

Bella

By

Rick Sparks

Written by

Steve Sheppard

There is nothing I like to do more than sit and listen to the graceful poise and tone of a **Rick Sparks** album, and as such today I am a lucky man, I get to listen to and reveal my thoughts on Rick's latest creation, **Bella**.

The opening piece is one of the most charming and ethereal offerings I have heard from Rick for a while, and of course I am referencing to the title track **Bella**. The art work reveals all here, and the child on the cover, glows of an innocence that is beautiful all on its own, and shows the honesty and unconditional love she has.

There is a decided Celtic motif to this next arrangement entitled **Twilight Dreams** that is really colourful and quite pretty. The mood of this track is so serene, one could easily drift off and into a blissful sleep whilst listening to it; this pristine performance by Sparks on keyboards is simply delightful.

The piano starts us off on another long road of ambience, and this time the song is entitled **Smiling**, the symphonic beauty here reminded me of a mixture of *Kevin Kendle's* nature musings, and of course Sparks personal favourite *Vaughn Williams* in feeling and mood, here is a track that is so moving, it truly brought a tear to my eye.

My Valentine of course was released as a single earlier on this year, and was and is a beautiful addition to this album, the flute here makes a wonderful symbiotic resonance and is utterly transcendent.

The first few notes of **Autumn Rain** simply says it all, it is a time of the year when we all perhaps need to slow down and reflect. The gentle piano narrative

allows me to visualise myself sitting by a window in early November, watching the seasons change and reflecting on the lessons of the past, learning from the actions taken, and then just floating with this mood filled opus of emotion and sincerity.

As we move into the second half of the album we come across what has now become my personal favourite **Rick Sparks** single of all time, and called **Highland Road**. Here is a Celtic melody that is so strong, fluent and colourful, it is an undeniable and a thoroughly picturesque portrait of instrumental music that you ever likely to hear in this genre.

The long hovering and floating musical narrative of **Last Goodbye** is now upon us, and here Sparks utilises his skill set of manifesting a composition and building upon its early constructions, and possibly into one of the finest symphonic creations on the album. A moving arrangement indeed, and redolent of some of the early new age styled tracks from many years hence, a sparkling heartfelt reminiscent opus indeed.

We have made it to the deeper realms of the album now and as we do so we come across a wonderful piece entitled **Going Home**, however many might also know it as *Dvorak's New World Symphony*, what many will not know was that this piece was my original introduction to classical music, by my father many years ago, and it was the bridge to a better relationship with him too, thank you **Rick Sparks** for its inclusion, and what a glowing and emotive arrangement it was as well.

The following and penultimate offering is, and could be described as the extension of the previous composition, and called **A New World**. Here Sparks creates a companion to the aforementioned track, could this piece be the performance that at last reveals a new age in this new world, where the energies of love and kindness for ever nestle closer to each other, in a oneness of spirit, sounds like Sparks has nailed that for me.

I must admit leaving an album and wrapping things up nicely is a really hard thing to do, but here Sparks does it so beautifully by playing out with the final piece called **Her Prayer**. A soft piano takes us to our beds, and we can reflect upon our stunning musical journey with the genius that is **Rick Sparks** and his latest album **Bella**.

Bella by **Rick Sparks** is yet one more page of bliss in the vast catalogue of musical brilliance by one of the finest instrumental artists in the new age field today. With each album Sparks brings us calmness and serenity, and on **Bella** he adds innocence, charm and kindness to the menu as well, how could one not recommend an album of this ilk, music like this is a panacea to cure all ills.