

Simple Gifts

By

William Ögmundson

Written by

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Sometimes it's best to keep things simple, you know, to take the complications and drama out of life and just enjoy the moment, each breath, each smell and each touch, to really feel life without stress or suffering, well through this album that has perhaps become possible; the artist has manifested for us a compilation of songs to ease our day and smooth out our nights, and entitled it **Simple Gifts**.

William Ögmundson has created this album to allow us to take a little beauty into our lives, and through this musical voyage we can sample empowering, but confident performances like the opening piece called **Belladonna**, a piece that leaves you feeling bright and alert at the end of the performance, revitalised completely.

The consistent fluency of this album is a real treat to hear, listen to the title track **Simple Gifts**, this is that special moment of magic, it is the title header, and here Ögmundson performs with such a warmth and style that we all may become a *Lord of the Dance* as well.

As we move continually down this river of solo piano we come across a really lively composition called quite appropriately, **Forever Drifting**. However, I would add when you factor in the happy refrain that this is played with, perhaps drifting with a purpose, or then again, perhaps just drifting for the sheer heck of it, whatever, this is one of the most fun arrangements off the release.

The curiously entitled **Pharaoh's Horses** is up now; I found this a fascinating composition. Going from light to dark on the keys at the beginning was equally encapsulating. At six minutes it is the longest offering on the album, but one played with such flair and panache this is easily my favourite composition from the release, I adored the sheer depth of the song and the wonderfully fluent performance by Ögmundson, his style, and it has to be said, is utter genius here, was beyond anything I had heard for quite some time, and I thoroughly enjoyed the sojourn within this tracks tonal energies.

As we slide ever onwards towards the fulcrum of the album we come across a gentle and very simple piece indeed called **Great Expectations**, there is a really charming musical narrative to be found here, there is warmth within the performance that has to be admired here as well. One could imagine this being played just as one is about to depart on a long journey of perhaps many discoveries.

Now we come across a piece that has a little eastern European motif about its energies and called **Twilight in Budapest**. This is one of those pieces that draws such a topographical picture for us to all enjoy, indeed we can, through the music, actually be with the artist as the sun sinks in the capital city of Hungary; the melody is delightful and allows us to retain a sense of actually having been there in a memory packed opus.

A total change in direction is now upon us as we move to the next offering called **Sancta Maria**. I'm not sure if I remember *Andrea Bocelli* singing this piece or not, there is a memory there, somewhere. However this is a presentation that has such charm and style, I am sure you will absolutely fall in love with it.

I was listening to this track just the other day and loved it; its title is **Jupiter & Venus**, this offering has a narrative that draws some beautiful pictures within my mind's eye that are vast, and graphic, as the universe can only be, but the mixture of minor and major chords form part of the recital that I find particularly exciting, the tempo and over all upbeat nature of the composition draws for me, comparisons for me with my neighbour *David Lanz* in style.

There is a real sense of drama about this next offering called **Lux Aeterna**, Ögmundson's classy approach to this short form composition is powerful with a sense of a regal posture within its musical matrix.

Heather's Song is our next musical doorway that we must cross the threshold of; here you will find a track that has a real lightness of soul about its essence. This is a proud arrangement that flows with such a level of subtlety and respect.

We now find ourselves at the opening to the penultimate offering of the album, this last but one arrangement is entitled **Icarus**. This is actually a really moving track that utilises a deep sense of reflection to majestically seal one of the most powerful offerings on the release. Whilst listening to this, one could easily imagine it being part of a movie soundtrack.

The final gift is called **Dance of the Fairies**. This is a much-crafted arrangement; the gentle but purposeful implementation is sublimely placed together with some flamboyant moments of grandeur. The dance elevates to a wonderful sense of heightened energy, then at the very last moment leaves us with an almost simple, but sweet disappearance of the fairies themselves, a very clever piece indeed.

Simple Gifts by **William Ögmundson** is a solo piano treat; it is a journey that is so well drawn by the artist, that the musician is simply your musical guide along the way. **Simple Gifts** by **William Ögmundson** flows with supreme confidence and should with ease satisfy any needs you have been longing to fulfil on a solo piano level, masterfully performed and produced, a real winner of an album.