

Haven

By

Briana Di Mara

Written by

Steve Sheppard

I felt in need of a pick-me-up this week and what better one would I find than the colourful spirals of musical pageantry within this wondrous new release entitled **Haven**, the debut album from Briana Di Mara.

From the very first track we are charmed by its light and happy narrative, it is called **Home** and retains the warmth of this most pleasing of places of the heart. The violin dances with the *Kalimba* as the sun streams down through canopy of trees, creating a fairy like dance for us all to enjoy, a superb piece to start with indeed.

The energy I needed was one to lift me from this autumnal dullness and within the piece **Storyteller** I had a composition that manifested an intriguing tale indeed, one that reminded me of the village music we have here in Cyprus, and contains a real folk styled multi instrumentational ethic, where the violin was supreme and backed up by such a stylish array of fine musicianship.

Seyyah is *Turkish* for Traveller and one could easily imagine this music being the soundtrack for the Seyyah as he makes his way via the caravansary from *Bodrum* to *Antalya*. Wonderful violin from **Briana Di Mara** can be found here; the tabla is sumptuous at creating such a redolent atmosphere. This is rightly the longest offering on the album at well over seven and a half minutes long, and I defy you to keep your feet still whilst listening to it.

Grace is the next piece on the album, this has an altogether different feel to its construction; there is a slight melancholy feel here, one with a distinct reflective quality. Di Mara's violin sings here, perhaps for one who has gone

from her life, but what a beautiful way to remember, by creating a musical opus of many memories.

La Partida Tango is now in front of us, so be ready to dance! This Waltz flows with such an international rhythm it is a delight to move to. Once more Di Mara's violin is centre stage, but it works with an almost energetic synchronicity when partnered with the percussion and the magical and fluent guitar of *Gabriel Navia*.

This is a world music album of utter quality and extremely easy to listen to, allow the tones of this next piece entitled **Reverie** to wash over you, in what is just over six minutes of sublime violin and the crafted brilliance of percussive genius *Aharon Wheels Bolsta*, then add into that mix a little hint of bass from the talented *Miles Jay*, and you have a really smooth winner of an arrangement.

I am pleased that through the magical tones of this album my **Muse** is working hard for me again. On the track, **Muse**, you will find a vibrant composition which contains a real eastern flavour to its construction; the santur creates this sultry backdrop of sound, which I believe is a hammered dulcimer from the Persian region. The music is very familiar to me as we have many international folk shows here in Paphos.

Our penultimate offering is called **Moonrise**, this one that unleashes *Tobias Roberson* and utilises his multi percussive talents. **Moonrise** is a song of happiness, dance and singing; it combines the ultra-skills of the violin of Di Mara with the sublime crafted style of *Diana Strong* on accordion and the rhythmic flow of *Gabriel Navia* on guitar in an arrangement that almost explodes on the musical palette with a burst of energetic flavours that are oh so very delightful, yes, this is the perfect track to dance to, Bravo!

After that extremely exciting narrative, we now end the album with a calmer offering, in fact let's settle down now and listen to **Kalliope's Lullaby**. The vocals come courtesy of *Kalliope Landgraf* and work in an almost symbiotic partnership with the violin of **Briana Di Mara** to bring us the perfect ending piece off the release.

Haven by **Briana Di Mara** is a really enjoyable album; it filled me with a lightness of heart and added an energy and vibrancy to my day. **Haven** is a superb offering of nine tracks that are perfectly placed and lovingly created. I must honestly say that if given a chance, this album could be appreciated by a very large audience; it has all the hall marks of being a global music great in my view, and one that I think you would enjoy too.