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August 1, 2012

Sacred Dreams by Tron Syversen

CD Review: Sacred Dreams

Artist: Tron Syversen

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While Tron Syversen and his “music for relaxation and wellbeing” are best known in his native Norway and northern Europe, he is poised for wider recognition as a rising star in the US and world markets. In fact, his previous album, *Peaceful Journey*, reached the number 5 spot on the Zone Music Reporter charts. Tron’s music has drawn comparisons to the musical group Secret Garden who also has roots in Norway as well as Ireland. Not surprising though, as three of the musicians playing on his CD’s also play with Secret Garden. Another Irish artist that is sometimes mentioned in the same breath is Enya, in reference to the ethereal female vocals of Elin Lokken that grace Tron’s compositions.

Tron began playing piano at the age of 7, and developed his skills in the genres of classical, jazz, and big band before turning his attention to music specifically created for relaxation. In discussing the motivation behind his artistic endeavors, he shares: “Nothing pleases me more than the positive reactions I get from people listening to my music. I hope my music can help many people to relax, to improve visualizations, to help them sleep, and with meditations. I know relaxing music has a very strong impact on the human body and mind and can help making a better life. I have attended courses and seminars in meditation, including the Silva-method. This has expanded into an interest in the whole world of relaxing music. Now, new ideas often appear in my mind no matter where I am or what I am doing. I then race to find music paper or access to a piano. I can be especially inspired by beauty or by strong emotional responses, such as moods of sadness or happiness.”

Much of Tron’s inspiration comes from within, springing forth from his own deep meditative states, as well as from without, inspired by the beauty surrounding his cabin by the sea in Norway and from a monastery in Italy near Assisi where music for several of his albums was created. While some new age meditation music leans more towards ambient soundscapes and drifting atmospheric textures, according to Tron: “My music has strong melody-lines. I believe that melody

is important, and of course, harmony. Most of my compositions have 3 or 4 themes or parts of 8 or 16 bars and last between 5 and 9 minutes. For me it was very important to give great expression to the music, so I programmed a lot of tempo changes throughout the arrangements. My ideas are first arranged on my computer at home or at my cabin. I then write out all instrument parts and hire professional musicians to play them in my studio.” In addition to Tron’s piano and keyboards and the aforementioned female vocals, additional instrumentation includes cello, electric violin, English horn, flute, and guitar, all played by an impressive list of special guest artists.

With song titles like “Dreamland,” “Cradle Song,” and “A Quiet Evening,” it is obvious that the focus of this album is not only on relaxation, as is most of Tron’s music, but on creating a portal to peaceful slumber. The CD’s liner notes describes these 10 “lullabies” as “suitable for listeners of all ages. These tunes are great for late night listening before a long night’s restful sleep, or a background music during all types of holistic therapies.” As a testimonial to *Sacred Dreams*, an educator at The Bio-Physiological Academy in Norway shared: “This is very relaxing music, which I think is very suitable as an aid for sleeping problems. I am very impressed, and we are now using this music while training our students. Many have shown great interest for this music and plan to use it in therapy after they finish their studies.” And according to a press release, hundreds of holistic therapists all over Scandinavia have adopted Syversen’s romantic melody lines and slow tempo as the perfect background for spa treatments, massage therapy, meditation, and visualization exercises.

From the first song, “Lullaby For You,” the mood is set by gentle orchestrations with classical overtones and the angelic wordless vocals of Elin Lokken. By the end of the song, the listener might find themselves with the kind of feeling one has after drinking a cup of chamomile tea by the fire at the end of a long day. This is the vibe that sustains throughout the entire recording – no sudden changes, rousing crescendos, or shifting of musical gears, yet at the same time displaying a well-articulated sense of dynamics. I was especially impressed by Tron Syversen’s skills as a composer and arranger. Each piece is beautifully crafted with rich musical substance and emotional depth. As mentioned, there are various themes and parts within each song and while there may be a lot going on compositionally, there is also spaciousness in the arrangement that allows room for various instrumental solos to impart their particular flavor to the mix.

Although the music is all original and distinctive, there was something vaguely familiar about the melody on “In A Silent Place.” I eventually realized that it bore a remote resemblance to a well known 60’s folk song by The New Christy Minstrels entitled “Today,” that starts with: “Today while the blossom still clings to the vine, I’ll taste your strawberries, I’ll drink your sweet wine...” While the similitude is slight, it was enough to evoke a nostalgic moment for me. Listening to “Moonlight Reflections,” I became aware of a feeling that was not only present in that song but is a hallmark of the album in general, that can best be described by words like “cozy,” “warm,” and “comforting.” This impression brought to mind a word my Dutch friend uses that according to Wikipedia: “the word *gezellig* (heh -SELL-ick), which does not have an English equivalent, literally, means cozy, quaint, or nice, but can also connote time spent with loved ones, seeing a friend after a long absence, or general togetherness.” This was the sense I had while listening to *Sacred Dreams*. Reflecting on what Tron’s goals were in creating this music, I’d say he’s been successful in achieving them. I’m sure we’ll be hearing more from this talented recording artist as his mellow music flows from the fjords of Norway into more international waters.