

Wayne Bethanis

Listen.

waynebethanis.com



You wanted to know and pianist and composer **Wayne Bethanis** has an explanation. For just about everything. All you have to do is...**Listen.** On his latest offering Bethanis submits eleven tracks of contemporary music that recounts his observations throughout the years and perhaps into the future. These well-crafted instrumental tracks are stories, perhaps even parables in disguise. Some of the tunes are soaring, classical impinged epics while others are light, cinematic fare that delivers challenges to the imagination. In every track you can hear that

Bethanis is a perfectionist with nary a stray note to be found. Each story song is self-contained and the album has enough variation to make the music consistently interesting.

Bethanis opens with an interesting tune called **The Four Corners**. It is calming instrumental with some odd Eastern elements lurking in the background. It put me in mind of some of composer Gerry Goldsmith's music and that's a compliment. It is an ambling theme, a journey perhaps with an aim towards introspection.

Ailerons? Tail? Goggles. Then away! **Orville & Wilbur (The Right to Fly)** is a lighter than air tune with updrafts of joy as the concept of flight takes wing. Bethanis and orchestra combine into an uplifting theme that is more than appropriate for any adventure. The music takes you high above the clouds, but don't fly too close to the sun. This is lighthearted tune that gets the daydreams going.

Lonely is the Normal Heart is one of my favorites on the album. It is a sweet, sentimental tune full of yearning. The honest piano lead is a memorable walk in the rain sort of song. Light orchestration is used as punctuation but kept to a minimum. Bethanis completes the tune with a warm, nostalgic music box denouement.

Brick by Brick is Wayne's tribute to contemporary Jim Brickman. The work is a highly listenable piano theme with just a touch of accompaniment. Bethanis hits all the notes to pay tribute to his long time inspiration. To me it is a modern day slice of life piece that would be an opener to any story about friends.

Egypt and the Sea People is a fascinating piece and my favorite on **Listen.** It is certainly the most passionate tune with a driving, dramatic score. The strong piano lead is besought with arpeggios and pounding percussion as if hardship was the rule and not the exception. Wayne's bold composition could be an epic soundtrack to any modern day melodrama.

Dr. Bethanis (PhD Mus.) is a multi-award winning pianist with many of his singles spending weeks at the number one spot on various charts. His album Listen. has won an Album of the Year Award. His three other albums, *Measure of Light*, *Remember the Rain*, and *Hero's Lullaby*

have all garnered awards and attention. He puts me in mind of John Tesh in his early years or maybe a modern day Yanni with a touch of Jim Brinkman thrown in for good measure. That being said, some of Bethanis phrasing is sometimes predictable. Crescendos and ostinatos abound as does his use of sweeping themes. Not a bad thing. This album is well suited for a live audience with its rousing artistry. Highly listenable. - R J Lannan, Artisan Music Reviews