

Blue Moon Rising

By

Acoustic Ocean

Written by

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There is a certain sense of memory and love created within the weave of this album that will become very apparent. This is the first I had heard from **Acoustic Ocean** since the release of *Chimes of the Spirit* back in 2013. I was saddened to hear of the passing of harpist *Peggy Morgan* in 2016, but here it is, the latest offering from them, with a new energy perhaps, but dedicated to the memory of the late band member.

A Hui Hou (Until We Meet Again) is the very beginning point of our musical journey and one that has such a calming refrain. Listening to this, one could easily just float away into a state of deep relaxation; the acoustic guitar of Phelan here was simply mesmerizing.

The use of natural sounds can be a contentious point for some artists in this genre, but on **Blue Moon Rising**, it is the perfect entry point into a piece that has a delightful Celtic energy to its construction. The percussion and fretless bass here were also sublime in their partnership within the main narrative of this most enjoyable arrangement.

Listen to the very start of this next offering and enjoy the guitar that winds its way down the country lane of this piece, one could almost be mistaken for thinking for a short while that we were about to listen to the opening of Zeppelin's *Stairway to Heaven*. **Recalling Beauty** is an incredibly classy composition that has so many elements to its overall construction and is indeed my favourite piece off the release.

The picturesque and colourful **Deep Grace / Scarborough Fair** is up next, it is a multi-instrumental haven, again pertinent natural sounds drift through the composition, but the almost timeless tempo of this offering is utterly tranquil, there is a quality like no other here, the talents of Phelan seem to have no boundaries when it comes to manifesting sublime soundscapes

The album contains some absolutely stunning songs, all seemingly manifested with such a wonderful artistic flair, it would be almost impossible to count the wide and varied instrumentation on this amazing release. On **Spirit Awakening** we can feel a true lightness of energy drifting from the tones of the arrangement, the little effects like the chimes and strings just go to add a whole new layer of magic to this already vibrant offering.

The quite stunning **Lotus Petals Falling On The Pacific** is up next. The acoustic guitar here is quite breath-taking and created a feeling of beauty inside me as I listened to its graceful tones. I adore the graphic nature of this offering, through the arrangement it would be easy to visualise such a charming picture as the title depicts.

There is something strange about hearing the voice of a partner when they have passed over, I had this with my late wife, a former and early presenter of this station, in a way through this medium they are never lost, just moved on, I say all this as the amazing *Peggy Morgan* features on this piece, with her voice and Harp two years after her passing, on the quite memorable and reflective composition entitled **Love Is A Force Field**.

I found **The Silent Storm** a truly powerful piece, unlike a storm that rages around the world of nature, this felt more of an inward storm, perhaps one that rages inside and needs to be quelled. I found the performance here by the band quite moving and extremely deep, this is a masterful musical moment washed by the dark waters of the inner creativity of release.

The start of this track was fantastic, a Tibetan Bowl chime and an Owl hooting, how clever, I adore inventive moments like this, and then the track just seems to smoothly transpose into one of the most relaxing offerings of the album. **Sweet Mana From Heaven** is as fluent as they come, and one could easily be lulled into a gentle sleep by the empowering, but restful tones of this brilliant arrangement.

We now find ourselves knocking on the door of the penultimate offering off the album it is called **Shadow Dancers**. The strings and bass here combined wonderfully to give us a sense of movement and indeed dance; the track also has a really intriguing ancient quality to its construction as well.

Water sounds and a gentle guitar caress our senses, and lead us into the very last piece off the release with a sublime ease, this is the longest offering at well over six minutes and is indeed the rich palette of sound it professes to be, this is indeed a multi instrumental track of extreme superior quality, and a superb way to leave the album too. **All Things Made New** is also a clever title as we may have come to the end of the release, but we feel refreshed and revitalised by this musical voyage we have taken.

I would rate **Blue Moon Rising** as one of the most graphic and colourful albums I have had the pleasure to review this year, its production quality and sublime performances by both *Bette Phelan* and *Kay Aldrich* on Cello have created for us, the perfect musical tapestry to bathe in for eons to come. Fans of classic new age music will love this release, but here is an album that could be embraced by just about anyone who has an open mind, heart, and a desire to seek out simply beautiful manifested music to sooth the soul.