

The Ineffable

By

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Written by

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These days of summer have been long and tiring for me, month after month of draining humidity, so where does one look for a little respite from the trials and tribulations of life, why in music of course, as music is the only true language in the universe, it can also be the panacea to cure all ills and moods too. So with that in mind I gaze longingly at the album cover of **The Ineffable** by **Alan Matthews**, a wonderful oceanic view with a multitude of sun rays poking out through the low level clouds and I begin my voyage of calmness and peace.

The first sense of tranquillity can be found on the opening track entitled **Moiras Song**. The soothing tones of this truly laid back offering are superbly performed by the artist as his piano sings out across the void of time, in total symbiosis with the sultry Soprano Saxophone of *Premik Russell Tubbs*.

The theme of relaxation and soothing the furrowed brow continues on this next offering called **No Words Remain**. The gentleness here is sublime to be a part of, and when combined with the *Charlie Bisharat's* violin, anything is possible. There is a slight elevation of energy throughout the piece, one that also pulls back like the tide rolling up to the shore, but that only adds to the perfection of the composition.

On the next track we are gifted a moment of tranquillity called **The Resigned**. The performance here is something so very special and has a wonderful reflective quality about its overall construction. One could easily look out upon nature right now and just give in to the moment with this charming musical narrative.

There is a certain light hearted reverie about this next offering called **The Conversation** that is so appealing, the tempo has increased slightly, to give us a notion of a reality of movement in some way, the energy is further raised by incorporating the talents on percussion of *Jeff Haynes*; the flowing piano and the inventive percussion also give us a sense of a back and forth of a conversation quite cleverly.

As we approach the mid-way junction of the album we come across one of the most emotive tracks from the release and called **The Second Goodbye**. This moving opus really hit home, the passionate, but reflective performance here was so beautiful to listen to, and then the tones of passion rose higher with the emotion of the narrative as the interplay of the track seemingly became both players in this game of moving expression.

Just about now we find ourselves heading down hill to the final few compositions of the release and as we arrive at the doorway to a piece that has me transfixed, as the artist goes long form on the 10 minute plus arrangement entitled **Strange to Me**. I once spent a few hours listening to a pianist in Hartsfield Atlanta airport in Georgia and he played a composition similar to this. The ambience of the moment was sublime then and never forgotten and this arrangement has the same energy to it. *Charlie Bisharat* brilliance on violin added a whole new dimension of class to this already addictive track.

Wistful is next and is almost the opposite of the last offering at just over 2 minutes long, but in this short form offering Matthews expresses so much musically, it is a real treat to enjoy. The performance is light and relaxed and indeed quite wistful, the addition of the incredible *Jill Haley* on English horn is a huge bonus and adds a sparkling new layer of magic to the piece.

One of my favourite songs was this next offering called **The Empty House**. I have emptied a few homes in my time, last of which was my dear late mothers, it was indeed one of the hardest things I had to do, and this track for me explores those emotions whilst doing so, exploring as it does the former memories and energies of the home as it was, and now the sheer emptiness of nothing more than a soulless building. Matthews creates a level of ambience

and emotion here that would be hard to match, but creates a cathartic musical narrative at the same time.

We are now deep in the weave of the release as we arrive at the composition called **What She Knows**, the mood here is blissful and the performance even more so, the tranquillity of this arrangement is delightful, the melody is enhanced further by Hayley's sublime English horn, as the story telling piano manifests an emotive swing and a calming refrain for us all to enjoy.

The voyage through the album has now brought us to a track called **You Don't Know What Day It Is**. This is our penultimate offering off the album and once more the artist paints for us a compelling musical picture of excellent tone and timbre. For me this created a soothing atmosphere, so much so I have now played this very track three times already, I just cannot let it go.

We started with Moria and we end with her, with **Moiras Song Reprise**. Once more the enchanting piano give us the perfect piece with which to leave the release and one bathed in a very light jazzy ethic, calming, tranquil and serene, all good qualities to have in an ending composition of an album of this nature.

The Ineffable is an amazing album, considering it is the debut work of pianist **Alan Matthews**. The performances and compositions are smooth, confident and intelligently arranged and composed. What Matthews has done so well here is combine that healing aspect of music with a mild Jazz ethic that leaves the whole album totally accessible to each and every listener.