

22 Piano Tales is the third full-length solo piano album from French pianist/composer Galya, following *If Only....* (2009) and *Key of Dreams* (2011). A classically-trained pianist from a very early age through college and beyond, Galya's music is melodic and accessible yet complex enough to reveal new subtleties each time you listen. The twenty-two Tales are all relatively short with the longest piece clocking in at 2:46 and the shortest at 1:16 - about the same length as most of Chopin's Preludes. Each piece is a gem, each telling its story with emotion, a beautiful playing style, and an abundance of heart. Sometimes light and breezy and sometimes much more serious or even sad, I love this album more every time I listen to it (about ten times so far!). And there is good news for pianists - the sheet music for all of the songs on the album is available from Galya's website!

22 Piano Tales begins with "Fragile," a graceful and poignant piece that lets you know that this is going to be a very special listening experience. "Live in Love" expresses a blissful kind of happiness where dreams come true and anything is possible. "Merci" is a very warm and heartfelt "thank you" to someone very special. "Turning the Page" is a favorite and seems to be about moving forward confidently but with a little fear of the unknown. I love "My Angel," a tender love song that comes from the heart. "Adieu" is a painful goodbye - dark and absolutely gorgeous with a so much emotion packed into two short minutes. "Happy Birthday" is a sweet take on the classic birthday song. "Lullaby" is another favorite - gently rhythmic and soothing. "Now and Forever" is a bit more abstract and improvisational but very evocative. "Prelude" has a haunting and melancholy tone that touches deeply. "Eventide" is a quiet and atmospheric sound painting in shades of misty blue-gray. Has a more elegant arrangement of "Frere Jacques" than Galya's "Brother John" ever graced our ears? "Legende du Vent Doux" is in constant graceful motion - gentle but purposeful. "Good Evening to You" is warm, light and cheerful - a chance meeting with a friend (another favorite!). "Night Wind" brings the album to an intense and beautiful close. Where's that "replay" button?

22 Piano Tales makes it official that Galya is one of my favorite artists. Combining her rigorous classical training with her original contemporary compositions gives her a unique voice and the playing chops to effectively express whatever she chooses - a wonderful combination! 22 Piano Tales is available from <http://www.galya.fr>, Amazon, iTunes, and CD Baby. Very highly recommended!

Kathy Parsons

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