

Steve Kuhn Trio - Pavane for a Dead Princess (2006)

Written by bluesever

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01. *I'm Always Chasing Rainbows* (7:26)
02. *Pavane for a Dead Princess* (6:30)
03. *Moon Love - Symphony #5 2nd Movement* (6:53)
04. *One Red Rose Forever - Ich Liebe Dich* (5:36) [play](#)
05. *Swan Lake* (6:13)
06. *Nocturne in Eb Major Op9, No2* (6:42)
07. *Reverie* (8:13)
08. *Prelude in E Minor Op28 No4* (5:47)
09. *Full Moon and Empty Arms - Piano Concerto #2 3rd movement* (6:55)
10. *Pavane* (6:36)
11. *Lullaby* (3:37) [play](#)

Musicians:

Steve Kuhn: piano;

David Finck: bass;

Billy Drummond: drums.

Anything that pianist Steve Kuhn does is likely to be beautifully executed and tasteful, and *Pavane for a Dead Princess* is no exception. Here, he and his empathic collaborators David Finck (bass) and Billy Drummond (drums) address themselves to the stock classical repertoire, jazzing up eleven popular pieces from Debussy, Rachmaninov, Tchaikowsky, Grieg, Brahms and Chopin. (There are actually two "Pavane"s—the title track, by Ravel, and Faure's version.) The result is nothing less than terrific. These are not classical melodies sitting stiffly on a jazz beat; instead, the trio digs deep into the structure of these well-worn compositions and thoroughly explores and expands them. Who knew "Swan Lake" or "Fantasy Impromptu" could swing like that? Or that Brahms's treacherous "Lullaby" would make such a moving ballad? Listeners familiar with this music in its original form will get the biggest kick out of this release, and those who've been intimate with Chopin's piano scores will especially appreciate the brilliance of

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Kuhn's improvisations. But any listener can enjoy what happens to strong, beautiful melodies in expert hands like these. The recording is clear and warm, the pacing ideal. The musicians are in peak form, sounding positively inspired, and they swing like mad. What a delight! --*Dr. Judith Schlesinger. AAJ.*

Pianist Steve Kuhn, accompanied by David Finck and Billy Drummond, explore classical works by a number of top composers from the 19th and 20th centuries on this Japanese release, though they are used as a launching pad for improvisation. Maurice Ravel's "Pavane for a Dead Princess" is recast as a soft samba, also incorporating a bit of an earlier standard that was derived from the French Impressionist's piece, "The Lamp Is Low." Chopin is obviously one of Kuhn's favorite classical composers, as three of his features, highlighted by a dreamy setting of "Nocturne in E Flat Major, Op. 9, No. 2." He brightens the tempo of Claude Debussy's "Reverie" while retaining its lyricism, while slowing Johannes Brahms' "Lullaby" to a crawl and demonstrating how a master jazz pianist utilizes space as an element of improvisation. Classical purists are always upset with jazz arrangements of "their" music, but anyone who loves both musical worlds will appreciate Steve Kuhn's thoughtful arrangements of music that has easily stood the test of time. --*Ken Dryden, All Music Guide.*

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