



Art Lande, solo piano - While She Sleeps (Piano Lullabies) - Blue Coast Records

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Art Lande, solo piano - While She Sleeps (Piano Lullabies) - Blue Coast Records stereo-only hybrid SACD BCRSA 2012a, 45:18 ***:**

This is a very unusual album from both musical and technical standpoints (it should be, retailing for \$40). Grammy-nominated Art Lande is best known as pianist, but he is also a composer, drummer, improviser and educator. He's performed with such people as Joe Henderson, Bobby Hutcherson, Charlie Haden, Mark Isham, Jan Garbarek and Paul McCandless. Lande had a band, Rubisa Patrol, which performed, toured and recorded for many years. He currently leads many workshops and camps in piano, improvisation and ear training.

For this solo album Blue Coast Records selected a specially-tuned 1885 Steinway and their purist hi-res recording approach was unsullied by any enhancements such as reverb, EQ or other effects. The mics are very close to the piano and the object was not to make it sound like you were five rows back in the concert hall but more as though your head was under the lid somewhere. Blue Coast calls their acoustic recordings an Extended Sound Environment.

The sound pickup is appropriate because the music is very quiet, simple and subtle, and due to the amazing resolution, thousands of tiny timbral details are clearly delineated instead of being lost. The tempi are mostly very slow, often communicating the feeling that the choice of notes to strike comes directly from Lande's brain in the instant. These 14 tracks sound to me they would be ideal for music therapy use; certainly more truly musical than 99% of new age piano noodling. His style strikes me as a sort of cross between Paul Bley and George Winston, but more tonal than the first and less predictable than the second. This is truly a piano recording for piano lovers; I'm sure it's going to get plenty of playing at CES and other audio shows. Even the standard CD layer sonics are exemplary. Surround fans shouldn't try to create a surround field with ProLogic II or Circle Surround, because it will just lower the super-clean and transparent piano sound of this stereo-only SACD.

TrackList: Tenderly, Fool on the Hill, Norwegian Wood, Silver Dream, Window Taps, Smoke Gets In Your Eyes, Ancestors D'Italia, Old Folks at Home, You Are My Sunshine, Burgundy Dream, Snow Dance, Ol' Man River, After Midnight, In a Sentimental Mood.

- John Sunier

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