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Around the Globe in a Lullaby - Volume 1  
Ken Elkinson  
2013 / August Son Productions  
1.1 hours

Ken Elkinson's solo piano *Around the Globe in a Lullaby - Volume 1* is the first of two parts. His previous release, the box set *Music For Commuting, Vols. 1-6*, has generated a lot of buzz in the ambient music genre, but this is his first solo piano recording since 2009's *Link*. Elkinson's first album, *Midnight Conversation* (1996), was one of the first CDs I ever reviewed, so we go back a lot of years! I always really enjoy Elkinson's music, but some of his liner notes are classic with their tongue-in-cheek attitude and laugh-out-loud writing. This time around, Elkinson listed "20 sleep inducing facts about Ken sleeping" that include his preferred bedtime, how many pillows he sleeps with, and his missed nap opportunities over the years. He has also compiled a short history of each of the eighteen lullabies, which come from all over the world. A few are familiar, but most are not, making this album suitable for all age groups, not just children. Saying that this album is a bit of a snooze is truly a compliment!

The first lullaby is "Fi La Nanae Mi Bel Fiore," a haunting piece from Italy. Elkinson says it came out a little sadder than he intended, but it's absolutely gorgeous. Much of "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star" (UK) is improvised, but Elkinson plays the melody straight at least a couple of times. "Frere Jacques" (France) is the other well-known lullaby in the collection, and Elkinson's take is sweet and charming. "Dormite Ninito" from Honduras has a simple melody that conveys tenderness and love. "All the Pretty Little Horses" (USA) expresses sadness and longing, but is so beautiful! "Aludj Baba, Aludjal" (Hungary) has Gypsy roots and is a bit darker than some of the other songs - hauntingly beautiful. "Nenna Nenna" from Egypt is one of my favorites with its gentle rocking motion and sweet melody. I also really like "Ho Ho Watanay" (Canada/ Iroquois Indian), also a bit on the dark side. The traditional versions of "Sleep My Baby" from Nigeria have drums for accompaniment, but Elkinson's arrangement is very fluid and graceful. He closes the set with "O Sweetly Does My Baby Sleep" from Greece, a poignant yet elegant piece that leaves a pleasant bittersweet aftertaste.

It's great to hear Ken Elkinson back at the piano and I'll be looking forward to Volume 2 of *Around the Globe in a Lullaby*! Volume 1 will be available from KenElkinson.com, Amazon, iTunes, and CD Baby on August 6, 2013. Recommended for curing insomnia and getting children to fall asleep with a happy smile! This music is also very suitable for unwinding, relaxing or whenever some gentle piano music is welcomed.

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