

Blue Butterfly

By

Darla Bower

Written by

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I have now listened to this latest release by **Darla Bower** called **Blue Butterfly** no less than three times in a row, there is just something about it that creates such a beautiful sense of ambience that I cannot leave alone. That is a truly wonderful reality for any album to have, and this album has it in abundance. **Darla Bower** plays with such smoothness and its calming repose creates for us eager listeners, something so very addictive indeed.

From the first point of departure **Woodland Fairy Dance**, we are gifted a journey that will create a serene and magical landscape within our hearts, the performance here does what it says on the can, and allows us to visualise a wonderful forest glade and the fluttering of gossamer wings as Fairy's fly by.

Blue Butterfly is dedicated to Darla's mother, who passed in the same year as my mother 2017, and indeed I would agree with the artist it does change you forever. This is, as you would expect, an incredibly deep arrangement and one that is very moving as well, but even so, there is a wonderful colour of performance that radiates from the composition.

A very sweet short form track is up next and one that celebrates the life of the artist's dog and entitled **Gentleman Bailey**. There is a quite lovely symbiotic major minor segment here that I love; the piece is far reaching musically despite its shortness in duration.

I remember listening to the **Mourning Doves** during my times in the states, what an incredible sound they indeed do make. Here Bower manifests a deliberately slow tempo that at times is quite dark, but there is a fine

juxtaposition being played out here, with opposing light energies that flow through this musical narrative, in what I regard as a truly clever arrangement.

November Skies brings us a fine representation of this time of year, autumn is my favourite time of year and the colours are quite amazing, those of us who are lucky enough to live in warmer places will get this. Bowers skill at drawing a wonderfully warming composition from the subject matter must be applauded, and the melody is as bright as a November morning.

The gentle nature of performance by **Darla Bower** on **Falling Petals** is nothing more than timeless and inventive genius. This is one of those pieces that you may scroll back to listen again to, many times over, and with ease one of the most melodic offerings off the album.

I used to love to watch the elegance of swans swimming, and then marvel at their most awkward nature on land; here on **The Swan's Song**, we have a track that has a mournful repose, and then from its imploring narrative perhaps something is being done for the last time ever, this is one of the most emotional offerings on the release.

It is now time for **Sleepy Star Lullaby**, so close your eyes and rest your head the sandman is coming, it's time for bed. I say that purely with reference to this track being the one I actually did fall asleep to on my first listen, it has that kind of mesmeric effect.

The pristine start here portrays with ease **Spring Rain**. This is my second favourite season and the rains are always welcome. The tender and extremely careful performance is indeed redolent of the subject matter, which is something we have come to expect from a true multi-natured artist like **Darla Bower**.

So we plunge deeper into the weave of the overall nature of the album and we arrive at one of my personal favourites entitled **Blue Day**. This is a splendid mood filled composition, one layered with some particularly nice blues motifs that create a certain depth and artistic quality to the piece.

The penultimate track on this quality album, is an arrangement of a timeless hymn which most will know, it is called **The Lord's My Shepard**, the inventive side of Bower comes to the fore again within this offering.

So amazingly we have arrived at the last doorway of the album and this last musical gift is entitled **Prelude - New Beginning**, It could be a track that answers an unanswerable question, is this the beginning of the end, or the end of the beginning! One thing is sure, we will all make many transitions along our own personal life times and beyond, and this clever musical gift will no doubt help us along our way, in what is a truly crafted ending of a composition.

Blue Butterfly could accurately be described as an utterly cathartic journey for the artist. This is one incredibly stylish performance and an album that I am sure Darla's mother would have been extremely proud of, perhaps actually is. Technically sublime, the crafted and timely use of the pause, a combination of reflective melodies and all arranged with such care and attention to detail. This may have been one of the hardest albums for **Darla Bower** to release, but one to look back on with a smile, because solo piano albums really don't come any better than this.