Peter Cavallo - Of night and light and the half light (2019)



1.Had I the heavens 03:49 2.Embroidered cloths 01:16 3.Golden and silver light 03:14 4.The blue and the dim and the dark 04:16 5.Of night and light and the half track 03:05 6.I would (if I could) 03:08 7.Cloths under your feet 03:48 8.But I 3:31 9.Have only my dreams 02:41 10.Under 02:28 11.Tread softly because you tread on my dreams 05:14 12.Requiem for the melancholy 04:10

Peter Cavallo's highly anticipated return this year brings a concept album inspired by the words from the poem 'Aedh, wishes for the cloths of heaven', by William Yeats.

It makes sense to read through the poem if you haven't yet, or to remind yourself, as you listen to these compositions. At the same time, it's perfectly understandable to escape into this music for what you hear within it on face value. As is always the way with Peter's work, the music seems to breathe life and emotion into the room, utilizing quiet as much as colour, making the most out of every moment in order to express a level of truth and uninhibited artistry. Had I the heavens as the opener is all of this and more. A mesmerising, passionate journey from stillness to high energy, then back again.

Had I the heavens' embroidered cloths, Enwrought with golden and silver light, The blue and the dim and the dark cloths Of night and light and the half light, I would spread the cloths under your feet: But I, being poor, have only my dreams; I have spread my dreams under your feet; Tread softly because you tread on my dreams. – Aedh, wishes for the cloths of heaven, by William Yeats.

Embroidered cloths sees the instrumental set-up vary and reflect the change perhaps from vastness to detail and specificity. Golden and silver light then welcomes the pure power of Cavallo's musicianship with two freely meandering yet soulfully paired roles; the two kinds of light, working in unison – though in different ways.

The blue and the dim and the dark utilizes similar levels of contrast but does so in a structurally powerful way – presenting a complex and ever-changing story-line that again reflects the underlying emotions of this moment within the poem. Cavallo's skill shines all the more brightly as quickness and delicacy appear intermittently. This piece is deeply moving and a personal favourite in hindsight.

Of night and light and the half light as a title track offers a rightfully impressive display of musicality that's as complex as it is calming. I would (if I could) is then an unexpected highlight – you can hear the gentle thud of the piano keys, thus bringing you right into the room where the music and the story-line first met. Cloths under your feet later offers a striking sense of rising anticipation, of sudden movement and energy after a mildly unsettled calm; and a subsequent downfall that seems a little like a feather falling through the air. There's a brief but overwhelming sense of sadness delivered at this point.

But I is a composition that removes the being poor from the equation and drives with a reflection of self and quiet isolation – plenty of space helps build that breath-like aura, or give the music a mellow pulse. You can even see this rhythm in the waveform itself.

Have only my dreams takes on something of a trance-vibe in the beginning, quickness and smoothness contrast and collide again, creating a blissfully dreamlike mood that perfectly encapsulates the line it links to. Under then brings back a hint of unsettling darkness – the organ sound has a heavy depth, though the choir of voices hits with immense lightness and humanity at this late stage within the album. It feels like a live performance, in a church – very real and compelling to witness.

Tread softly because you tread on my dreams offers more of that classic, recognisable Peter Cavallo rhythm and breath-like sense of movement as this beautiful composition and performance gradually gathers momentum and passion – before falling back away to do it all over again.

In the final moments, Requiem for the melancholy veers away from the poem's threads and refers to the composer's own experience of personal loss and difficulty. There's a fine balance between light and darkness at work, the rise and the fall, the journey and its end. Again, complexity suggests a whole world of detail and layers – as is the nature of a human life. A beautifully sad piece but one that accompanies well the inevitable heartache that comes with true loss.

To even have it cross your mind to create an entire album of music following the lines of a short and timeless poem such as this is incredibly rare and creatively free in itself. Peter Cavallo's passion for music and the arts is limitless and often refreshingly unpredictable. This project is yet another that's something of a dream to lose yourself within for a while.
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