

# **Piano Sanctuary**

**By**

**Masako**

**Written by**

**Steve Sheppard**

I had the delight of coming into the world of **Masako** in 2012, a year of many changes; her music then calmed the soul and brought a new focus to my life. The changes have constantly rang out for me over the past 6 years and in 2018 **Masako's** latest release now plays its gentle refrains into my heart and soul, so why not join me on this new musical sojourn, through the works of **Piano Sanctuary**.

The style and narration and a musical prowess is clear to see, and we are off on an emotive ride with the first offering entitled **When You Were Little**, a composition that is filled with the light of sweet memory, passion and happiness, the perfect way to open any album.

The piano of **Masako** is always something worth waiting for and on **Ragrima** we have a gentle but reflective melody that will be loved for an age. There is something almost timeless about this piece that attracts me, the notes fall from her fingers like, crisp brown leaves from an autumn tree, and with each stroke manifests such a rich tapestry of tone to enjoy.

One of the most picturesque and sensitive arrangements is the very beautiful **The Bird And The River**. Her performance structure can change with an ease that is hardly noticed, but non the less very evident, and here on this piece one could almost watch a small bird, dip, swoop, and sip from this ever abundant river. **Masako** has a rare talent to be able to draw wonderful art within each composition she creates, and this one is a fine example of that.

On **Midnight Sun**, we have a little Jazzy motif that fits so beautifully; this laid back song seems to sparkle in this night sky of radiant music with such a smooth refrain. The confidence in performance here draws an even more elaborate picture for us to enjoy, and once more the magical skills of the artist brings us total peace and harmony.

I stayed over in *New York*, but didn't have the time to visit *Central Park*, but I could see it from above as my plane took off for the Midwest. This is a sublime representation of the area in music and **Central Park Retreat** is indeed a sanctuary to many, perhaps even a piano sanctuary.

At the mid-way point we come across a charming piece called **A Tale of Lonely Otter (Solo Version)**. There is indeed a sense of remorse and sadness built in here, but as always a tale to tell with the keys and this track seems to wend its way through a nature narrative of happy free times, mixed with moments of reflection and memory.

Time to take a trip across the lakes and seas on **Sailing**, there is a real energy about this offering that I love; it also has a little Beatles ethic sown in for good measure at the start. The power in this track is very redolent of the subject matter; we could feel at ease as if we are sailing on choppy but sun kissed waters within its construction.

As we move from the waters of **Sailing**, we come across **The Land We Called Hope**. **Masako** seems to be able to change course at will and here on this piece we have a sense of a fresh start and possibilities built into its musical narrative. The style is both confident as well as empowering and brings a new energy to the album that flows so wonderfully.

Something different is on offer on this next piece called **The Lost Estate**. This composition is intriguing and seems to manifest an essence of grandeur, but one that floats on the energies of past memories. I adored the performance here, at times almost classical, with a hint of Jazz thrown in for good measure, listen also to the elevation of intensity within this piece, this has to be the cleverest track on the album, with ease.

Within the next offering called **Koto**, we have a piece that could be classed as almost cinematic in parts, it's has that essence and energy of drama, but seems to also create a narrative of musical quality that is truly addictive.

**Frozen Quarry** is yet another vista of great musical quality painted by the piano of **Masako**. The slow tempo, but assured melody draws us a wonderful picture of a frozen wasteland, through each touch of the piano **Masako** uses a little power, partnered with a gentle touch to illustrate this masterpiece of winter.

Sadly we have now reached the very last gift of musical genius from the artist **Masako** on her album **Piano Sanctuary**; this final composition is called **Tender Stories**. The exit from this her latest project has an energy of empowerment built around a calming and tender refrain, this musical confidence will allow us to leave the album fully aware that we have listened to a truly superb album, and will be very eager to revisit it yet again.

**Piano Sanctuary** by **Masako** is another step up for the artist, her skill sets grow and expand constantly, and on this release, she hasn't only shown what a consummate performer she is, she has revealed to the world, that she is a composer of sublime and cultured music, music that can speak to each and every listener she connects with. This is a truly marvellous release and thoroughly recommended for anyone who wants to hear solo piano, played brilliantly.