



Iiro Rantala

My Finnish Calendar

★★★★☆

In another solo piano outing Iiro Rantala plays 12 originals, each of which evoke the mood of a month in his native Finland. To a non-Finn the emotions evoked may be surprising. February, for example, is joyously bluesy with a stride-like left hand, reflecting a time when “Finns are at their best” frolicking in the snow. August is fussily melancholic because, in spite of fine weather, it is when the holidays end.

Rantala has a Williams-like talent for writing instant earworms, so even if his playing is fairly straight it's always in the service of a good tune. *November* is a piece of pop balladry that takes a reassuring journey through uncertainty towards wistful calm. *January* has that Ludovico Einaudi air of brooding fulfilment. *March* is a Bill Evans-like waltz of wonder. He needs a lyricist — or a Hollywood contract. (*Act*)