

Reflecting Forward

By

Ryan Marvel

Written by

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I sit here in the very beginnings of a new year and hope that 2018 can be more kind to me than the preceding one, like the artist **Ryan Marvel**, 2017 had been a severe year of extreme change, with many emotional challenges.

Ryan Marvel as thus created **Reflecting Forward** as a journey of healing, I for one salute that and am most grateful for the sojourn into this album; perhaps I would find the contents as cathartic as Ryan himself, as at this time I sure need it.

This voyage of restorative musical balance starts with the title track, **Reflecting Forward** is a wonderful example of an artist, who in one track, can sum up the mood of the album and the yin and yang of emotions in just under five amazingly reflective minutes.

Most of the song titles are a simply a single word, no over-elaboration needed here, just the truth of thought. The theme continues with the second piece entitled **Forgotten**. Memories seem to reveal themselves here with each key played and a sense of letting go can be found within the composition as well.

Conflict sees Marvel employ the technique of dampening the strings; this herald's the arrival of a more upbeat composition. There is something both very appealing and energetic about this arrangement. At times the performance bursts into musical passages that contain a lush music colour, then back into an essence of apprehension, this is without doubt one of the cleverest tracks off the release.

On **Apology** we have a more moody composition that creates a delicate pastiche of nervousness and concern, but weaves its quite brilliant narrative so well, that a back drop of honest sincerity can also be found within the weave of this breath taking piece.

One of my favourites would turn out to be **Horizons**, that's exactly where we are now; this is one extremely reflective opus, one that is bathed in a deeply contemplative energy. This moment of introspective genius captured my imagination and heart and perhaps one, through the tears, can see new horizons as of yet untouched, this is a song of great hope.

Once reached, there is no turning back; this is the quite brilliant **Renewal**, a composition that has such a charming flow and resonance about its arrangement. The performance here is sublime and quite empowering too, one that employs a really vigorous but immaculate performance.

Let's float over the half way line together and listen to the piece **Then, Now**. There is such a splendid interplay between the past and present here on this composition. This song is almost like sitting in your arm chair and reflecting on what has been and what is now. Marvel has produced a moment of blissful philosophical piano.

Stillness is a piece that has a well of great ambience about its nature, and to that ambience is added a delicate melody from the heart, one that brings comfort and calm. Marvels sensitivity here is moving and something profound to behold; another one of my personal favourites from the album.

As we move into the deeper regions of the release, we come across a track called **Reverence**. The veneration and respectful performance says it all, the tempo is slow and careful and played with such a level of respect; this is both tender and touching to the musical ear.

At times we all have moods that are less than cheerful; these moments of serious nature will flood our hearts and minds if we allow them to. On the piece **Somber**, we have a short form composition that illustrates that mood perfectly, the style and execution of this track is clever and insightful, one that also contains many musical rooms of shadows within.

The vastness of the ambience in the track **Waiting** is delightful, the pause and breath of performance is magical. **Ryan Marvel's** skills at producing full flowing solo piano are simply stunning. This is one of those tracks you cannot stop playing, as it manifests such beautiful imagery from each and every note played.

The shortest offering on the album is the light and almost cheeky composition called **Hopeful**. At just under two minutes you have the perfect remedy for any sombreness you may have had. Marvel creates a sun kissed track that literally sparkles on the horizon and burns your fears away.

The penultimate piece off the release is entitled **Nostalgic**, I have had many moments feeling like this over the past weeks, many doors have closed, but through this gentle and caring performance we can access the more happier moments of our colourful past. This is beautifully played and carries a feeling of love and respect well within its musical boundaries.

The end is the beginning, the beginning is the end, we have shared many, many moments of reflection on this musical journey with the artist, now he has one more gift for us to take along with us on our way, and this is his parting gift called **Beginnings**. Marvel delivers a perfect ending piece, one that seems to round up all the emotions of a turbulent year of change and challenge, in a very memorable last performance.

Reflecting Forward by **Ryan Marvel** is indeed a cathartic journey, one that could be a much needed remedy for our world today. This album allows us to reflective and understand our thoughts, and thus be more thoughtful in the future. Marvel as a pianist has a talent that is rare, he creates a vibrant colourful narrative with his music and has a level of sensitivity that allows us the space to heal through the music, this is one album that you just have to embrace and feel the love from.