

Touched by the Stars

By

Richard Pouw

Written by

Steve Sheppard

When you gaze up at the night sky, what do you see, do you truly comprehend what you gaze upon, do you resonate with the vastness of creation, and are you **Touched by the Stars**?

Richard Pouw has created an album of music to allow your senses to be taken into another realm entirely, the amazing backdrop of symphonic sounds on the opening piece, which also happens to be the title track, **Touched by the Stars** says it all, it is as if we have literally lifted off into space, this is an arrangement that has an amazing amount of power and intensity within it.

On **Reflections of Imagination** we have quite a mournful structure to begin with; the keyboards create a texture so light and airy, while the pertinent percussion builds upon this delightful oasis of artistic endeavours. There is also a mysterious nature about this offering that makes it rather addictive to listen to.

The piano of Pouw now manifests something truly beautiful on the piece **Light of Serenity**. This gentle and flowing composition is carefully interwoven with an additional flute that only creates an even more sensual feel to the offering. The clever crescendos and build toward the end of this track made this one of my personal favourites from the release.

There is a certain *Lord of the Rings* feeling to the piece **The Coronation**, perhaps we we're in the hall of the mountain king himself. The powerful narrative here is a delight to listen to, and reminds me at times of the work of *David Arkenstone*. The tempo is superb and the grand percussive beat brings a

marvellous cinematic feel to the production, suspense, action and intensity, all of these qualities can be found in this quite breath taking opus.

In an almost mirror image of the last track, we have the steady, but ever onward offering of **Stardust Wanderer**. The piano here is splendid in all that it does, and creates a melody that will not get out of my head, and amazingly in all but just over two minutes or so long.

At the half way marker we come across **Eclipse**. The combination of Piano and the symphonic nature of the composition are simply stunning, but all kept perfectly contained in a well-structured arrangement that builds with purpose, and weaved a tale of light and dark for us all to enjoy.

There is something about **Underwater Worlds** that I adore, I guess though that living on one of the possible sites of Atlantis that it would peak my interest. The dramatic energies here are once again evident, and the strings manifest something quite stirring, there is a slight mournful repose as if one were perhaps looking at a long ancient city under an ocean so blue and complex.

The **Pillars of Creation** are always going to be an opportunity to excel, and I am so glad the Pouw has created this track with this title header for us to float within. The *Eagle Nebula* is a place so vast it would be hard for us to even comprehend, but the artist does this great justice, I simply fell in love with the organ segment at the 2 and a quarter minute mark, it is a slice of sublime genius it has to be said.

I found **The Final Embrace**, so very moving, I have had a few of these in my time, the last opportunity to hold, feel and touch the humanity that is about to leave this plain for good. This heart on a sleeve performance here is literally breath taking, and will move you deeper than you ever imagined possible; the tempo and power of the piece is so imploring and emotional, that it almost breaks your heart to listen to it.

Strangely I journeyed the other night and found myself in an oasis of purple light, just floating, drifting, without sensation of weight or pain, without human form, just pure energy. It took some time to get used to, but this composition, **Levitation**, is easily the musical interpretation of that out of the body moment with ease, simply peace filled and easy on the senses.

Our penultimate offering is now upon us and called **Cosmic Consciousness**. The rhythmic energies of this piece are a clever addition to a pretty ambient floaty composition, one that reflects the subject matter with great clarity. The melody here is also quite picturesque and adds a delightful colour to this charming musical narrative.

Our last portal of tone, sound and passion is entitled **Tribal Earth Meditation**. This is rather cleverly the longest piece off the release at just over six minutes long and from its very opening structure, offers up a vast landscape of music for us to all wonder within. The percussion and multi instrumental nature of this arrangement deliver a wonderfully multi-cultural style of a composition to end with.

Touched by the Stars by **Richard Pouw** is the shot in the arm the industry needed as we head towards winter, the fine and fully flowing compositions are both powerful and sensitive and create so many delightful mental vistas for us to all enjoy; listening to **Touched by the Stars** is like traveling without moving, as all around you each of the pieces from this release seem to fit so well with our lives. **Touched by the Stars** is a dream filled offering created by an artist who clearly is in tune with his musical muse.