

## Mp3 David Alstead - Pieces Of Piano



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David "encourages" the inclusion of pop sensibilities, jazz chordal structures and various seemingly inappropriate musical elements into a sometimes belligerent and unwilling classical music form; emotional and stirring 13 MP3 Songs CLASSICAL: Contemporary, CLASSICAL: New Age Details: "Pieces Of Piano" is Dave's second solo piano CD, and the music on it is a little bolder than his first CD "Piano For Both Ears", with a more venturesome spirit. Listeners will appreciate the classical influences that are obvious in David's musical style, which are the result of his many years of classical piano training. In addition however, with David's tendency to encourage the inclusion of pop sensibilities and jazz chordal elements and structures into the music, you are as likely to hear Billy Joel, or Keith Green, or Dave Brubeck hidden just beneath the surface. His writing has been recognized by internationally renowned instrumental quartet Zeitgeist as a winner of their Eric Stokes Song Contest. Here is a great recent review of "Pieces Of Piano". DAVID ALSTEAD Pieces of Piano Narrow People Music (2005) Generally, there are three types of piano players in the new age genre: one, the romanticists who work within a warm flowing motif, crafting memorable melodies, two, the neo-classicists who more or less follow the path of their named predecessors, whether they be Mozart, Beethoven, Debussy or others, and three, the impressionists/minimalists who weave subtle tone poems and paint sparse musical portraits, evoking introspection and reflection. There is, however, a less well-known fourth category. These are the piano players who defy classification and smash genres together as if they were musical atom colliders (those machines which supposedly prove the existence of quarks). These are the artists such as Bradley Sowash, Timothy Davey, and Mary Martin Stockdale brave explorers who switch time signatures and motifs in midstream, yet do so deftly enough so as not to leave the listener gasping for virtual air. Add to that latter list the name of one David Alstead, who hails from my Twin Cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis.

His recording Pieces of Piano is an energetic explosion of styles on which one is never quite sure where the musical road is leading but you realize you're in confident and self-assured hands all the same. Crisscrossing from neo-classical to straight-up new age to jazz/blues riffs, Alstead handles the transitions so seamlessly that if you play this in the background you might be unaware of the magic at work on the compositions, as the artist deftly switches mood, tempo, and motif consistently throughout the thirteen tracks. No mere silence filler recording this, although it is one hundred percent user friendly provided the user is no fan of mind-numbing valium e.g. Lloyd Weber show tunes. Opening with the wistful Nymph which flits and waltzes playfully, Alstead flirts with reflection on Sometimes I Feel before setting forth with a dramatic run on the ivories in mid-song. Flip Side manages to give a nod to free jazz and experimentalism while still remaining cheerily listenable, veering mid-song into introspective territory. Through the Falls displays Alstead's commanding presence in the neo-classical theater of performance, with amazing dexterity exhibited between left and right hand (overall, Alstead's talent and prowess, when analyzed and dissected, is more than considerable, if not even dazzling). His hands seem to be flying every which way all at once. He can just as easily slide into a bluesy vein such as on the closing track You Can Go Home Again which merges a saucy vibe with a more dramatic aspect. The straight ahead (when compared to many of the other pieces on the CD) Jazz in a Box struts its stuff, but even here Alstead allows the path to deviate into unfamiliar territory now and then, but always returning to the tracks jazzy/goodtime roots. The key to enjoying Pieces of Piano is the casting aside of preconceptions of what a new age or smooth jazz/contemporary instrumental piano release should sound like. The more constrained your vision of the mold is, the less likely you are to tune into Alstead's frequency. While not adventurous to the point of alienating mainstream music lovers, Pieces of Piano is still complex enough to raise the eyebrows of fans of Winston, Spielberg or Lanz. That's no knock on any of those artists, certainly. It's merely an expression of how unpredictable a journey Alstead takes the listener on with this album. I recommend the CD to those who don't require a detailed map but more just a general idea of where they are going to them, the trip and its unfolding mysteries are what makes it fun. Bill Binkelman Producer and Host Wind and Wire KFAI-FM Minneapolis and St. Paul, MN

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