

# **Piano<sup>2</sup>**

**By**

**Doug Hammer**

**Written by**

**Steve Sheppard**

**Doug Hammer** has been a guiding light for all us of those who truly appreciate all things piano for years now, with such classics as *Celtique* and my personal favourite *Heart* among many others; he is back to thrill us again with a brand new release entitled **Piano<sup>2</sup>**.

This wonderful new musical journey of **Piano<sup>2</sup>** is a real step into a whole new realm for the artist. Hammers 13<sup>th</sup> release has a great self-descriptive introduction, as he describes his work as “*two pianos, four hands and a whole lotta fun*”, so let’s travel this fascinating corridor with the artist right now.

The first port of call is the smooth and calming **Shimmer in Disaster**, its delightful jazz motifs won me over instantly, and to follow that up with **You’re the One** was a move of sheer genius; this almost anthem like opus continued to create a powerful energy of compositional craft on this most acceptable of sojourns.

**The Sunshine in You** could be the next TV theme for a show like *Cheers* and the folk like melodies on the following piece called **Across the Plains**, took me directly back to my time in the Midwest. Now I know it’s an old and probably worn out cliché, but there is literally something for everyone on this album, for example try the distinctly empowering **Reaching for the Moon**, a track where anything is possible, and one that highlights the skills of the artist and the purpose for this album brilliantly.

The funky charm of **Strut Your Stuff** is an addictive composition of both humour and style, while **Chasin' Possum** is just unadulterated fun and frolics, indeed; rag never sounded so good.

The reflective mood is also catered for on this album with the quite emotional **A Rainy Night With You**, a song that eased the sadness of my day slightly, and a track that I felt could be turned into a love ballad with ease. Indeed the more one listens to this album, the more you get drawn into its excellent musical narrative, especially when you come across a composition like **The Uncertainty Principle**, here is an arrangement that caught my attention, I particularly adored the construction and crafted build which would go on to create something truly special and quite moving for me.

**Round and Round** does exactly what it says on the can, and while the melody elevates slowly, the principal mood of this track flows around us in an undeniable energetic way, this flows with an abundance of power and prestige within the next offering called **Fanfare**.

Hammers skill over the years has always to bring his audience truly listenable and accessible music, you can find that within pieces like the mournful **Celtic Heart**, a composition that pulls you back to a time of simplicity and unconditional love, he follows that up with one of my personal favourites off the album entitled **Walking with You**, a track played with such class and a wonderful open heart.

The penultimate offering is called **Shine Bright** as indeed it does, but in a heartfelt way, perhaps of experience, the performance here is sublime and utterly brilliant, and builds into something quite breathtakingly superb.

It is indeed incredible to think that this journey with the artist is about to be concluded, this final offering from Hammer that takes us out of the album is called **The Last Goodbye**. This is one of the most emotional performances I have heard from the artist and it certainly brought a tear to my eye of this emotive day, I have no doubt that this particular piece will be regarded by Hammer fans as a beautiful stand out piece off the release, it is with me.

**Piano<sup>2</sup>** is a clever album played by one of the most professional and intelligent pianists on the planet. **Doug Hammer** has pulled together a splendid 15 piece

album and given us the ever eager listener something to remember for the longest time, a crafted and well thought out project indeed, and after all, if you can't jam with yourself, who can you jam with? A release that is impossible not to recommended.