

## NOW WE'RE TALKIN'

By Helen Marketti

# Magnificent Obsession

Kelle Rhoads talks about his latest CD.

*Magnificent Obsession*, a new CD by Kelle Rhoads was released in June. He is enjoying the album's success. Kelle, who is a classical pianist as well as one of the administrators and instructors for the Musonia School of Music in LA is excited about his latest work.

*Magnificent Obsession* is a beautiful selection of 10 tracks that is a must for piano lovers and music fans. Kelle gives a voice of expression through his piano playing, giving each composition its emotion and feeling. The title alone is unique. "*Magnificent Obsession* is actually the title of a movie from the 50s but I thought it applied. It was a perfect title because piano playing is an obsession for me," explains Kelle. "I tried to put the best of the best together since the release of my last CD. There are no fillers on this album. They are all A-side compositions. My producer who is also my engineer was able to arrange with a friend of his an opportunity for me to play his friend's 12-foot grand piano. Most of the piano pieces I play are from this piano. It presents a completely new sonic territory. Instead of playing the piano, it was like playing a symphony."

Titles for the tracks are appealing and distinctive which Kelle has received many accolades. Title tracks include, *Beautifully Broken*, *Saturn over Sunset*, *Trix of the Parlormaid*, *Dark Harvest*, *Our Lady of Mercy*, *Woman Without a Shadow*, *Epitaph in Eb Major* and *You Gotta Move*. Each title offers its own individuality and curiosity to what the piece may sound like in the listener's mind.

*My Old Ohio Home* is a piece that Kelle composed when inspired by an old house that he stayed in while recording music in Grove City, Ohio, near Columbus, several years ago. "I remember sitting on the old wooden porch of this house, smoking my cigars and looking toward the streetlights. The scenery inspired me. I think the house was built around the mid 1890's. It left quite an impression," Kelle recalls. "I have never really written a piece of music in that style. When you are working on music you have to be open to where the music takes you and what is needed."

*Satan's Circus* gives a mix of piano playing that is calming at first but then segues into a dark, sinister and gothic sound. "I was inspired to write *Satan's Circus* when I returned to Newfoundland. A courthouse I had seen was huge and imposing in its appearance. It had been built during the 1870s. The people I was traveling with told me that during the 1870s, prostitutes would be executed by being hung over the side of the building. The town's people would gather to watch them die. I thought to myself that this certainly would be something for the devil so I composed *Satan's Circus*."

"We do not use many instruments on these pieces but if you listen closely there is a lot going on in each composition. We worked very hard on the recording as well as the artwork," said Kelle.

In addition to great music on a CD, music fans pay attention to how the music is packaged. It is an avenue for visual appeal as well as listening enjoyment. "The young lady on the cover of *Magnificent Obsession* is my niece on my wife's side. The photos were taken in Mexico, which is where she lives. Her look seemed to fit with the image we wanted to present. The other photo is of my maternal grandmother. The photo is around 100 years old. The back of the CD cover was created by doing research on an old piano program for Franz Liszt. It's a baroque style of artwork. It's quite detailed. The artwork was a reproduction of a concert program," explains Kelle.

"I'm happy to say that *Magnificent Obsession* has been selling remarkably well. If anyone would like a copy they can send me \$10 in care of Musonia School of Music, 12111 Tiara Street, Valley Village, CA 91607

I will immediately send the CD!"

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