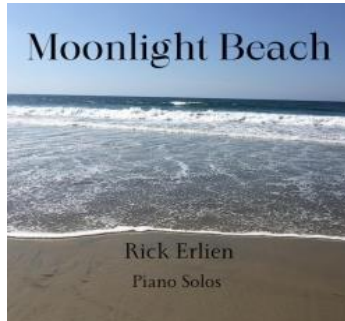


Rick Erlien

Moonlight Beach - Piano Solos



There is a lot to be said about being in tuned with Nature. Capital N. Solo piano artist **Rick Erlien** seems to have a direct pipeline. On his latest release, an EP called **Moonlight Beach**, he takes four songs and in a very short period, he makes you believe in time and tides and moonbeams and gravity. And there is a lot of poetry in between. What better inspiration than the ebb and flow of the ocean, the heartbeat of the planet that is influenced by outside forces we cannot see. Each of the four tracks on this EP is contemporary piano and can be played without a silence in between them. They seem to blend seamlessly one into the next.

The first track, called **Moonlight Beach All Around**, is full of drama and fluid emotion. Erlien's music has a 60's vibe, like interludes in between a long movie. It has expressive passages describing not only the past scene, but the future action. This is footprints in the sand washed away by the tide, but never the less, it makes an impression on the wet sand and the passion in the music makes an impression on the heart.

Moonlight Beach on the Sand Looking at the Ocean reminds us that the ocean ties together every bit of dry land on our planet. Staring out from Malibu Beach, you can imagine a long voyage that touches the exotic islands of Hawaii, then on to the more than seven thousand islands that make up the Philippines and eventually, the shores of mysterious China. Rick's flowing tune sparkles like the sea smiled on by a gibbous moon. The sea's vastness reminds us that each wave has a beginning, a middle and an end right at our feet.

Warm arpeggios open the third cut, **Moonlight Beach Splendor**. This one has a unique style, somewhat salty, tasting like the Mediterranean, but still offering up a voyage for the spirit. Envelop yourself in the peace and tranquility. Perfect conditions for healing and meditation even with its introspective deportment.

The last cut, **Swami's Beach** is where enlightenment and water come together in Encinitas, California. Just a short ride out of San Diego, this quiet beach has the reputation of being the birthplace of some deep meditation by well-known Swami Paramahansa Yogananda who introduced thousands of his followers to the concept of self- realization. Keep in mind that this remarkable guru lived in California in the fifties and his inspiration is still strong. Rick's reverent piano tune draws out a quietude of riffs that cascade in the mind.

Erlien's classical training does him a great deal of justice on this album. The formal elements are obvious, but the modern embellishments seem to blend very well together. The old with the new maintains an understandable balance. Rick Erlien is well noted for his album "*The Music of Yosemite*" back in 1994. Highly listenable. - R J Lannan, Artisan Music Reviews

