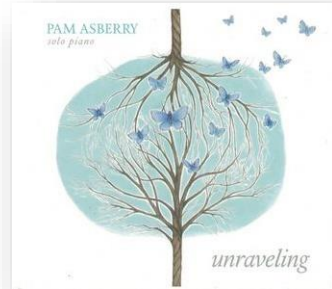


Pam Asberry

Unraveling

pamsberry.com



**Pam Asberry** is a pianist and composer from the southern part of the U.S. On **Unraveling** she delivers her ninth album of solo piano contemporary themes. This one is brought on by the chaotic experience of Covid-19. It would be a misnomer to say inspired by. So much has changed since the virus affected the entire world. Pam's music voices the sadness, the confusion, and the loss that the pandemic created and offers a bit of succor to those in need. That's just about all of us. This is music as medicine.

From the very first note the eponymous **Storm Clouds Gather** warns of what is to come. It is tempestuous and gloomy. Pam's skyline is as gray as dull stone. The air is thick and heavy. The mood is somber. Fear not. There's dim ray of sunshine in there. The theme turns lighter, the mood less dismal. But we must not forget it is a harbinger.

Imagine your life like a tightly wound ball of yarn. Now think of it as if a single thread unraveled and the ball started rolling down a hill with nothing to stop it. **Unraveling**, Asberry's main theme is not as out of control as I thought it would be. Through thoughtful arpeggios and serious rifts, it's holding on the best it can. But just barely. I think we can all attest to the helplessness we felt when the pandemic hit. It's not like we had one recently and we have a plan. Perhaps that says it best. Pam's melody which is sympathetic in its sensibility reminds us that no one could prepare for this.

Looking through an old wooden chest she finds some **Tattered Lace**. It is stiff with age and smells like old crackers. But it is a reminder of the parlor. The piano was in there with the family gathered around it for comfort and company. Pam's tune has an old world feel to it. Something remotely European, something memorable. It brings a smile.

**Labyrinth** was favorite on **Unraveling**. I heard it as a charming waltz that could have been written at the turn of the century with obvious classical influences and straightforward cadence. More subtle was the hidden world of confusion and doubt that Covid created. It was as if we had to hold our breaths for a very long time. Still, this dance reminds us that we can navigate to a place of safety. Beautiful piece.

We are drawn deep into the heart's memories with Pam's sad, nostalgic tune **Saudade**. It is a Portuguese word that means longing, yearning, for some place or for someone. It is an emotional sentiment. We can feel the loneliness in the music. Although there are no missing notes, there is a sense of incompleteness in every stanza.

Every clear night, and sometimes even on some that are not, she looks up to find **Polaris**. She learned early in life that everyone needs a North Star, a guide for the everyday journey of life. It is so easy to lose your way in this harried life time. Pam uses something of a music box style on this tender ballad. It supplies a personal warmth. It is hopeful. It is also one of the more upbeat tunes in the collection.

**Metamorphosis**, the last tune, starts like the first one on the album. Dark, dreary, gray. But as the theme builds, so does the confidence, the energy, and the optimism. Asberry opens her heart and lets in the light. She sees the promise and we hear it. We can hear the self-assurance in her melody, albeit a serious tone. There is hope.

Additional tracks are **Bluebird** and **Dark Places** and they are just as noteworthy as the rest of Unraveling. Pam Asberry uses her talent as a composer to rebel against an unseen enemy and she's winning the battle. Her music is clean, and by that, I mean she doesn't use artifice to mask her aptitude. Solo piano is very revealing. Her contemporary music is the panacea we yearn for and need if ever we are going to get healthy again in more ways than one. Very Good. - R J Lannan, Artisan Music Reviews