

The logo for Solo Piano Publications is a dark, textured rectangular shape with a curved top edge. The text "Solo Piano Publications" is written in a white, serif font across the middle of the shape.

Solo Piano Publications

Cue
Ken Elkinson
2006 / August Son Productions
50.1 minutes

"Cue" is pianist/composer Ken Elkinson's fourth CD, and is comprised of eleven original piano solos and one vocal featuring the voice and lyrics of Tom Freund. As on Elkinson's previous releases, the music on "Cue" is mostly peaceful and reflective, and the liner notes are exceptional with a couple of favorite poems, a crossword showing many of the CD credits, and a list of "everything you always wanted to know about Ken but were afraid to ask..." The cover artwork is a painting by Mark Rothko - quite a feat in itself!

"Cue" opens with "Portenos," a gently upbeat piece with a feeling of swirling. The title track is a beauty. Both hands have flowing parts that create a lovely counterpoint. Sometimes searching and sometimes more purposeful, it always keeps moving. "Lightly" has the feeling of walking on tiptoe - quiet and a little bit tentative, but also fun. "Wanderlust" is much freer, flowing where it will in an unrushed, carefree manner. "Firefly" also has a lighthearted sense of freedom and joy. The oddly-titled "Tetherball" conveys the innocence and fun of this children's playground game (Elkinson must not have played tetherball as competitively as I did as a child!). "January" is more ambient, with open spaces in the music and a bittersweet mood - a favorite! "Oregon Coast" is a piece about my favorite place - where life is unhurried and surrounded by beauty as far as you can see. The piece conveys serenity and peace. "Maybe" is also rather ambient with a reflective, dreamy mood; the major chord at the end suggests a positive resolution. "Beautiful Sadness" with Elkinson's piano and Tom Freund's voice and lyrics is kind of an odd little piece. The words almost make sense and then take a sharp left turn. Very pleasant and enjoyable, but also a bit puzzling - nothing wrong with that!

Fans of Ken Elkinson's earlier albums will be overjoyed with "Cue," and it should bring him plenty of new fans as well. It is available from www.kenelkinson.com, cdbaby.com, and amazon.com. Recommended!

Kathy Parsons