

# **Ascend**

**By**

**Christine Brown**

**Written by**

**Steve Sheppard**

The solo piano skills of **Christine Brown** are now officially laid before me to peruse, and today I am grateful for this musical interlude of quality and tone, as autumn furthers its cloak upon our landscape, the arrangements contained within brightened my soul somewhat.

We start our ascendance with the opening piece, and here sits, in a proud stance, the very title header itself, **Ascend**. This is a composition of a flowing energy and intent, the fluency of performance really draws us a wonderful musical vista with which to roam freely within, what a sublimely charming beginning.

A passionate piece swirls around us now, with the arrival of the heartfelt and very imploring **Love's Legacy**. The power and intensity of this offering is incredibly poignant, both sad and stirring at the same time. Brown has really captured the true legacy of love, an emotion that is sometimes so very hard to deal with, but all encompassing.

The light and sparkling **Magic Carpet** is now upon us; however this is not an offering to be taken too lightly, as the artist has also created a wonderful sense of movement here that is compelling and commanding in its presence. This formidable piece oozes absolute class all the way.

There was something so very calming about **Gravity**, the gentle performance seemed to allow us to flow with time and tune, the repetitive nuances were delightfully arranged, and I found myself listening with awe and a tear in my eye to this one, each time I hit repeat, and yes, you have guessed it, this was

indeed one of my favourites from the release. Browns performance here was both magical and emotive, in the sense that the music allowed me to let go of earth based burdens, and just float in peace.

On **Closer**, we have a track of a different colour; a far slower tempo is gifted to us, almost classical in a *Debussy* way, but once more again we will be entranced by the beautiful stylish implementation of the presentation here. This was another that really resonated with me, the narrative of Browns composition drew me in with the subtle notion of movement contained within.

As we approach the half way point of the album, the preceding offering stands before us and is called, **Forest for the Trees**. There is a sense of confusion in this piece for me, the passion of performance is indeed potent, but there is also a feeling of many weighty decisions to be made. Once more the artist story telling skills as a pianist grow with each passing composition.

We can now take one tentative step across the borderlands of the half way marker of the album, with the piece **Ivory Wings**. Browns subtleties are really on view here, it is as if we are listening to something growing and shining whilst doing so, on this perfect midway point composition.

So we begin another musical sojourn, this time hand in hand with a track called **Lotus Breeze**. There was a strange familiarity about this one, perhaps the resonance of the arrangement spoke to me, but however, this is just yet another example of a fine performance, and an excellently written piece, one that has lightness about its overall energy, as we drift in a musical stream of brilliance.

**Floating Colors** is one of those pieces that you never want to end, by the time I had reached this part of the album, I was convinced that this was easily the best work I had heard from the artist, the album is so stunning and full flowing, and this track is a fine example of that brightness and timeless fluency.

**Christine Brown** now creates a musical narrative to enable us to literally **Soar**. The graceful approach on this piece is well received, and the effortlessness of the composition is very enjoyable to drift along with, the subtle shifts of tempo and movement are wonderfully crafted here.

**Cherish** sees the artist showing her sensitive nature in the creation of a really heart-warming opus, this is a piece that almost nurtures you along the way. This is a feel good composition that has that warm caress of tone, to manifest a realm of musical sanctuary, to utterly cherish in an embrace of truth and honesty.

We have now arrived at the door of a short form offering entitled **The Departure**. Despite being just shy of three minutes long, this is a very clever arrangement and in its petite narrative, manifests a whole raft of emotions, but leaves us emboldened.

Our penultimate track is the very attractive title of **Amethyst Sky**. As a writer and musician I love watching the patterns of light, shade, and colour form in the sky, this great global theatre above us that most take for granted, one that sometimes offers up such breath taking vistas and this offering is probably the sound track to that moment of magic.

Our last port of call is called **Safe and Sound**, this is simply idyllic, Brown has created here a final parting gift for us to revel in, with that homely feeling of safety and security, it is the final offering of the day, as the light goes down, and night swoons its sleep filled intent over our minds, now we can just float in total bliss and harmony.

**Christine Brown** must be proud of this latest offering, and in my view this is her best work so far. The melodies were fresh, but very memorable; each composition was played with a total passion, but with such a confidence that we felt completely captivated, with what has to be her best performance so far. Browns skills and musical story telling here have jumped tenfold, her care and attention to detail whilst creating such incredibly powerful and moving pieces, should not, and will not go unnoticed. **Ascend** is an album that truly touched my musical soul, and I hope it will yours too.