

# **Solace of Mountains and Clouds**

**By**

**Kathryn Kaye**

**Written by**

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A new **Kathryn Kaye** release is always a very special moment of time, I have followed her musical career throughout the years, and have been fortunate enough to have reviewed many of her albums. Kaye is a consummate artist in every sense of the word, and her musical portraits illustrate beautiful images of nature and all that is gloriously wonderful about our world.

On this album **Solace of Mountains and Clouds**, Kaye once more shows off her charm and artistic brilliance with this graphic and fluent new offering and also pulls off a few surprises along the way, for instance the opening piece **Luna's Dream**, which lulls us into a false sense of security with a gentle Kaye styled opening, then breaks into a tantalizing upbeat movement, tip of the hat to the amazing percussion of one *Jeff Haynes*, then as we approach the ending of the composition *Jill Haley's* English horn restores the balance to this quite breath taking opener.

Fortunately for me I have two large mountain ranges behind my home, so I have a wonderful appreciation for mountains and clouds and the solace it brings, this next piece offers even more comfort and is called **For Love of Earth and Sky**. The added bonus in this track is the incredible talent of violinist *Charlie Bisharat*; the luscious melody within the overall composition, literally drips with beauty and respect of our world, and a deep understanding by the artist of the subject matter, and thus this piece is simply moving with every note played.

As we move to the next offering which is called **We'll be Home Tomorrow**, we find ourselves walking a brightly lit pathway of musical mastery. Kaye's

performance here is clever, it is upbeat, but without compromising the tone and mood of the arrangement, and to add the skillset of cellist *Eugene Friesen* into the offering, was a stroke of genius, pay close attention also for the subtle but quite charming accordion of *Tom Eaton*.

Well we are approaching this point of time slowly as August has started here, but at some stage I guess we will all be doing a **Slow Waltz at Summers End**. Once more it has to be said that this performance is extremely crafted and truly inspirational, Kaye bring us the feel of a Waltz, but once again it does not take over the overall smoothness of the composition. This is one of only three solo piano pieces off the album and gives us a moment to admire the talents of Kaye's style.

That moment has arrived, the title track, that blank canvas that only a true artist can paint upon with colours of tone and timbre, and Kaye is most certainly one of the best in the business at painting with sound and tone. **Solace of Mountains and Clouds**, the track, is actually incredibly ambient and it pleases me to say this, it is one of my favourite compositions that Kaye has painted for a long time. The slow energy of the piece beautifully depicts the clouds drifting past the tors of the mountains, and the inclusion of *Gus Sebring* on French horn was a clever touch that only added more weight to what, at well over 6 minutes long, is the longest track off the album and thank goodness it was, I never wanted it to end.

Let's enjoy this next graphic landscape entitled **Mountains Touching Sky**. This is truly stunning and I believe should be used in a movie of perhaps even on a channel like *National Geographic*, there is also a sublime sense of grandeur here too, assisted most amicably by the skills of *Bisharat* and *Sebring*.

As we make our way down the mountain, a moment of excitement and light hits our senses, it is called **Finally Spring**. This happy and ebullient offering portrays perfectly our feelings when winter is finally over and spring comes knocking on the door. A soothing but gently driving bass from *Tony Levin* combined with the returning Haley, but this time on Oboe, just goes to make this track even more listenable.

With spring comes something quite beautiful, that moment when we feel **Warm Sun, Gentle Rain**. Now this is no oxymoron of a title, this is the artist

painting us a tranquil moment of peaceful times ahead. Solo piano never sounded so good, and her ability here to build off the back of a minor key into something so spectacular was wonderful to listen to and feel, this for me was one of my favourites from the album.

Amazingly we now find ourselves at the penultimate track off the release and a calm musical narrative will bathe your senses with a feeling of a serene nature, it is called **While the Mountain Sleeps**. It has to be said that including Sebring's French horn here was a stroke of utter genius, whilst Kaye plays the sleep filled melody so sweetly, the horn for me, just added that extra touch of a night time allure to the overall construction of the narrative.

In a way I am almost sad now as we have come to the end of the album, but we do have the added bonus of one more gift from the artist to enjoy before we end our voyage, and it is called **Stories Told by Trees**. Whilst the title is inventive, the use of pause here in this piece is equally so, one could easily sit within a lush and green woodland, and hear the chatter of the majestic trees as they relay their stories of the eons to each other, and to us, it may be nothing but a mere whisper in the forest, or the tickle of a summer breeze on our skin, this is an outstanding performance by Kaye to end with, one I shall remember for a long time.

**Solace of Mountains and Clouds** is another masterful collection of utterly beautiful pieces produced at the home in the woods, that mystical musical sanctuary of genius called, Imaginary Road Studios. The collection of other well-known artists that grace this album just adds to its overall value, but **Kathryn Kaye** must be proud of her creation here, as it contains some of the finest work I have heard from her to date, and as such I have no problem at all recommending this one to you all.