

October Wind

Rebecca Oswald
2005
56.0 minutes

October Wind is the first album of composer and pianist Rebecca Oswald. Produced by Rebecca Oswald and recorded by Don Ross at Don Ross Productions in Eugene, Oregon, this album is arguably the result of a lifetime dedicated to music, in which Rebecca has created works for soloists, orchestras, choirs . . . an enviable curriculum! October Wind contains fourteen pieces composed between 1981 and 2005, through which you can enjoy all the experience that Rebecca has accumulated throughout her career as a pianist and composer. Each theme was inspired by a memory, a beautiful landscape, unforgettable . . . Beautiful feelings that the artist holds inside come forth with each note on the piano, all performed with amazing piano technique.

The piece that opens the album is the title song; "October Wind" is simply endearing. With a classical touch, the melody is cheerful, playful, as if from a children's singing game, but always keeping that kind character and nostalgic at once. The continued arpeggio of repeated low notes throughout the piece offer the juvenile touch, while the right hand plays the main melody gracefully. Beautiful, loving. I love it!

"Truth" is a wistful theme. The slow, flowing, alternating notes in the lower range of the piano create a state of total melancholia. Extremely beautiful, this theme is the deep inner voice of Rebecca, as an improvisation comes to light, simply as it is. It's amazing, the feelings transmitted by this piece. One of my favorites!

In "The Rhythm of Snow" a subtle set of chords and notes announce the arrival of the first snow. Disconcerting at times, repeating yet varied notes are accompanied by a melody that is sometimes played by the left hand. The perfect soundtrack to an image seen from a window, a lonely scene in which snow covers everything with its white robe. Captivating, descriptive music!

"New Leaf" is one of my favorites. A powerful melody that thrills at its zenith is produced by a energetic right hand, while the left accompanies with rapid chord progressions — a wonderful and optimistic vision of the arrival of spring with the sprouting of the first leaves and flowers. This piece is fascinating. I can only say, Wow!

"Perseids" (or in Spanish, "Perseidas", commonly known as "Lágrimas de San Lorenzo") are the shooting stars that we see in the summer nights in the mid-August. The track begins with a bright tone, as if furtive shooting stars are welcoming the beautiful dance, then play all the stars at a time. With every note, this piece describes perfectly the movements of meteors through the sky. Pure excitement!

"Think." As its name suggests, this piece invites us to ponder, in an appeal to peace and tranquility. Delicate notes move on a slow course, accompanied by almost imperceptible progressions played by the left hand. Rebecca gives us the right mood for meditation. Pure delicacy!

One of the first pieces written by Rebecca is entitled "Regatta". Inspired by a trip the artist made on the ocean on a sailboat, this piece has an exciting melody. An ode to freedom, it is easy to imagine the beautiful environment surrounding the artist in that moment, as the emotion came over her to set course for the horizon. Another of my favorites!

"Reunion" is a gentle track, dedicated to a great violinist and friend of Rebecca, Mary Ann. An emotional track with strength in its melody, shows the moment of reunion between both, and that later lowers the tone to give way to a sweet melody, as though it were a touching dialogue. Pure feeling!

A nervous melody that shows Rebecca's mastery of the piano is the main voice of "Dancing With Unseen Friends." Fast, shaking high notes, accompanied by an independent melody played by the left hand, creates a dialogue between the two hands together, giving life to one of the most disturbing and disturbed pieces that form a part this work. Wonderful. Another of my favorites!

"Periwinkle Blue" is the plant known "Maiden Grass", which is characterized by its small flowers, of color blue-tinted violet. This piece is gentle; its notes come and go with hypnotic power, relaxing, inviting the listener to enter a state of complete stillness. Blessed serenity!

"Blessing Bowl" is a piece that Rebecca dedicated to another of her beloved friends, in this case Judy, who spends her time pinching clay to create beautiful bowls. The piece flows slowly, with great feeling. The beautiful melody is born in the artist's fingers, soft, relaxed. A delight!

There is a curious story behind "A Starfish Serenade", a piece that was written only for the right hand, when the artist was recovering from an injury to her left shoulder. Despite the limitation, she created a tune with a special charm, perhaps because of the challenge to bring to life a beautiful melody with only one of her hands. Well, she achieved it! A beautiful piece!

The poignant tone of "Embrace" bears an amazing emotional weight, yet gently surrounds delicately as in the moment of an embrace. This piece began as a lullaby, but the melody that appears at its zenith is so heartfelt which makes it perfect for the moment that two people should say goodbye. Another of my favorites!

One of the surprises this album holds is entitled "Your Hands". The impressive voice of tenor Peter Hollens joins in perfect harmony with the notes Rebecca brings out from the piano. The pianist's hands dance across the keys, while Peter sings the song whose lyrics are an English translation of a fragment of an epic Greek poem called "The Twelve Words of the Gypsy" written by Kostas Palamas. A beautiful piece, an exciting and perfect close to this fascinating work. Wow, what a surprise!

October Wind is a fascinating album, filled with descriptive music that immerses the listener in the same ideas which, at the time, inspired to Rebecca to create this wonderful work. The guessed right melodies, supported by the titles and explanations contained in the CD booklet, helping to create and understand the scenarios that the artist manages to capture in the mind of the listener. A perfect album for a deep listening enjoyment. Work, simply amazing! October Wind is an album highly recommended and is available at:

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Stars: ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ (5 out of 5)

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26/05/10

