



Full Moon Music

Armen Donelian | Sunnyside Records

By [Elliott Simon](#)

The third chapter in pianist Armen Donelian's Grand Ideas trilogy, *Full Moon Music*, stands alone in its ability to allow the listener to bond with the artist on a most personal level. Consisting of fourteen freely improvised solo piano portraits, the program masterfully tip-toes, walks, and runs along the thinnest of lines separating jazz and classical performance. Donelian is intimately familiar with the subtle nuances of his gorgeously warm 19th Century reconditioned Steinway and it serves as the vehicle for his extemporaneous expositions.

The lovely flowing lines of the introductory "Preamble" that beautifully segue into "A Call to the Spirits" hook you in until you are slightly jarred by the somewhat discordant "Witch's Cauldron." Each piece, save for the eclectic yet compelling excursion "On the Dark Side of the Moon," with its rag-like middle, and the multi-hued "Blues Montage," is a brief mood piece that reflects Donelian's inner self expressed through his flawless touch. "Nostalgia" evokes the requisite longing without being too schmaltzy, while "Beer Drinker's Anthem" is a comical paean to the amber liquid. The quick-moving "Springtime in the Rose Garden" uncovers the bustling behind the beauty, as opposed to evoking pastoral scenes, just as "Young Asses at Play" literally gallops through a spirited pianistic romp.

Where Donelian truly excels is in his use of subtlety, be it through time or sustain, to involve the listener in his own musings. I found myself listening to a piece and letting the music take my mind where it would and then checking the title to ascertain if our journeys matched. At times they did and at times they didn't, but either way this is the type of album that is best experienced by closing your eyes with no other distractions and allowing the music to lead the way.



Track Listing: Preamble; A Call To The Spirits; The Witch's Cauldron; Nostalgia; Fractured Dream; On The Dark Side Of The Moon; When A Girl Dreams Of Love; Beer Drinkers' Anthem; Springtime In The Rose Garden; Barren Landscape; Young Asses At Play; Blues Montage; Pilgrimage; Redemption.

Personnel: Armen Donelian: piano.