

SPENCER BREWER

CINEMATIC

Spencer Brewer is not only a multi-million-selling composer, pianist and producer, but also a connoisseur of many of the greatest film scorers of all time. For his latest contemporary instrumental recording, *Cinematic*, Brewer has turned his talents to creating a collection of original material specifically meant to evoke visual imagery and also serve as his homage to movie music.

"I have been a fan of film music since I was a small boy," explains Brewer, "and as a tribute to that often over-looked art-form, I decided to make an album filled with pieces I feel have the same ambience of classic movie and television scores." In fact, some of the music has already been used in films and television. Brewer, who extensively collects recordings by his favorite film composers, has been most influenced by Bernard Hermann, John Barry and Ennio Morricone, but also has studied the works of Erich Korngold, Franz Waxman, Max Steiner, Alfred Newman, Thomas Newman, Miklos Rozsa, Esquivel, John Williams, Maurice Jarre, Howard Shore, Mark Isham and Danny Elfman.

Cinematic is a two-CD set featuring a cover painting by Salvador Dali. The first CD is subtitled "Black & White" and features Brewer playing solo piano on a dozen pieces with the addition of guitar and flute on the final tune. The second CD, subtitled "Technicolor," contains compositions played by various artists led by Brewer on piano, synthesizers, Hammond B-3 and a pump organ built in 1888. "Technicolor" has ensemble arrangements of ten of the same tunes that appear on "Black & White" plus four different pieces. The musicians on *Cinematic* are top new age, classical and jazz players including acoustic guitar virtuoso Alex de Grassi, reedman Paul McCandless (Paul Winter, Oregon), flutist Matt Eakle (David Grisman, Suzanne Ciani), harmonica player Norton Buffalo (Steve Miller, Kenny Loggins), drummer Mark Walker (Oregon, Paquito D'Rivera), and bassists Steve Rodby (Pat Metheny, Chuck Mangione), Todd Phillips (David Grisman, Psychograss) and Cliff Hugo (Rick Braun, Richard Elliott), plus other percussion, wind and string players including the renowned Quartet San Francisco led by Jeremy Cohen.

The music on *Cinematic* ranges from new versions of a couple of Brewer's most-beloved compositions ("Quintessence," "Dreamgift") to new material ("Into The Mirror," "Satie's Forgotten Dream," "Say What!"). Some of the music has already been used in the cinema: "Heartwood" was commissioned for the movie of the same name starring Jason Robards and Hillary Swank, and Brewer also wrote the title theme for Lee Mun Wah's acclaimed documentary film on racism, "Last Chance for Eden." "Trip to Glory" has been used in several Olympics' broadcasts, became the Big Brothers-Big Sisters theme, was used as Hank Aaron's theme song and helped sell Arby's Roast Beef in television commercials. "Blueberry Street" has a Porgy & Bess-feel to it and displays Brewer's early blues roots, while the rip-roaring "Lupin Swing" displays elements of vaudeville, Broadway and ragtime. "Caravanserai" would have worked in Valentino's "The Sheik" or Sean Connery's "The Wind and The Lion." "Fellini's Carousel" pays tribute to the Italian film master. "Walls That Move" was written in George Lucas' Skywalker Sound huge soundstage where the walls actually are capable of moving. "Cinematic" is a soaring tour-de-force of classic film sounds creating several moods, building tension and then letting the listener down easy at the end as the lights come up and the credits roll.

"I first got into movie music when I was watching the classic monster films from the 1930s - "Frankenstein," "The Hunchback of Notre Dame," "The Mummy" - and then "Creature From the Black Lagoon" in the Fifties and "Jason and the Argonauts" in the early Sixties," remembers Brewer. "The music was so powerful, it knocked me out. I realized how important music is to the mood, storyline and character development in films. So then I started paying attention to the film composers and found music they did in other genres."

Spencer, who was born and raised in Dallas, Texas, began playing piano at age seven, and although he took lessons for several years, he learned the most from his grandmother, who taught him Southern blues and boogie-woogie. He played in rock'n'roll bands throughout high school and then moved to Austin for its thriving music scene. Brewer became the accompanist for modern dance troupes (Deborah Hay, Martha Graham, Daniel Llanes and Suzanne Grace), which "pushed my envelope as to the possibilities of spontaneous and interpretive music." Brewer also wrote the music for "Once Upon A Time" and "Willowmancifoot the Dragon," two musicals written in New York City. His first recording, *Stellar Notion*, was done in 1980 and was vocal music from those musicals.

After moving to Northern California at the beginning of the Eighties, Brewer began recording original instrumental music, became a leader in the forefront of the burgeoning new age music movement and sold more than a million albums under his own name. He also was involved in producing, arranging, engineering and contributing tunes to albums that sold an additional several million units. It began with his albums *Where Angels Dance*, *Shadow Dancer*, *Emerald*, *Portraits* (a Gold Album with sales over half a million), *Dorian's Legacy* (Top 10 on *Billboard's* New Age sales chart and #1 on the *R&R's* NAC airplay chart with sales of more than a quarter-million), *Piper's Rhythm* (#1 on both of those same charts), *Romantic Interludes* and a half-dozen more. He created the music for several dozen NorthSound concept albums in which he often went uncredited, but stretched beyond new age music by exploring pop, jazz, bluegrass, big band and world music. Spencer also recorded several projects with other musicians who shared credits on the album covers – one with Tingstad & Rumbel, another with electronic music pioneer Craig Anderton and a jazz CD with Paul McCandless.

Brewer opened his own studio, Laughing Coyote, near Ukiah, California, nestled in the redwoods, and from the mid-Nineties to the mid-00s, he spent most of his time recording many other artists (plus some time out recuperating from a head-on car collision). He produced, engineered or performed on recordings by artists such as Alex de Grassi, Holly Near, Gene Parsons, Darol Anger, Steve Erquiaga, Kostia, Joe Craven, Barbara Higbie, Michael Manring, Phil Aaberg, Fred Simon, Georgia Kelly, Kirtana and many others; and oversaw productions that featured acts from John Bucchino to the Duke Ellington Band.

Spencer also contributed music to the films "Home Alone 2," "The Gifts of Grief" (starring Isabel Allende and Rev. Cecil Williams) and "Color of Fear" (another ground-breaking movie on racism from Lee Mun Wah). Brewer wrote the national theme songs for the YMCA and the Japanese Postal Service. His music has been used on more than 2,000 television shows all over the world including "Sex and the City," "The Oprah Winfrey Show," "L.A. Law," "Sixty Minutes," "Thirty Something" and broadcasts of the last five Olympics.

In addition to creating music, Brewer has run a record company, owns a music store, rebuilds pianos, collects vintage microphones and gramophones, had his own radio show and produced hundreds of concerts in Mendocino County. He contributes to his community in many ways including helping found the Redwood Valley Outdoor Educational Facility for children and the Ukiah Educational Foundation which helps fund students and schools. He also has founded and created patents with the high-tech company HighWired Inc. which allows voicemail or email users to add music, sounds and visual content to their messages.

"Part of what makes movies magical and deeply moving is the music soundtrack married to the mood of what we are watching," explains Brewer. "In our own lives, we generally pick music to listen to because of how we are feeling or want to feel that day. I hope the music on *Cinematic* can serve as a soundtrack for people's lives."

Many of Brewer's recordings are available at his website (spencerbrewer.com). *Cinematic* also can be purchased online at Cdbaby.com and Amazon.com, as well as numerous digital download locations such as iTunes and Rhapsody. Check him out on YouTube as well.