



The Boy Who Flew Away by Johannes Bornlof

Reviewed by Zoe



Instrumental/Fantasy

Give a summary without spoilers!

While there is no clearly outlined story behind these nine songs, given that they have no words, the titles give something of an indication. The story appears to be that of a fairy tale about a young boy who, well, flew away- the story has characters, such as the Paper Birch, and he eventually makes it to a strange other world above the clouds. The song "Friend or Foe," appears to be a reference to some kind of conflict, perhaps someone he met there. It ends when the boy returns to the world he knows, in a song called, well, "The Return". The story is very loose, and it leaves a lot to the imagination, which is my favorite thing about it.

What drew you to this album?

I love this album so much. The music is whimsical, nostalgic, beautiful and imaginative. Listening to it gives one a sense that they are walking through a Pixar movie. While I checked to see if this is the soundtrack to something- perhaps an animated short- that does not appear to be the case. It is a simple, creative and very inspiring album of songs. My favorites are "A Thousand Moons Ago," because the theremins give me a sense that we are witnessing some sort of prologue while floating through space, and "The Paper Birch," because it is so very pretty and fills me with a very fluttery feeling.

Did it remind you of something that you've previously listened to?

It reminds me of Pixar movies, honestly. The soundtrack is very orchestral, but it also doesn't sound like something you would hear behind just any film- it's not an epic fantasy soundtrack, if that explains it. It doesn't sound much like any of Johannes Bornlof's other work, which is mostly soft piano that ends up in the background of aesthetic youtube videos. I would say it is comparable, in a sense, to Eric Kinney's work, as he uses similar instruments and has a similar knack for melodies. If I had to pick one that is the most similar, I would name his song "Meadow Song in G for Birds and Piano," which captures the same sweetness of tone that Bornlof does, though in this instance his instruments are living birds. The album also reminds me a bit of Joe Hisaishi's Tale of the Princess Kaguya soundtrack, as I think Bornlof's "Pirates and Princesses," and Hisaishi's "Mountain Hamlet," have similar characteristics, however Tale of the Princess Kaguya is far more orchestral.

To whom would you recommend this album?

I would recommend this to anyone who loves instrumental music as more than background noise. This album is truly magical, and makes excellent writing inspiration for fantasy settings. I think it would also be a lovely place to look for any dancers who need a song to choreograph to. The songs have a lot of movement and life in them, and if you like instrumental music but want to branch out beyond original soundtracks, this is a great place to start.

Overall, did you like it and would you recommend it to others?

I would absolutely recommend it to others. The simplicity and innocence of the melodies just catches you and holds you there, and I've yet to find an album quite like this one.

Anything else that you would like to add to this review? What made you choose it? Did you like the cover? Was it recommended to you? Did you find it at the library?

I found this album as an admirer of Johannes Bornlof's other work- I love instrumental music- and I will share it with anyone who listens. The album cover art is spectacularly beautiful, I hope Bornlof paid his artist commissions well.