



Ken Elkinson,
Opal
(August Son, 2004)

Ken Elkinson has created some wonderful music for the piano on Opal. Elkinson is the sole musician on the CD and the sound he creates is quite commanding.

There is a sense of familiarity to "Impression," with the music switching between two main themes. The melody swirls around in "Circle" and the momentary breaks between phrases emphasize this feeling. The phrasing of "Opal" shifts around a central theme and keeps returning to that core.

"Glance" is not a quiet piece and yet the images within the music are always just on the edge of the notes. The mood builds from there to give you a gentle autumn day in "Sienna." The arc started in "Glance" continues to run through "Augustine," which is passionate and very intense. There is a powerful romance in the music.

The opening notes of "Change" redirect that energy and the piece itself is less intense. The music expands as Elkinson moves onto "Orchid." The theme is broader, structured to give the piece a sense of dense vibrancy. The melodies change in "Indigo," as the themes from the two previous pieces are built on and blended together. "Afterglow" is a closer, starting off quietly and growing from there, becoming stronger as it brings you to the close of the day.

Opal is not a quiet set of piano music. It is often loud and intense, grabbing your attention as piece follows piece. The connections between the pieces are but one more reason to listen to this CD a few times over.

- Rambles
written by Paul de Bruijn