

Jonathan Fritzen - Ballads (2017)

Written by bluesever

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1 *The Journey* 2 *Today* 3 *The Fiddler* 4 *Let It Go* 5 *Just Be* 6 *Beyond The Sun*
7 *Sahara* 8 *Countryside* 9 *In The Zone* 10 *Eternal* 11 *Serenity* 12 *Rainbows*
Jonathan Fritzen - Piano

Swedish keyboardist/pianist/composer Jonathan Fritzen stills works his charm on us as effectively now as he did 9 years ago when he happened onto the smooth jazz scene with his debut album *Love Birds*, and his new release *Ballads* serves as a reminder as to why his style and sense of what works still works for us.

This album is abundantly stocked with some of the sweetest melodies I've heard in years in this genre and puts on display Fritzen's skill, professionalism, and total musicianship. There are soft caresses and the total embrace of you the listener. It's so serene that the occasional spark of edginess found in tunes like "Today" and "Let It Go" in the form of distortion guitar comes almost as a surprise when taking the entire album into account. As its name implies, this is an album of slow, romantic, soul-stirring sensuality, charisma, and beauty. No finger-popping, foot-tapping, head-bopping grooves here — and it works out perfectly.

The album opens with a remarkably sedate, gentle, and melodic track entitled "The Journey" which initially takes on a lullaby-like quality before morphing into a simply sweet and soulful stroll. It then dances slowly and intently all the way through the finale "Rainbows," singing the type of poetic story that has worked on hearts forever.

Ballads is completely comprised of Fritzen originals, and he plays all instruments except guitars, violin, and flute. His piano stands out as the commanding instrument here, and his approach to

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it is simply majestic.

In addition to the previously mentioned lead track "The Journey" and "Let It Go," my faves here would have to also include "Today," "Countryside," "In the Zone," "Eternal," and so many of the remaining tracks on this 12-track musical gift to us.

This, my friends, is time-out music. Time out for the replenishing of the soul, mind, and body. Time out to get in touch with you and everything around you through reflection and introspection. It's as therapeutic as it is entertaining. Trust me: You need this. Listen and witness its delicate, soft-spoken power. ---Ronald Jackson, thesmoothjazzride.com

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