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A Place In The Sun by Ann Sweeten, reviewed by RJ Lannan
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Label: Orange Band Records

In the Hands of God

I remember reviewing *Sapphire Days*, and hoping that the next release by pianist **Ann Sweeten** would come soon. I am pleasantly surprised with her latest offering **A Place in the Sun**. Not only is it delightful fervent fare, but

somewhere along the way Ann found a wonderful flute accompanist in Trisha Craig. These are thoughtful melodies with some first-rate complementary orchestration and Ann's contemplative piano. There is quite a difference in the timbre of this album versus *Sapphire Days*. There is more strength and more emotion in this new one.

It stands to reason that any traveler along life's road is bound to come upon obstacles. Ann has surmounted those obstacles and it has made her stronger. For Ann is a breast cancer survivor and any doubts, any moments of disillusion are fading and replacing them is a fortitude balanced by love and hope. *A Place in the Sun* is Ann's testimonial that the journey has a beginning, a middle and an end. Hopefully, the end is always on the horizon.

A Place in the Sun opens with the musical entreaty *Shepherd Me*. There is the beauty of a thousand sunsets in this melody. You can almost see the golden glow in your mind. Gentle piano and electronic strings tenders a prayer asking for strength and guidance as Ann offers her surrender to her God. When in doubt many of us turn to our faith. No matter what the faith, the only guideline is that we believe in something greater than ourselves.

The cool, crisp wind begins to blow and the color palette of the land starts to change in the song *Shades of September*. The red and gold painted days shorten and the cobalt-colored dusk comes quickly. Ann's bittersweet tune goes along with the changes. The seasons are the

time clock for the planet and the days tick on by in this flowing melody.

[Echoes](#) is a reflective tune in which the past memories and present thoughts are precariously balanced against the future. Doubt is weighed against hope and the pendulum finally swings in the right direction. This is a poignant tune of synth and bright piano that is made for thinking. And hoping and wishing.

Trisha Craig's soulful silver flute adds a note of optimism in the song [Summer Tomorrows](#). Drifting along with the piano, the flute adds hope in the long journey through Ann's season of transition. The music somehow allays the fears if only for a moment. But in that moment one can feel triumphant. This is one of the best songs on the album.

[A Pillow in the Sky](#) isn't just about cloud watching. The music here is very light as the piano and flute drift around in the melody. I think the song is about finding solace: a kind of peace if you will. This dreamy tune became a favorite as it reminded me that sometimes you do find answers. It's rare thing and it is to be celebrated.

The tune I liked the most was one called [Ashes](#). Of all the songs on *A Place in the Sun* this is one of the most heartrending to listen to. It sounded as if all the hopes and dreams you possessed are burnt up and the only thing remaining is a cupful of ashes. It is a life distilled, cooked down, completely reduced. It is surprising that you can burn a whole tree and end up with just a bucket of ashes. Ann put a lot of feeling into this one.

Ann Sweeten's album had me in mind of a Gary Lamb CD called *Lavender Skies*, a very enjoyable listen. Ann however gave it a lot more emotion and depth. Her winning attitude serves her well in the physical word as well as in the higher planes. Her strength of conviction is to be applauded and her new album is an experience that is joyful in the literal sense of the word.

Rating: Very Good -

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