

Leaning Toward Home

By

Holland Phillips

Written by

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Ask and I will give you an honest answer, yes I am a big fan of **Holland Phillips**, why? Well in my view he has consistently created quality album after quality album, his musicianship is superb and the feeling one gets from listening to a **Holland Phillips** album is one packed full of memories and good feelings of those times had, but the energy is always within the music, to help you move on as well.

Holland has done it again and manifested something so memorable and emotive with the release of his latest album **Leaning Toward Home**, so let's take a journey now with the artist; we start with the piano lead offering **Prelude to a Dance**, the gentle string sections and piano create a wistful memory of a piece, one can imagine sitting on a hill, looking out on a nature filled vista, whilst pondering a thought so deep and all changing.

The more moody **Before the Epilogue** is up next, this manifests for us that continually moving thought of making a change, a musical statement of saying I am not finished yet. The gentle flute here is beautiful and the delicacy of the overall nature of the track is matched perfectly by the backdrop of empowering keyboards which give strength to the overall narrative of the piece.

One of my favourites is **Roadside Brew**, there was something almost progressive rock about this offering, the guitar at the start is stunning and memory packed; the mix of the organ into this well of genius added a whole new level. Phillips has done it again, he usually has at least one track on the album that makes the hairs on my arms stand to attention, the changing of the

chords bring a lump to my throat and a tear to my eye and **Roadside Brew** is that very offering.

After the emotion falls away into the valley of calm, we are greeted with another sublime arrangement entitled **Time Travels**. I adored the beautiful flow here, the keyboards of the master musician seem to almost create wave after wave of movement within this clever composition, there is a real hint of original classical music here too, mixed brilliantly with that ever so lush ethic of the contemporary instrumental genre.

We now near the half way marker of the album and come across a piece called **A Sip of Potion**, this one caught my eye as soon as the album landed on my desktop. The build and progression of the composition is utterly amazing and literally carries the listener along with it with ease. This is another of those Phillip's master pieces like *Roadside Brew*, that draw you in with its almost cinematic narrative, one that paints such a wonderful musical picture for us along the way and is of course another favourite of mine.

We now begin to descend into the latter half of the release and as we do so we come across a track called **Moving Forward**. The piano here is unceasing; its constantly moving onward mantra is glorious and when joined by the keyboards, manifests defiance, a purposeful energy of keeping on moving in that forward direction. The arrangement and its balance are delightful to listen to, and one can truly feel an essence of determination within this offering.

That all important moment is now upon us, it is that very moment when the artist unmask the title track as we arrive in the musical dimension of **Leaning Toward Home**. The treat is that we are gifted to another moment of **Holland Phillips** magic as the artist brings us a really expressive and moving title header, and yet another moment of artistic brilliance to sample. The flute brings a mournful repose to the piece, while the keyboards almost re-create a light 1990's melodic rock feel.

On **Full Circle**, the quietness of the start is like arriving at a safe harbour on some distant coastline, Phillip's ability to perform with such artistic descriptive power is incredible, the composition of the piece, has both a sense of security and warmth about its narrative, as at some stage we all come full circle, and

perhaps this arrangement is for us to listen to while we meander upon the lessons we need to learn from the voyage taken.

On **Surprising Turns** we are gifted an almost sun kissed offering, with an unusual moment of Holland giving us some spoken word audio, this narrative manifests something quite addictive and changes the whole perception of the track. **Surprising Turns** is one of those compositions you're going to want to listen to over and again, to gain a full feeling of the arrangement in its entirety.

As we arrive at the doorway of the penultimate track off the album, we can reflect back on what has been an incredible journey of musical bliss, this next offering highlights that statement entirely, it's called **Along the Way**. The smoothness of this piece is utterly charming and has that wonderful energy of remembrance and melody mixed sublimely together. This is the album's feel good piece and by the time you have arrived at its conclusion you will undoubtedly feel like I do, refreshed and re-energized and with a smile upon your face.

The very last gift from **Holland Phillips** to take with us as we wander home is called **Bedtime Stories**. This is Phillips at his soothing best, creating a composition that will ease the mind and soul and allow the restorative powers of sleep to drift over us, in what is simply the perfect way to end this quite amazing album.

Leaning Toward Home as an album is yet another step up the ladder of musical respect and prowess for the artist, in my opinion this is Phillips best collective work so far. **Leaning Toward Home** will leave you the listener with a beautiful and satisfied feeling of contentment at its conclusion, its pristine production and absolutely inspiring performances make this an album to really watch out for, and of course completely recommended.