

Days Gone By

By

Holly Baines

Written by

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Whilst 16 isn't the youngest pianist or musician I have ever written a review for, the fact that I recently wrote one for her father, must make this the first family pairing that I have done so far, and it is quite beautiful in all its blissful glory.

So, it is this lush and colourful journey we must now travel and Baines and her piano will be our master narrator along our way, we start with **Bluejay**. I have only ever seen this bird once whilst visiting the states, but it, like this song, has a charm all of its own. Baines on this piece drops into a lovely melodic flow and the drifting airborne essence of this composition is one of the best I think I have heard in this genre for quite some time.

This *New Zealand* based pianist has a really beautiful touch on the piano, strangely enough similar to another musical friend and pianist of mine who lives in the same country, in one *Rachel La Fond*. So as we move to this really moving offering **When You Return**, we find that her sense of depth and passion are already quickly maturing, the awareness of just what is needed is also emphasized by the crafted use of pause during the piece.

My breath is simply taken away by the beauty of this next composition called **Train To Berlin**, the tempo is utterly delicious and played with so much emotion, yet once again we listen to a piece that is creatively arranged and very redolent to the subject matter, but it has to be said one of the most artistic endeavours off the album.

The lightness and deftness of touch on this next offering entitled **Chasing Starlight** was sublime, a crystal clear composition that at times reminded me of solo piano from yesteryear from the greats like Cossu and Lanz. The gentleness and uplifting nature of this track made this a sure fire winner of an arrangement for me.

It has certainly been some years since I both heard this tune and walked across **London Bridge**. One has to say though that this melancholy version is quite brilliant in creating a new energy to something old, and if we listen carefully we can even hear a little Celtic refrain in there as well.

The title of this next arrangement captured my imagination from the off, the mysterious and imaginative **Winds Of Time** truly was a classy performance, one that happens to be one of my personal favourites from the release. Baine's fluency and melodic essence within this empowering composition was so well crafted and performed, one could truly feel and be at one within the winds of time themselves.

As we now move into the deeper regions of the album we come across a really weighty and emotive piece called **The Time We Had**. There is energetic signature of the classical within this track that I adored, but one mixed so well with Baines artistic brilliance, that it manifested a moment of solo piano that was truly heart rendering and touching with every note played.

That theme of reflection continues with this next piece called **Regrets**, and my goodness I have had a few in my life time! Here the artist seems to be expressing this emotion beautifully and with style too it has to be added. Baine's just seems to be able to create moods so craft-fully, and as her hands touch the piano magic flows from her instrument; a wonderfully moving offering indeed.

There is always one track off any album that really brings a lump in the throat and a tear to the eye and for me it was this one, entitled **Last Moment**. A composition beautifully composed and played. Once more the artist has depicted a truly sad moment of a time of final goodbyes, but also in her arrangement has brought in a reflective essence that in some ways brings some comfort to the listener, a very cleverly crafted song indeed.

So we have arrived at our penultimate offering off the album, it is called **Days Gone By**, a slow moving opus that draws us in carefully and whilst doing so creates artistic images within the mind's eye. **Holly Baines** on this piece has honed the art of musical narration to its best; this is one memory palace of a composition that within you, there is a part that never wants it to end, and that's a sublime skill to have.

Our last doorway to this album is about to close, but before it does, the artist would like to hand us just one more musical present to take with us along on our way, it is called **Sanchez**. There is a real charm about this offering that will endear itself to you; there is also a sun kissed feel to the performance that makes this a really clever way to leave, what is a really remarkable album.

Holly Baines has manifested **Days Gone By** with an open heart and an openness of spirit, she has not been afraid to express herself musically, and as such this album is one of the most expressive and emotive albums in this genre I have heard for quite some time.

One can only imagine where this young 16 year old pianist can go, I'm guessing as far as her imagination will allow her, and judging by **Days Gone By**, that could very well be an endless trip of excitement just waiting to happen. If you a fan of solo piano, you should have this album in your collection, its reflective, inspiring and truly moving and certainly one that I am more than happy to give a big thumbs up to.

