



Remembering Adam Marks

It took a while before I was able to bring myself to update my many website pages which feature Adam Marks's beautiful solo album *ARCANA*. Typing the tragic news of his sudden passing on May 9th at age 42 was painful and surreal. Two days earlier, he and I had been confirming the schedule for a concerto for him for 2023. He was planning to coming out and stay with me and Dan a bit this summer while we worked through passages. He was looking forward to seeing an island sunset like the one you see above. I took it the evening after his funeral, shouting to no one as I wept and raised my lens, that the sky was ablaze with Adam's incredible energy.

The social media flood of grieving, loving messages from friends and colleagues about Adam was simultaneously gut-wrenching and heart-warming. This gifted man meaningfully touched the lives of an enormous number of people. It was remarkable seeing a portrait of an exquisite, kind human being, painted by so many in so many identically glowing colors. Stunning, too, was reading about the number of Adam's active projects with different collaborators in different planning stages. The world has been cheated of many more decades of Adam's goodness, virtuosity, and utter enthusiasm; I can only find solace knowing how excited he was about it all: about things beginning to open up after such a scary hiatus, and about all the upcoming opportunities, and joy. All the joy.

The term “may his memory be for a blessing” could not be more apt in Adam’s case: he will continue on through all of us whose lives were improved and brightened by knowing him. I am so deeply fortunate to have known him for twelve years, and to have had the chance to work closely with him on the 8 recordings that make up ARCANA-- pieces which he interpreted as profoundly as if he had composed them. The album was released in late August 2020 in the middle of lockdown, and Adam never got the chance to tour with it. He never got the chance to read the latest beautiful reviews about his stunning performance that were posted the very week of his passing. How lucky I am that he asked his friend Luis to join him over at Yamaha one day to create a video of the piece of mine he performed the most over the years, SPARK. I invite you to remember Adam’s passion and talent by watching it: <https://youtu.be/FOQ4rcwsl2w>

Too ironically, SPARK is a spirited elegy composed in loving memory of another keyboard player who passed away in the prime of her life, named Mara. When I described her to Adam, we agreed that had they met, he would have truly connected with her. As the gentleman who commissioned the piece touchingly wrote me in response to learning of Adam’s passing, “Maybe Adam just wanted to perform SPARK for Mara up close and personal.” A sweet image, indeed.

My heart goes out to Adam’s husband Gabe, his brother and my friend Craig, and their parents. Adam’s spark will burn brightly for as long as those of us who loved him are here, and he will be in my thoughts during many, many more vivid sunsets.

Alex Shapiro
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