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Simcock, Gwilym: Good Days at Schloss Elmau

Being a world renowned, improvising musician definitely has its perks. According to Welsh pianist and composer Gwilym Simcock, while it might not exactly be the most lucrative profession, the opportunity to make music and travel around the world has certainly taken him to some unique places. Case in point, his latest disc of solo piano recordings entitled *Good Days at Schloss Elmau* recorded in a single day at the prestigious Schloss Elmau resort and spa, which is nestled deep within a nature reserve in Bavaria. Imagine waking up every morning and being able to sit down at the piano and compose music on the spot, all the while enjoying the pristine views of the surrounding mountains and countryside. This is what helped inspire these eight, superb, original compositions.



Unlike playing with other musicians in a trio or a quartet for example, the challenge for Simcock as a pianist was to reach in and draw the inspiration and energy from himself as he attempted to blur the lines between the art of composing and improvisation, all on his own. As a listener I have to admit that I've never really been all that keen on 'solo' piano recordings as a rule. I've always preferred to hear the piano in more of a standard jazz ensemble, such as a trio, quartet etc...However, anytime Simcock has presented his music in this fashion, any initial feelings of trepidation I may have felt have always been quickly overcome by the sheer beauty and grace of his playing and this recording is certainly no exception. For almost an hour I was absolutely captivated by the magic spell that was expertly woven throughout the course of this recording. Simcock's ability to evenly balance his supreme technical ability with poignant, lyrical textures has always been his strength. You can hear how seamless that balance is on "These Are The Good Days", "Wake Up Call", "Plain Song" and the stunning, twelve and half minute "Can We Still Be Friends?".

With *Good Days at Schloss Elmau* Gwilym Simcock has delivered another extraordinary effort for fans of jazz and classical music to devour. One listen to this enchanting musical journey and you'll know why he's getting mentioned in the same breath as the likes of Brad Mehldau and Keith Jarrett and why Chick Corea has dubbed him "an original" and "a creative genius".

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Reviewer: [Ryan Sparks](#)

Score: ★★★★★

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