

The Space Within

By

René Michele

Written by

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René Michele has drawn some wonderful fluent musical art work in her time; I was particularly entranced with the 2015 hit album *Seasons of the Heart*, and now even more so with the latest album entitled **The Space Within**, it is this voyage we now embark upon with the artist.

The title of this album is something to remember as we journey, as it really feels like we are going within, deep within. The opener is a very reflective and emotive track called **My Angel**. I particularly found this quite moving, the performance was not only played with a subtle perfection, but with a deep level of soul as well.

Now we move to the intriguingly entitled composition **In the Mist**. The artistic opportunity for the artist here to create something truly special is massive, and Michele does not let me down, as from the very first notes I am transported to a realm where the dawn is struggling to break through the shield of the night, and a thick mist is crawling across nature's landscape. A beautifully fluent performance can be found here, one as you can see has inspired my imagination, added to this is the flugelhorn of *Jeff Oster* and the English horn of the amazing *Jill Haley*, all of which creates something truly magical and unequivocally picturesque.

It feels to me like I have walked into an entirely different realm of music, the atmospheric attractiveness is stunningly opulent, listen to the title track and you will understand far more. **The Space Within** as a composition is lush, but emotional to feel and hear, and contains a very sensitive but pertinent Cello from *Eugene Friesen*. This fine portrait of beauty is enhanced further with

some of the finest flugelhorn by Oster, which only adds an extra texture to Michele's already crafted performance.

The lightness of spirit with which this next piece is played is idyllic and although reflective in parts, raises the energies of the album, almost akin to the sun peaking in through the curtains of a shadowy room for the first time. The melody on **Tabla Rasa** is sublime and memorable, even more so as it contains the work of non-other than *Will Ackerman* on guitar and a heartfelt segment of violin from *Charlie Bisharat*, which is always something to look forward to.

This is **René Michele's** sixth album and I can confirm that this is a release that you could take into eternity with you; with each and every track there is more beauty to be found lying just around the corner, like this next offering called **The Cloud Suite- Aspire and Life As A Cloud**. One has to admire the gentleness of performance here by the artist, one that is joined in part one by both Oster and Haley as the Horn section softly lifts the piece skywards, with an almost unperceivable touch, then when one is the cloud, we can just drift with the serenity of the moment, one that is made even more charming with the natural energies of Friesen's Cello. As suites go, this has to be one of the most additive listens I have had, normally I can write as I work, but these two tracks made me stop in my tracks and almost meditate on the compositions in question, simply brilliant indeed, musical genius in motion.

I believe that the artist grew up here, so perhaps it's no surprise that we find a track called **Montana Breeze** on the album. **René Michele's** performance is truly charming and completely honest, it's like the musician has woken up in her old home and flung open the curtains of her old bedroom, and that warm feeling of familiarity fully flows right over her senses completely.

The next offering shows a different energy from the artist, a true willingness to break from conformity, to take a chance, to alter course and take a new pathway, in this instance **The Road Less Travelled**, here you will be able to hear a sense of nervous excitement within the onward marching performance of the piece, one that must be said contains some of the most charismatic guitar from the incredible *Will Ackerman* you may have heard for a while.

Amazingly we have arrived at the penultimate arrangement of the album called **Trees of Vermont**. It will of course not surprise you to know that the artist recorded the album at Ackerman's Imaginary Road Studio's, and one feels like this is a journey to that very studio itself, all the expectation, all the beauty of nature's journey along the way. One can literally feel the inspirational power exuding from the artist as she plays with her heart, to yours.

Our last doorway to this magical wonderland of piano is a sensitive but colourful offering called **Communion**. At just short of seven minutes it is the longest piece off the release and one that really shows a wonderfully symbiotic partnership of performance and creational spirit, in a perfect combination of natural genius, a better way to leave this album you will never find.

The Space Within for me was one of those albums you never wanted to end, **René Michele** in my view has produced her best work so far and the magic touch of Ackerman and his team have added a layer of crafted professionalism, which makes this album truly inspiring and quite moving to listen to. **The Space Within** is an attractive album of pristine performances and has an enchanting production quality, that has delivered to its listening audience one of, if not the best piano with instrumentation albums that I have heard in the last few years, simply captivating indeed and thoroughly recommended.