



Refined eclectics: Ryuichi Sakamoto.

Ryuichi Sakamoto
Playing The Piano/Out Of
Noise

★★★

Decca 4763609/2717098 (2-CD)

**The Japanese maestro returns
in meditative mood**

A founder member of the cult 70s electro-pop trio, Yellow Magic Orchestra, keyboardist Ryuichi Sakamoto is best known to European audiences for his memorable scores to the movies *Merry Christmas*, *Mister Lawrence*, and *The Last Emperor* (the latter won him an Academy Award), as well as his collaborations with the likes of David Sylvian, David Byrne and Iggy Pop.

The Tokyo-born 57-year-old is renowned for his extreme eclecticism and intrepid sense of musical adventure, so the fact that his latest project is a minimalist solo piano recital is something of a surprise, especially given Sakamoto's propensity in the past for employing a fuller sonic canvas. *Playing The Piano* finds him revisiting some of the celebrated material from his back catalogue, including the marvellous *Merry Christmas*, *Mister Lawrence* and includes two lovely pieces – *Bolero* and a graceful waltz, *Mizuno Nakano Bagatelle* – that reflect the influence of Debussy and Satie.

Concerned, perhaps, that a solo piano record might lack the requisite allure to interest the public, Decca has added as an enticement a bonus CD, *Out Of Noise*. It fuses electronica with acoustic instruments, samples and sound effects to create some fascinating soundscapes that at times possess a cinematic grandeur. *Charles Waring*