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New Age Pianist Breaks Out

By David McGurgan



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With the overwhelming number of CDs being released each year and a music business that seems to give the least consideration to what ought to be the most important ingredient -- the artist -- it's amazing that independent musicians are even able to make a dent in the music scene.

But that is exactly what pianist Ken Elkinson has done. His debut CD, *Midnight Conversation*, is a true gem of relaxing solo piano compositions. Released by the artist on his own label, the album is a snapshot of soothing melodies and gentle keyboard phrasing by an up-and-coming new age pianist.

Writing and recording your own music is a time-consuming project requiring lots of creative energy and patience. But releasing that music on your own independent label is an additional challenge requiring a serious commitment.

"I've tried to be resourceful in finding unique places to market my music. I've had success with telephone hold music companies, yoga centers, music therapists, and airline in-flight audio."

"It's been a pretty positive experience so far," explains Elkinson. "It's very overwhelming to see how many solo piano CDs are out there. I've tried to be resourceful in finding unique places to market my music. I've had success with telephone hold music companies, yoga centers, music therapists, and airline in-flight audio."

The Internet has played a key role in helping independent artists find alternate distribution routes, and while Elkinson still remains a "small fish" in the New York City scene where he makes his home, he is already making waves on a global level. "It's been surprising to see the international response," explains Elkinson. "The Internet has been an invaluable tool in reaching new audiences. The DJs especially in Germany and the Netherlands have been supportive. It's a great feeling when someone from Ecuador or Romania sends me an email to buy my CD or asks me when I'm coming to play live."

Elkinson has achieved results with minimum financial investments. By making thrifty choices in his career, he's been able to persevere as an independent artist. "I think I spent a total of six hours in the studio to record all of *Midnight Conversation*," says Elkinson. "I haven't marketed my music to any new age labels, but that is something I wouldn't rule out as it's hard to do everything with such limited resources."

Being a "signed" artist with a recording contract doesn't guarantee success. And artists such as Ken Elkinson are proving that with a little elbow grease, faith in your abilities, and a do-it-yourself mentality, a rewarding career in the world of music is not as impossible as it might seem.

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