

Robin Spielberg

Re-Inventions



It is a fact that pianist and composer **Robin Spielberg** is well versed in Classical music. Those roots run wide and deep in her own music. But let's say she takes fifteen tracks of well-known classical tunes and re-imagines them in modern terms. It's not a dream. She did and the album is called **Re-Inventions**. The album is an incredible foray into the music we know and love gently massaged and lovingly touched upon by a visionary contemporary composer. The well-known works of Beethoven, Brahms, Chopin, Mozart, Strauss, Schumann, Schubert, and others are represented in this album that is as accomplished as it is satisfying. The question "What if these composers lived in modern times and could utilize modern experiences to write their music" is answered again and again on Spielberg's album, a tour de force for her long career with twenty albums to her credit. On a few tracks she is joined by cellist **Tina Guo** and violinist **Ricardo Ochoa** who add tragedy and substance to the mix. The curtain rolls up....

The opening track is **Mozart's Sonata no.16 in C Major Reinvented**. It is Mozart's famous music box *Sonata Facile*, but this isn't the beginner's version. Robin's rendition is sharp and clear, at times dream-like and sweeping.

One of the truly sad pieces of Franz Liszt, **Liebesträume Reinvented** is tenderly reimagined by Robin with the accompaniment of cellist Tina Guo. It was one of Liszt's more ambitious solo piano pieces and it requires adroit hands at the keyboard. Fortunately, Spielberg is not lacking in that department and music softly weeps with emotion.

I almost did not recognize **Pachelbel's Canon in D Major Reinvented** as it is surrounded by a novel approach to the theme in Robin's solo piano interpretation. The recognizable joy of the original remains, but it is more expansive and more surprising in its new setting. Compared to most of the orchestral versions, this new one is emotionally rich and again, clear in its delivery.

Robert Schumann's **Scenes from Childhood Reinvented** had a nostalgic tone and I found the **Skater's Waltz Reinvented** amusing in that it reminded me of so many cartoons I saw as a child. It is good memory.

Robin delivers one of the most beautiful pieces ever written, **Prelude and Fugue No. 1 in C Major Reinvented** in her usual manner of sensitivity to the theme. The flow of the music is enthralling. No well-tempered clavier here, just a fluid, delicate, and an evocative interpretation that soothes the savage breast.

It is amazing to me how emotional Spielberg's renderings are. For example **Berceuse Reinvented** by Benjamin Goddard from his opera Jocelyn is a piece that transcends its 1888 birthday. It could reside easily in her repertoire of contemporary piano. This tender lullaby written for a Western Christian religious feast is timeless in its beauty.

One my favorite and more notable tracks on the album is **Piano Sonata No. 8, Second Movement Reinvented**. Robin displays her incredible keyboard skill on a complex piece of one of Beethoven's most beloved works. The Sonata Pathétique is an emotional work describing deep love and not the common interpretation of the word in English. Robin certainly imbues the sonata with a great deal of her own passion.

Finally, Schubert's **Serenade Reinvented** closes the incredible recording. The work is a bit serious for a finale, but the Cymbeline as it was called, is a bit of serious music. Taken from a Shakespearian work, this morning love song exudes emotion and pathos, despite the fact the questionable provenance of the song is improvisational just like Spielberg's offering.

I find it almost impossible to believe that these fine, fifteen renderings are extemporary. After listening to Spielberg's music for many years however, I cannot doubt her skill, nor her devotion to the music. Robin Spielberg has, in fact reinvented herself with this recording. It joins together two worlds, the past and the present and with the future being the fortunate recipient. Highly recommended. - R J Lannan, Artisan Music Reviews.