

Minor 7th Reviews

Peter Ciluzzi "Still Without Words" 2016 CandyRat Records

If you've been following acoustic fingerstyle guitar music the past five years, you know what an incredible stable of artists Candyrat Records keeps rolling out. Perhaps made famous by Andy McKee's YouTube videos, the label has a knack for releasing great music from talented players. The latest release from Peter Ciluzzi, *Still Without Words*, is special for not only the playing, but the instrument – a world-class handmade guitar by Ciluzzi himself. Luthier and player, with sublime beauty and taste. Like most modern players, Ciluzzi uses tapping and percussive techniques – though not as much tapping as many of his contemporaries - and not one of the 12 songs is in standard tuning. Chords are made much easier this way, allowing a wider tonal palette. Ciluzzi's playing is easy and smooth, and never rushed or trying to impress. I like his easily defined melody for each song, but he plays in and around the melody to give enough variation to make each tune interesting. The CD opens with "A Perfect Unison," a musical study of playing two of the same note to make a perfect interval, or perfect unison. "Something About Circles" undulates in tempo from quick to slow, giving the listener an opportunity to go around and around. "Where Things Come From" is a playful mix of picking, tapping, and percussion with a thumping bass line. "Easy Does It" uses some nice arpeggios with subtle harmonics. "Seven Four" is written in 7/4 time, giving some interesting melodic twists. "Shady Pete" has a funky groove, and Ciluzzi's picking technique throughout the CD gives many of the songs a noticeable groove. This disk is full of clean playing, really sweet melodies, and Ciluzzi and his guitar sound like one. It's got a permanent home in my iTunes!

Peter Ciluzzi "Music Without Words" 2008 CandyRat Records

Peter Ciluzzi builds his own steel-string guitars and plays his own compositions on this CD. He fits in well with the rest of CandyRat's guitar roster, many of whom play atmospheric solo pieces in altered tunings. Ciluzzi does this, but distinguishes himself with a sensitive delivery that draws the listener in. "Nocturne" is easily one of the best tracks, due to Ciluzzi's strength as a composer. Things get a bit lighter on "Gospel," although the low bass strings create a pensive feel (Ciluzzi most often tunes his bass strings down a full third or fourth, putting them in the register of a baritone guitar). "Sojourn" features strong melodic lines, played both vertically across the fingerboard and horizontally (i.e., tending to stay on one string). True to its title, "Elegy" evokes sadness. "Soliloquy" follows, recalling good times in the company of friends. Ciluzzi's tribute to Michael Hedges, "March," uses some of Hedges's techniques, including slaps and octave runs. At least two tunes on this disc, "Aria" and "Isola," were composed for settings other than solo guitar. Their inclusion reveals more about the breadth of Ciluzzi's musical interests; perhaps his future recordings will have some vocals or ensemble pieces. Peter Ciluzzi is an individualistic, yet very listenable, artist. He bears watching, which you can do at www.facebook.com/peterciluzzi (videos of Ciluzzi playing several pieces from this disc are posted on this site).

Bridge Guitar Reviews

A new guitarist on the CandyRat label is Peter Ciluzzi. The style Peter Ciluzzi presents is different from most guitarists on the CandyRat Records label. Peter Ciluzzi is more a poet and creator of atmosphere on his guitar. His compositions touches ones soul very deep with an excellent choice of guitar pennings. All the cuts are written in altered tunings, and it's a wonderful journey of the unconscious mind in poetic written sound escapades. Peter Ciluzzi describes his music as inner reflections of what's happening in his life, as beautiful painted landscapes in any part of the world. It's an exceptional gift to play so much music with so less notes. A truly talented guitarist who is able to touch a person's soul with so much warmth and impact. All the music which flows out of his hands, has that magical feeling of tenderness, an outstanding connection with nature and the reflections direct drawn from the inner force, the heart. All pieces demonstrate a serenity while his guitar just gently cuddles forwards into a new experiment. Personally I think it is one of the best guitar CD's I've heard for a long time. The title of the CD says it all "Music Without Words". A truly gifted guitarist but foremost a first-class composer and musician.

Folk & Acoustic Music Exchange Reviews

Antoine Dufour/Craig D'Andrea/Peter Ciluzzi Concert DVD, 2009 Candyrat Records

CandyRat is a blazingly hot label featuring a new crop of guitarists destined to be regarded as some of the best of the moment, hopefully longer. I've reviewed the very talented Antoine DuFour before (here), and this DVD has him along with two label compadres. The set opens with Peter Ciluzzi, who favors a mellower approach, more a Towner-ish chamber sound rich with harmonics and a fair amount of the tapping so common to the new wave. Ciluzzi's pieces are short but tasty, classicalist in intent but a good deal more modern than any Romantic composer. Music for a rainy night or overcast day, the cuts are evocative, not toe-tapping; impressions, not delineations, and neither urgent nor enervated but perhaps a skosh too brief for their own good. His body-tapping and string dampings are subtle, very occasionally the slightest bit outré, always returning right back to the pastelline etchings set moodily in the fog and lowering day... These presentations are not unlike the YouTube style videos but sharper, with better fades...and ultra-pristine sound. The music works just as well visually as engrossing audio fare but watching these guys lets you know just how far guitar playing has come in the last decade or so and how blatantly and how subtly the mechanics have changed.