

Awakened

By

Marshall Barnhouse

Written by

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The solo piano genre is one of the most packed realms of music styles on the face of the planet, so a performer has to really stand out, has to be at their best and most creative, and as far as my ears tell me, **Marshall Barnhouse** has just ticked all those boxes and more. So let's go on another musical journey through the album with the artist within his creation called, **Awakened**.

The title track sits proudly as the opening piece, and I must say this is one of the finest examples of composition creation in this genre I have heard for quite a while, a stunning melody and an empowering performance can all be found here.

We now move to a track called **Invocation**. A much more thoughtful repose is found within this piece, this is a musical statement of an invocation through tone and energy. I adored this arrangement; at times the song almost became ambient and had a spacious quality about its nature, but also adopted a sense of power and intensity when needed.

On **Searching for Home** we have something truly moving and almost mournful; a true longing to be whole again can be found within the tones of this wonderful composition. The flow and fluency of this piece was most addictive to listen to, and I could feel that I would visit this particular track again many times over, almost like an anthem of a longing to just be home again, a feeling I have had many times in my life.

Another Chance is a warm composition that is packed with second opportunities and Barnhouse has brilliantly got that across in his arrangement,

one can find lightness about this offering that is both charming and very loving in its construction, and once more the artist produces a memorable melody that will always be with us.

A slight elevation of energy and we are off again and into the arms of the next song called **The Promise**. This complex performance has many facets to it, a constant and driving motif and an empowering and imploring narrative of music that gives a real edge to the composition.

Light of the World is another respectful, yet calming opus that leads us towards the centre of the release; again Barnhouse has manifested a vast realm of space for us eager listeners to roam within. I listened to this piece and found myself gazing down upon the Earth, and watching with a smile, all its simplicities and stunning beauty.

Time is the linear measurement we use to measure the passing of the sequences of moments we call life, but if we say **For Eternity**, what does that mean? We can through this piece step outside of the constraints of time, and do so by using this confident and assured arrangement as our guide. Once more there is a gentle hand that drives the narrative here that is so very peaceful and self-assured.

The Pierced Heart is one of the most mournful compositions off the release, that being the case, a careful melody can also be found within. This track has the feeling that time is winding down and a major change is about to take place, the anthem of deaths last procession perhaps. Barnhouse performs right until the very last beat of the heart on this moving performance.

Moving on with a gentle caress of the hand, we now find ourselves in a world between worlds, an inner dimension, a **Land of Rest**. **Marshall Barnhouse** perhaps surprises me here, I was expecting an ambient arrangement, but the master pianist creates a sense of relief and happiness within the structure of this offering, in what I would call a clever performance.

Spring, the fountain of all that is new and reborn, the symbol of rebirth and on **Eternal Spring** the artist captures the energy of that moment beautifully. This has a real sense of freshness about the performance. Once more Barnhouse creates a freshness in his composition that is under pinned by a previous

narrative of struggle. **Eternal Spring** is a memorable offering that is both new, but respectful of the journey it has taken to get there.

The Breath Prayer is a really fascinating piece that really needs to be listened to with care and time, it's in a higher key and its tempo is smooth and paces itself sublimely. This is solo piano at its finest, a truly meditative slice of musical magic can be found here.

We're deep within the creation of the album now and have arrived at a musical doorway marked **Longing Heart**. Barnhouse once more pulls out a really memorable melody on this one. This is also one of those rare pieces, that when you listen to it, if you're musically inclined, you can almost hear the lyrics to a song run through your mind at the same time, in an arrangement that is almost cinematic in proportion.

So here we are the penultimate track off the album and it is called **Under the Stars**, a place I love to be. The star fields shine brightly here in Cyprus and watching them could easily be done with this very piece as a soundtrack for the event. A slightly faster tempo can be found, but a wonderful sense of energy and fluency constantly runs through the arrangement, giving it great space and clarity, and the melody is filled with a vast depth of passion wonderment as too.

The last and longest piece off the album is the track called **All Is Well**, this composition feels like it sums up the entire album and in a word, a level of musical acceptance has been realised here, so it seems. Listen carefully to the performance here and the technique used, it's both fascinating and creative. This is a fine example of a confident piece, in the guise of the style of an anthem.

Marshall Barnhouse and **Awakened** is an album that has such poise and confidence about its creation. For fans of the solo piano genre you're going to adore this crafted release. Barnhouse has stepped forward and produced a very classy album that has a really special quality about its arrangements and compositions. This is solo piano at its very best, well-structured and produced and played with a good deal of finesse, passion and pride.