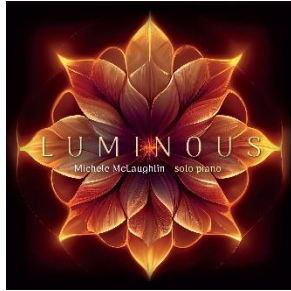


Michele McLaughlin

Luminous

michelemclaughlin.com



If you are seeking all the values of light, you can easily find them transmuted into glorious music on pianist **Michele McLaughlin's** latest album **Luminous**. She offers ten tracks of various radiances as she explores all the light that the eyes can see and the heart can imagine. McLaughlin, who has released twenty-one previous albums, is a no frills pianist. She relies on solo piano exemplars, resplendent melodies, and consistent themes to make poignant piano pieces that has attracted fans all over the world and, in large numbers.

Droplets of Gray, the first tune, is the perfect music for this rainy day. Michele's soft, quiet tune reminds me that even though the mountain is obscured by clouds and the mists are in the valley, there is still a promise of light in the northern sky. When there is little or no light, the spirit clings to memories. There is always light somewhere.

One spec of light, then two, then many more make up the tune **Shimmer**. Every time you look up at the stars, the light does that. It shimmers and sparkles and you forget that it started a billion miles away. That's the secret of light. It's here before you know it. Michelle's simple tune is starlight that is softly bright. A suitable companion on any night.

There are fleeting contrasts in the song **Moonlit Shadows**. What was once silver hidden behind the clouds emerges to give everything a bluish umbra. The tunes follows the shadows in an urgent manner, forward, hiding, and appearing again. Where there is doubt, let there be light.

Every new day offers up its greatest gift, **The Golden Hour**. Just after sunrise, the heat and light of the day decide to make an appearance and the world is turned into gold by the Greatest Alchemist of Them All. The inspiring, dynamic music, bright and glowing, suggests that this gilded day is a promise.

It is the glow from a single candle that can light up the world. It is the smile from an innocent child that makes you smile. And it is the music of **Luminous**, the title tune, that promises light from an unexpected source. This emotional tune, one of Michele's best on the album, turns out to be a light created from within. It is unstoppable, and cannot be quenched as long as the heart supplies the energy.

Every April here in Tennessee I am gifted by Mother Nature right around my birthday. Michele's song **Fireflies** brings back the thoughts of glimmering lime green dots in a warming night sky. I make a wish on just about every tiny neon speck. At least for me, McLaughlin's joyous melody keeps reminding me to look for the light and the magic in the world.

Slow, soft and sublime, **Adrift** is another favorite for me. It has classical currents mixed with a contemporary style. It sounded as if it had been written long ago in some dusty parlor in Paris. It conjures up a Sunday afternoon, a quiet country side, a lot of time for quiet contemplation.

The final tune **Lanterns in the Sky** has just a touch of sadness, maybe even regret. Perchance the thought of missing someone. The boxy construct of paper and fire, two enemies at best, combine to lift up a beacon of hope, or perhaps send up a prayer for a drifting soul. Michele's doleful tune has an innate beauty in it that combines peace and hopefulness.

Michele McLaughlin's latest album, Luminous is a musical lesson in light. For me it was a journey through room after room of animated shadows, flashes and flares, and a multi-faceted iridescence. Musically, it was a finely-calibrated experience of different kinds of emotional pleasures and the unexplainable pain of healing. Highly listenable. - R J Lannan, Artisan Music Reviews