

Voyager

By

Lisa Swerdlow

Written by

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Lisa Swerdlow is back after the chart topping success of *Equus Rising*, and this new musical child is born with such a sublime sense of melody and charm, it will take you by the hand and lead you to a musical wonderland of solo piano like never before, it is called **Voyager**.

The opening is probably the most melodic start you could ever wish for and the title track **Voyager** takes us a journey through time and space with such sublime precision and delicacy, it is a delight to simply be a part of this moment of musical bliss, this is utterly the best start to an album your ever likely to hear.

Swerdlow follows that up with an equally brilliant offering entitled **Edge of Tranquillity**. I heard this being played yesterday by my partner Chrissie and was stunned at its beautiful presence and flow. Swerdlow has a classy ability to change power and intensity seemingly at will, and is without doubt one of the most listenable pianists around today.

Mindful Moments is next, and as you would expect from the title we have a short time here to ponder the pathways of life's rich tapestry. This can be done with ease on this most passionate and reflective opus, but one can also enjoy the moments of unbound emotion here too, these emotive energies are so powerful I personally found them awe-inspiring.

One of my favourite times of year now is autumn, it didn't use to be, how could it be, when living in the dredges of an English grey season, but here in the Mediterranean it is a delight beyond that of gold. Here the artist performs

an empowering arrangement that seems to usher out a tiring summer and then embraces the change of the new season. **Autumn Speaks to Me** is indeed a powerful yet moving offering, which will paint a delightful musical narrative of transformation.

There was a warm and certain smoothness on the piece **Sundays in Paris**, one that gives you that feeling musically, of waking to a new day and gazing at the sunny Sunday filtered autumn light streaming in through the cracks in the curtains. This track has a slight intensity within it, but one that feels as if it comes from a much loved memory. I can see that during the weeks and months ahead I will be playing this one multiple times.

We now begin the gentle voyage into the latter half of the album and come across an arrangement that is both softly played with a deliberate mindfulness and entitled **Gone Too Soon**. This is one of these tracks that whilst listening to it, we will each have a story of why we feel the way we do while listening to the offering. This for me is deeply moving and emotional and very imploring, one could easily get lost within the mood filled structure of this expressive composition.

As we move deeper into the labyrinths of this release we also find ourselves in the deep mid-winter and in fact at the **Winter Solstice**. This would be one of my favourite pieces from the release, not that I have seen any snow for many years, but through the tone and minor notes I could imagine with ease sitting by a window in December, watching the white flakes drift down from the sky and be aware of the memories of this time of year that float with a certain reflective sadness across my mind.

Into the Center is an interesting track; it starts with a little sense of mystery and then very slowly develops into a beautiful reality of ambience, one that you would be more than happy to just roam in musically for ages. There were certain changes in her performance here that I adored, a quietness partnered with a hint of intensity, but all the while, built around a wonderful reality of musical confidence. Without doubt this has to be the most technically brilliant piece off the release.

The penultimate offering off the release is called **I Saw You Dancing with the Stars**, apart from being one of the most attractive and artistic titles on the

album, this also has to be one of the most fluent pieces, this composition has such an abundance of flow and movement within it. There is also a splendid energy of dance within the construction of her performance and arrangement here that truly makes this a really happy and all-embracing composition, one that you simply just don't want to leave.

Sadly we must part our ways with the artist now, but before we go, we can take a trip with her to California and go on a **Yuba River Journey**. The impressive techniques employed by Swerdlow on this offering take us on an amazing musical narrative, and one can literally flow with the river all the way. I also believe that this region was also part of the great gold rush era of the 1850's and one can feel all that and much more within this too; it is the longest composition off the album at just short of seven minutes long as well.

Voyager is the second release by **Lisa Swerdlow** on the *Heart Dance Record* label, but in my opinion, easily her best so far. The artist has let her dual talents of performance skill and imagination completely loose here, and it shows with one of the finest solo piano albums this year. This is a powerful release, one that really stands up and demands to be listened too. It's a release packed wall to wall with some of the most meaningful and colourful tracks around, all bound together by the one thing that **Lisa Swerdlow** has in obvious abundance, passion.