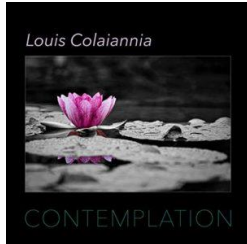


Louis Colaiannia  
Contemplation



Award winning and well-known pianist and composer **Louis Colaiannia** presents us with his latest effort called **Contemplation**. If we consider the title a promise, then he delivers elegantly and with many extras. The album is a 2-disc set with ten tracks on each. The first disc (S) has his solo piano tunes and the second disc (O) has the same tunes enhanced with light orchestration. Colaiannia's music checks a lot of different boxes in many different genres, but his music is generally ambient and contemporary with segues into sub-genres. As a long time listener, I can tell that the songs on *Contemplation* are more intimate, much softer, and more thoughtful than previous albums. Mellow is always a good thing.

The first cut, **The River** (S) is, of course, a placid, fluid piece suggesting gentle waters coursing without ripple or wave. Whether you row a boat made of birch wood or float one made of writing paper, this music is transporting in the finest aural fashion. The music seems to create lush audio landscapes, always fresh, always new.

Using undulating arpeggios, Louis replicates the sounds of a soothing downpour on the tune **Gentle Rain** (O). Was that thunder in the background? Or the cacophony of droplets on the rooftops. The subtle, emerging synth background might be the sun escaping from clouds and shimmering through the raindrops.

On the tune **Believe in Peace** (O) you can hear baby soft voices offering an innocent's prayer of hope. The voices of international youngsters ornament the song, giving it a feeling of expressive promise. Colaiannia's heartfelt tune unfolds like a soft lullaby and then the progressive rhythm gives it a small march for small pacers. Everything starts with the first step.

The best track is the title tune, **Contemplation** (S) (O). Louis's theme sustains many understated classical values, but it can fit right into the contemporary music world without much ado. It is sober and melancholy, two elements that it balances very well. It is the music of long thoughts, moments of transparency, and pauses in the universe. Play it often for effect as I did.

**I Am** (S), one of my favorites, had a minimalist point of view and I liked it for that. It reminded me of works by Icelandic composer Ólafur Arnalds where simplicity and orderly composition allows the mind a time for freeform thoughts and deeds, without any physical exertions.

Not as sad as I thought it would be, **After Goodbye** (S) is very sentimental. Yes, you can sense the farewell part in the flow of the music, but you can also sense that it is not the end. Maybe it is the parting for the day or for the week, but not forever. The melody is still positive, still hopeful.

**Two Hearts Across Time** (O) is a slow, sweet refrain. There is a sadness about it, a sorrow that might never be healed. The instruments in this introspective lament are muted, as if trying not to

intrude on the main theme. Louis's musical message is that you can survive the distance, but the absence is heart breaking.

Colaianne's **Forbidden Feelings** (S) (O) is the closer and it is an impressive orchestral piece as well as a solo piece. It is an old world waltz that recreates an era of bygone days. It was time when you could feel the vibrations of live music coursing through your body and the heartbeat of your partner. A slow and steady time when hidden passions could only be revealed in dance steps of 1-2-3, 1-2-3. A time when emotions were expressed in hand holding and muted smiles. And sometimes from way across the dance floor.

Several musicians contributed their talents to the music including Danny Masters on guitar, Joey Glassman on vibraphone, and Handpan (hang drum) by Tad Michael Wheeler, who also handled synthesizer and string arrangements. I put the two discs on shuffle and experienced a relaxed atmosphere for quite some time. The music drew my attention away from the rain outside, and made my time more introspective. Music works. Great music works better. It appears after listening to *Contemplation*, that Louis Colaianne is not afraid to reveal that he is not only a great composer, but also a true romantic. Highly recommended. - R J Lannan, Artisan Music Reviews