

Nancy Shoop Wu

Full Bloom



Although Nancy Shoop Wu plays violin for a symphony orchestra, she creates her compositions with a light hearted New Age/Contemporary perspective that sometimes defies the rules. I recall reviewing her previous album *Rainbow Road* and enjoying it very much. This time she adds some vocals to her instrumental tracks for a refreshing mix of material. Living and working in the magical place called Hawaii, she never runs out of inspiration. Full Bloom is ten tracks of fresh, feel good fare that reminds us that even in these trying times there are still golden sunny days, verdant landscapes, and cheery blue skies to celebrate. In her first album she used her violin as a voice. In her latest effort, I believe we actually hear her voice.

The first song is the title track **Full Bloom**. It is the sound of acceptance and the acknowledgement of a new level of achievement. Nancy's violin soars with confidence and verve. This beautiful music was created somewhere above the clouds. Not looking down, but looking ahead.

Night Rainbow is a favorite. Strong piano by Derek Nakamoto blends with the violin backed up by Peter Korpela on percussion into a tune of poignant beauty. From the salt tinged breezes to stars so close you can almost touch them, this nocturnal tune is the prelude to a night of dreams realized.

Beautiful is eponymous. Nancy's expressive violin weaves a fabric of sweet lament. The song is memorable with its atmospheric flow and evocative melody. Beauty is where you find it and the music reminds us that one need not look too far to find it in our own lives. The song captures the theme of the album nicely.

Flying Away and **Angel Above Me** both contain what I would call soft vocals. Flying Away is a happy-go-lucky tune celebrating the day as are most of these songs on Full Bloom. Sun and fun are on everyone's menu. On the slower tempo Angel Above Me the tune calls on divine inspiration in everyday life. The vocals on both songs are tentative and lack the power and confidence to drive them, but the melodies do manage to balance that out.

Serenade is just about the sweetest song you could ever hear. There is something warmly nostalgic in the melody that makes you think of turn of the century cafés, tall, golden gaslights, and romance at every turn, whether it be in Paris, France or Paris, Tennessee.

Golden Leaves has almost a Celtic feel as Nancy's strong bowing paints a picture of aspens in the distance with autumn on their heels. They have their own kind of light, a landscape that is sunny and optimistic. This is another favorite in which the violin takes the lead into a world of blossoming beauty.

The final tune is called **Morning Paradise** and it features more of Nakamoto's fine piano, but it is the violin that adds the color to this tune. Drawing from her geography, the music is a greeting to a new day as only an island smack dab in the middle of the Pacific Ocean can produce. We welcome the new dawn as the horizon boasts pastel colors for a short while and then the gold and blue balance out for a brand new sky. A fresh beginning is included with every experience.

Joining Nancy Shoop Wu on the album is Cello (Qiele) Guo on cello, Aidan Carroll on bass, and Mitchell Long on guitars. This new album by the master violinist is full of music to take your cares away. The positive vibrations (literally) and good feelings that this album of contemporary music promotes should be heard by all. Recommended. - R J Lannan, Artisan Music Reviews