

Ryan Judd
An Open Sky



An anachronism at its best. That is how I can describe guitarist **Ryan Judd's** music. It takes me back to the early eighties when instrumental music was making a preemptive impact on the souls of mankind. His album of guitar and accompanying cello called **An Open Sky**, is melodic, fluid, and emotionally rich. His music offers romance, nostalgia, and reflection. An open sky can be a clean slate or a blank canvas, and it suggests endless possibilities. These ten contemporary tunes are representations brought to rich, vivid life by Judd's minimalistic renderings and the cello shadowings of **Kristen Miller**. Miller's technique is flowing, like water. It covers everything, but takes the shape of Judd's acoustic textures. All songs were written and produced by Mr. Judd.

This first romantic interlude is brought to by the song **Looking Back**. Memories are made by experiences, and this memory is an intimate look into the past. The song exudes tenderness and sentiment. You can tell from this first track that Judd and Miller are synchronized on many levels. Equilibrium is established, harmony is assured.

Some believe that a simple embrace can be more passionate than a caress. The delicate contact, the rising heat, and the imbued passion combine in a yearning to touch that special someone. It is a non-verbal communication that radiates from the soul. Judd's composition, **The Embrace**, frames that sense and more in a sublime song of invisible chemistry of the heart. Miller's cello reflects all the fervent emotion of the piece.

Judd fills the implied empty page of the title tune **An Open Sky** with a modicum of notes, but the music speaks volumes. If this be the night, then every note must be a star. Every twinkle is a heartbeat. And oh, what the heart can write on the blackness of the in between. The dulcet music suggests that no opportunity be missed, no dream left to fancy.

Between the moody sound of the cello and the sincere voice of the guitar in the tune **Autumn Light** you can sense the color and the coolness of the season. Frosted leaves crunch underfoot as you seek the comfort of the day. The sun has given up her heat in preparation for winter's advent and the light pales more every day.

My favorite on An Open Sky is a tune called **Her Beauty Shines Through**. It is one more of Judd's romantic interludes where the cordial cello cascades over his sensuous guitar theme. When you look at someone you love, no matter at what stage of life you are in, there is an aura that only the heart can detect. It is a pure golden light like the prelude to a sunset, but it comes from within. Judd's sumptuous tune captures that light with every strummed note.

From the cooling warmth of autumn we find ourselves at **Winter Harbor**, the final tune on the album. The finality is evident as if the ocean itself will sleep for a time. The music is slow,

lyrical, and a bit sad. But that is what goodbyes are made of, I think. The music makes you ache for the warmth of the coming spring, but it will be a long time coming.

I enjoyed every track on An Open Sky. This is my first encounter with Ryan Judd's music and I promised myself that it will not be my last. Judd, as a composer has a gift for serene simplicity of construction, but with complex reasoning behind it. Miller's contribution is equally important as her cello adds a balance of emotion throughout the album. For pensiveness and poignancy, there are few collections like An Open Sky. Highly recommended. – R J Lannan, Artisan Music Reviews