

Atmospheres
Michael Dulin
2003 / Equity Digital

“Atmospheres” is pianist Michael Dulin’s second release of original piano solos. After a long career in the classical music field as well as acting as producer of music for others, Dulin is emerging as one of the brightest stars in the new age/ambient genre. Calling his music “inner music - music that balances and centers and replenishes,” his pieces are soothing enough to stay in the background to set an easy mood, and yet are complex and challenging enough to be consistently interesting and rewarding for the active listener. Dulin’s playing “chops” are impeccable, and the tone of the Steinway he recorded the music with is crystal clear. Most of the tracks have washes of synth instrumentation for color, but this is definitely a piano album.

The title track opens the CD with a quiet melody that is enlivened with shimmering runs up and down the piano keyboard. Both pensive and serene, the piece is a very elegant opening. “Once Upon a Time” is a bit more wistful and dreamy - very gentle and sweet. “Mirage” is more ambient, with a beautiful flowing quality and a sense of moving forward. “Bedtime for Little John” is a simple, cozy lullaby that spills over with innocence. “Nocturne” is absolutely gorgeous - cool and peaceful, and very atmospheric; very definitely a “night song,” as the title implies. “The Highlands” is a bit more structured, and could easily be a movie theme - a beautiful melody. “Morning Clouds” is fluid and tranquil without any hard edges. And then there is my favorite track, “Night Rhythms.” This piece is much more “smooth jazz” than classical, and it pulls me in every time. It has the easy-going pace of the rest of the CD, but is more rhythmic and has a sense of fun. It surprised me the first time I listened to the album, but I just love it!

“Atmospheres” is destined to be one of my “Top 10 for 2003,” I’m sure, and Michael Dulin has become one of my favorite contemporary composers. “Atmospheres” is available from equitydigital.com and amazon.com. Very highly recommended!

- Kathy Parsons