

Chapters

By

Stephen Wallack

Written by

Steve Sheppard

Another glorious opportunity to bathe myself in some quality solo piano has arrived with the release of **Chapters** by debutant **Stephen Wallack**. This exciting new offering is a really luscious thrilling ride on the piano.

The album sets off at pace with the first offering entitled **Virginia**, a proud and powerful opus that is truly liberating to listen to, its fast paced tempo is the perfect beginning with which to start this sojourn through music with, and at just shy of seven minutes it is the longest piece off the release.

The second offering has a wonderful flowing mood, and as I gaze out of my window it fits well with the brooding early summer storm over the ocean. The track is entitled **Oceans** and as it breaks free from its moorings it becomes one of the most fascinating tracks off the album, the melody in the main segment is also so familiar but so much fun, this is one of those pieces that is simply impossible not to like.

Cooper's Song has that reflective quality to its structure that makes it so moving and emotive, a piece that must be a testament to good times with good friends perhaps. Wallack has produced something steeped in memories here, this song is like listening to a scrapbook of events, some good, some sad, but all memorable.

I simply adore compositions that are based on **Trains**, OK I know it may sound weird, but I love them, and I see them as an opportunity for an artist to create a sense of movement within their arrangement and this Wallack does with

such style and panache. **Trains** is a piece that is truly addictive to listen to and hooks you in with its constant undying narrative of movement.

The power of music is always inspiring whether it is from a movie or something that literally pours from the heart, on **Dad**, perhaps you have both, Wallacks performance here is delightfully moving, but packed with a musical colour that is undeniable and could so easily be the theme music for a cheerful TV show.

Chicago, the mid placed track has a wonderful flourish to start with that is so appealing; in the first few bars one can feel the energy of the place through the tones of the performance. This is a song I could listen to multiple times over and each time I do so, I can hear more clever little nuances, a really crafted piece indeed, this composition is so picturesque in its build and progression.

As we move into the deeper waters of the album we come across a piece called **The Traveler**, there is something quite romantic about this piece, but in the context of the love of constant travelling, I have been there, thousands of miles on my clock, and this beautifully paced arrangement could have easily been the sound track for my sojourns across the world.

The delight of listening to a debut artist is hearing all the enthusiasm and excitement go into the album, one that will never be forgotten, it literally pours out of the orange piano, perhaps **Wedding Song** is a good example. This is a charming composition, one coated in love, tenderness and happiness and on a musical level, very sun kissed and beautifully performed too.

So we arrive at our penultimate offering called **Holiday**, instead of the buzz and excitement you may expect, it feels like a holiday should be, a break, some relaxation and a moment to breathe, all those things that you normally promise yourself before you go away, but never quite achieve. Once more the performance here is sublime at creating a musical narrative that is really compelling and interesting.

Unbelievable though it maybe, but we find ourselves at the final portal to the album, and we leave the release now with what must be the perfect dedication to another friend in the track **Archer**. This is literally an amazing composition; it has a real sense of moodiness and power about it that I love, the intensity

within this offering has passion and pride and is the perfect way to leave the album.

Chapters by **Stephen Wallack** is a fine first album, it is a debut release of energy, passion and respect. Wallacks performance on his beloved orange piano is brimming with an effervesce of what is still yet to come, but on **Chapters**, he has produced a testimonial to what has gone, and he has thus produced a perfect example of how to start off on the good foot in the solo piano genre, this is an album you will completely fall in love with.