shrouding an autumn moon. The silver tinged skies race across the selenium moon like a goddess playing with shadows. The goddess is not pleased. **Triumph** is a rare, musical fait accompli. It is an olive branch tiara to wear and display after the battle. We all fight these kinds of battles. Sickness, pain, fatigue, even despair. But we fight the good fight and come up on top and we triumph.

My Life With You is a beautiful waltz dedicated to discovery. The discovery that you love someone and they love you back. Michele's heartfelt rendering is a priceless perception that the world has balance, the day has meaning, and that the future is not only right in the palm of your hand, but at the center of your heart.

The cold, quiet darkness is evident. The snowdrifts are silver in the moonlight. The stars are so far away that the cold light twinkles in the distance. The track, **Winter** embraces all those concepts as well as the stark solitude that often comes with the season. Winter segues perfectly into the next song, one called **Northern Lights**. What was once space-bound static blooms in the night sky of the north, like a garden of light. Michele's piano sings a vibrato of an Arctic background filled with diffused light. It is a wonder that this chilling landscape fills the senses with a warmth felt deep down inside.

The final cut, **Dismissed** is Einaudi-esque in its mood and tempo. The tune is one of confusion and melancholy. Something has been lost and the search for it is somewhat painful. Michele's somber piece reminds us that life is not all sweetness and light, but also unkind and dark. The tune balances the musically positive album well as an aide-mémoire that life is full of challenges.

Michele's dozen stories on **Memoirs** have a beginning and ending. Some of the endings are cheerful, bright, and celebratory. Some are not. That is the honesty in her music shining through. McLaughlin's other eighteen success stories, i.e., her other eighteen albums are a testament that

this young woman can compose, play, and evoke emotion every time she touches the keys.
Highly recommended. – R J Lannan, Artisan Music Reviews