

Timeless: Classics For a New Age

Michael Dulin

2004 / Equity Digital

53.1 minutes

“Timeless” is an exquisite collection of classical pieces, faithful to the originals and embellished a bit to update them. Purists might sniff that these pieces could never be improved upon, but the composers of these works were innovators in their own times, and I think they are probably smiling down on Michael Dulin for the loving touches he has added. A pianist/composer who completed his classical training at Juilliard and has had a lifelong career in music, Dulin is impeccable as a soloist and almost reverent with his various instrumental shadings. His piano is a wonderful Steinway grand.

I really like Dulin’s selection of music for this recording. Several of the pieces are performed as composed, demonstrating his magnificent artistry as a soloist. Those include “Moonlight” (Debussy’s “Clair de Lune”), “Love’s Dream” (“Liebestraum” by Liszt), and Chopin’s “Waltz in C-sharp Minor,” all played to technical and emotional perfection. The CD opens with “Simply Satie,” which is based on Erik Satie’s “Gymnopédie #1.” The most innovative piece in the collection, it is a gem. Dulin composed a beautiful solo piano introduction, and then overlays the melody with subtle strings and lovely piano improvisations. Part of the charm of the original piece is its spare, haunting melody. These additions don’t detract from that simplicity, but create a duet with one pianist playing the piece as written and the second improvising over the top - a gorgeous interpretation. “Serenade” is based on Liszt’s arrangement of Schubert’s “Serenade.” Dulin has added a few touches to this one, but it’s a piano solo pretty much as written. “Nocturne” comes from Chopin’s “Nocturne in D-flat Major.” Strings are added for background color, and the original solo shimmers with Dulin’s amazing sensitivity. “Prelude” is the Bach “Prelude in C,” with strings and additional piano overlays. Bach strongly encouraged improvisation of his music, and I think he’d be delighted with this heartfelt interpretation. The string washes added to Liszt’s “Consolation” give this haunting piece even more poignance. “The Poet” is stunning. Taken from Schumann’s musical portrait of Chopin in “Carnaval,” the strings again tug at the heart as the piano flows dreamily. “The Emperor’s Adagio” from Beethoven’s Concerto #5 is more orchestrated (as a concerto would be!), and is just beautiful. One of Michael Dulin’s signature touches is

including a lullaby on each of his recordings. Chopin's "Berceuse" is that lullaby. Strings are added to this elegant piece, and Dulin's loving touch makes it a gorgeous close to an exceptional album.

In our interview some months back, Michael Dulin mentioned that classical music is dying, and needs to be brought back to the attention of the general public. By updating some of these easily accessible pieces, Dulin has made a step in that direction without compromising the integrity of the music in any way. I love this album, and hope it will open some ears and hearts with its beautiful message. Very highly recommended! "Timeless" will be released on October 19, 2004, and will be available from www.michaeldulin.com, www.equitydigital.com, amazon.com, and cdbaby.com.

Kathy Parsons