

Equus Rising

By

Lisa Swerdlow

Written by

Steve Sheppard

I adore listening to the work of a debut artist, all the energy and intensity of a new project is in there, it's an exciting moment and **Lisa Swerdlow** will be glad to note that her intensity and passion has come through beautifully.

The first piece is entitled **Requiem (Song for Evelyn)**, a commanding and emotive composition that flows so powerfully, and I must mention at the juncture of 3 minutes 20 seconds, and I have to be specific here, you will find a perfect tempo change and some of the most delightful solo piano to feast on for all time.

Together is a real feel good arrangement, the energy is light and sun kissed, while the tempo has such a delicate, but purposeful flow to its construction. The performance here is also something to admire, it contains a real elevation of power at around the 2:20 minute mark that is so smoothly played, and mixed with real confidence and passion as well.

The title track is next and is of course called **Equus Rising**; there is a slow deep opening that seems to entice us in further. It is almost like something is about to wake, and it sure does, in an almost *Cristofori's Dream* styled segment at 1:20 mark that *David Lanz* would be proud of, the piece really picks up movement and pace. At 6:41, this is the longest and indeed the most fascinating track off the release and is indeed one of my favourite compositions from the album. Swerdlow puts everything into her main musical canvas, and it works gloriously. As a solo piano performer, Swerdlow satisfies the needs of her listeners in all ways with this opus, the alternation of speed and pace, the power and grace, all make up a superb performance, and one

you could easily ride through valleys and across fields on a pure white horse to this fantastic arrangement.

On the piece **Sanctuary**, we have a delightfully all-encompassing opus of sound. There is warmth here that is created by a cleverly crafted performance and a melody that manifests a safe harbour of a composition for us all to enter and enjoy in safety.

Mujer Divina is up next, and there is a little change in style for this piece that celebrates the divine nature of the woman. The ever so slight Jazz motifs were a delight, and the performance on keys within this arrangement are quite breath taking, this is one that you will wish to revisit over and over again, even if it is to take pleasure in the many and varied nuances contained within.

Our footfalls across the walk ways of this album have been picturesque and colourful and that remains so with the piece, **Waking the Light**. The use of minor chords here is perfection and the narrative drawn by Swerdlow's skill on the piano makes this a truly memorable moment of musical magic.

I have said this many times, but the interpretation of storms within a musical narrative, is one that I so deeply love and respect. **Lisa Swerdlow** has thus created a masterpiece on the track **Sudden Storm**. Listen to the dramatic fluency here, this is a slice of genius, the constant rhythm and the changing patterns of chords, the sheer amazing power and movement here is utterly stunning, it is as if we are dancing with the storm itself, and yes, this is my number one offering from the album.

So we come to the final goodbye from **Lisa Swerdlow** and her debut album **Equus Rising**. Before we leave this realm created by her, she has one more musical gift to see us along on our way, this present is entitled **Unfolding**. This is a real mixture of light and shade, sensual, yet intense and it must be also said, what an incredibly emotive way to leave us.

Equus Rising is a rare album of texture and strength, the eight compositions on this release are all extremely enjoyable in their own right, but as a debut offering it is a remarkable place to start. **Lisa Swerdlow's** performances have slight essences of *David Lanz* and *Michele McLaughlin* at times, and I think both of those artists who I know fairly well, would be pretty impressed with

this brand new album from the artist. **Equus Rising** is a solo piano album that contains such a riveting musical narrative, that one listen will simply not be enough.