

A Better Musical Mousetrap I guess his stint at Julliard worked. He must have been sitting up straight, taking notes and listening, because **Michael Dulin** is one of the most expressive composers I have heard in a while and he can play piano. Of course having innate talent sort of helps, too. Using mostly piano, but with a touch of keyboard samples, his enhanced renditions of popular classical works on his new album *Timeless* are a far cry from your daddy's Bach, Chopin and Liszt.

The title *Timeless* is perfect as the pieces Dulin has chosen to rephrase are favorites that have spanned the ages. Schumann, Beethoven, and Debussy are as familiar to classical music lovers as Ciani, Lanz and Brickman are of today's generation of listeners. Add **Michael Dulin's** name to the list. This is the best of both worlds.

The first cut, *Simply Satie* is Dulin's version of Erik Satie's *Gymnopedie #1*. It's always remarkable to me that this strange, sumptuous piece was written for a nude sporting event. Even if you don't like classical music, you might like this version. It starts with a teasing, tinkling introduction and segues seamlessly into the familiar main body. Dulin's dulcified style just picks you up and settles you on the nearest cloud. Yeah, it's my favorite.

In the tune *Nocturne*, Chopin's *Nocturne in D-flat* gets the Dulin treatment which adds a bit more softness and transparency. It has the sound of gentle cascading notes that disappear into your mind and spiral about like autumn leaves swirling on the street on a windy night. Color, movement and texture are all present.

Claude Debussy's *Clair de Lune* is presented fairly close to the original, but the style is somewhat lighter and more pensive. Dulin's version sounds like he didn't just read notes and play this, it sounds like he felt this music flow through him and into his piano.

Simply called *Prelude*, Bach's *Prelude in C-Major* is a piece to which Dulin added a bit of strings and it is better for it. Charles Gounod's *Ave Maria* based on a prelude by Johann Sebastian Bach is a sweet lament that continues to comfort the spirit of all who hear it.


Odd that Robert Schumann who wore many hats during his burgeoning music career was thought of as poet, often signing his name as Eusebius, the poet. Yet he dedicated one his finest works to his friend Frederic Chopin "The poet of the piano". *The Poet*, Dulin's tribute to Schumann, is a gleaming ray of sunlight that breaks through the gloomy clouds of stodginess. With an added string background it is a prime example of Dulin's willingness to remain loyal to the original version without too much tinkering. It is one of the best cuts on **Timeless**.

The final and most remarkable tune on the CD is *Lullaby*. This is a beautiful interpretation of Chopin's 1844 piece called *Berceuse*. Although this has a simple title it is a very complex work

and Michael, adding a contemplative string section and his cascading piano style turns the theme into a dreamy medium for floating about in search of magical places.

Although generally a solo artist, **Michael Dulin** has been a session musician and he has just returned from a tour with the Motown super group the Temptations. Classically trained at Julliard, Dulin has performed at Carnegie Hall and in Europe. He still has time to perform in concert, start up his own record company and compose music for film and television. Two of his previously released albums, **The One I've Waited For** and **Atmospheres** were number 1 on the NAR charts. His music encompasses New Age, smooth jazz and of course classical. When he puts them all together in his top hat and says the magic words however, the magic never seems to end.

Okay, I have to go listen to that Satie piece one more time.

Rating: Very Good  - reviewed by RJ Lannan on 2/15/2005