

Perihelion ... the turning point

By

Al Jewer and Andy Mitran

Written by

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There are some artists in this world that guide us through musical halls and alleyways, some that are supreme in the art of melody and some that resound in the avenues of tone and ambience. In my view **Al Jewer** and **Andy Mitran** are the great narrators of time and tide, as well as the aforementioned traits above; each step into a new project with them is like embarking on the storyline of a brand new movie, and it is this path we must tread again as we embark on a new voyage of plenty entitled **Perihelion ... the turning point**.

The vast array of new age stars that reside within the album are many and we will come across each and every one of them on this trip of sight and sound. Let's start with the opening piece **Gathering Heart**. One can feel through the energy of this song that a brave new journey is about to begin and one heavily influenced by the unique bass sounds of the incredible *Erik Scott*. **Al Jewer's** style on flutes here is amazing, as the intensity of our voyage takes hold, while **Andy Mitran** is in what we call the engine room, and at his percussive best.

As we take our **First Step**, we find a composition that I simply loved, I floated above clouds of delightful tone with a sublime performance by Mitran not only on percussion, but dreamy keyboards too, then Jewer's flutes caressed my open musical heart, my mind would revel in the delight of hearing the violin of *Biff Blumfumbgagng*, then with *Bob Lizik's* attentive bass; this has to be one of the most smooth and serene tracks of this genre I have heard for years.

The vast oasis and ambience of **Eternal** is now upon us, there is a real excitement built into this one from the very off, it is as if we have seen our path ahead and it looks like something we have never experienced before. For

us, this trip can be made even more pleasurable, by the addition of the award winning vocalist *Miriam Stockley*, whose stylish brilliance, pitch and tone, never ceases to amaze me. Mitran shows his multi-instrumental nature by adding bass to his percussive armoury, as does Jewer who brings the English horn into this house of musical plenitude. Infinity in tone is created here and the vocals for me manifested something truly special, we even had an appearance of the other AO music artist in *Richard Gannaway* on Bouzouki, an instrument we know all too well here in Cyprus.

As we drift into the piece **Reflection**, we truly have a moment of peace to survey all that we now see before us, as we become part of it all. This piece really highlights the new age styled genius of Jewer and Mitran, while we see a debut for ambient guitarist *Michelle Qureshi* to create for us a simply angelic offering, one that we can truly appreciate as a moment of reflective brilliance.

That extra edge of the percussive beat by Mitran gives us a sense of onward movement again, in an almost ethnic and rustic style. Here we will find on our journey through this forest of tone, one of the masters of the flute in *Peter Phippen*, but this time employing his talents on the Shakuhachi. **Awakening** is a wonderfully colourful offering, it's almost like going on a journey, within a journey, but the momentum is also endless and incredibly rhythmic.

We now move towards the mist filled realms of this next piece called **Space Between**. Here we will also meet with another musical friend of ours in flautist *Sherry Finzer*, whose bass flute resonates us into a whole new musical dimension; it also combines so beautifully with the violin of Blumfumdagge and Jewer on Native Flute, with a careful and crafted performance on various percussive instrumentation by Mitran we are gifted something truly remarkable and extremely listenable.

We have reached the tip of the album, that beautiful point where we can see our former pathway and gaze upon the walk ways of what's next, but for now we can relax in the ambience of this absolutely stunning reverie entitled **Ascendance**. Phippen and his Shakuhachi flute join the duo for a truly memorable offering, and in my view easily the most ambient and peace filled opus on the album, here is one to really get lost within.

As we make our descent on our homeward trail, we first must pay homage to the inspiration to this entire concept, and of course I am referring to the title track **Perihelion**. Every time the Earth travels around the sun it reaches its Perihelion. This is a fascinating track, the combination of instrumentation is stunning, especially the violin's symbiotic nature with the bass of Lizik and Jewers clarinet, and the addition of the horn which creates a never ending opportunity to enjoy crescendo after crescendo; what a spectacular title offering indeed.

There is much to be felt and enjoyed within this next composition, it's called **Renewal** and contains such a delightfully mournful Native flute performance by Jewer. Qureshi joins the dance and pulls off a masterstroke of ambient proportions as she lays down one smooth passage after another on guitar. The energy of this track is one that seems to coalesce all around us, as musical colours of this new dimension seem to do with ease, as they merge past and present together; what a breath taking piece this truly is.

The energy picks up a little more now as we embrace the tones of this next offering called **Welcoming Light**. There is a really joyful essence about this one that is really addictive, Finzer is back, but this time on Alto flute, joining Jewer on the same instrument, but channelling left and right as they do so in a remarkable performance. The ever abundant talents of Mitran gift us some wonderfully light hearted percussion, especially on Marimba and piano, in a track of supreme quality and style.

Ever reached the top of a hill walk, and as you do so, your eyes are greeted by the most vast of vistas, a view that is simply magnificent, but extremely immense and wide, this is the music for your soundtrack of that moment and it is called **Redshift**. For the only time on the album the duo of Jewer and Mitran paint a musical picture that is sublime in its depth and gravity, for built into this piece is a little apprehension, that kind of slight doubt that sometimes occurs when you have travelled far and then realise you still have many, many miles to go before you reach your goal, can you make it, do you have the intensity and focus? Jewer on flutes is amazing here, while Mitran contains that percussive intelligence and laces it with a crafted performance on piano.

Sometimes we have to look at things from a different perspective to enable us to carry onward, perhaps that's what is just about to happen here in the song called **Journey with the Moon**. That silver feminine light of the moon goddess shines down upon our humanity, and allows us to visualise beauty in a way we have never done before. The exquisiteness of this moment gives us a glimpse perhaps into an entirely different realm and here, through what is one of the most breath taking performances on the album, the artists manifest something beyond beauty itself; this features the emotive talents of pianist *Lisa Downing*, whose delicate performance draws such a compelling narrative for us to enjoy. A tip of the hat must go to one of the most emotional moments of synth magic too from **Andy Mitran**, his wizardry created a sublime backdrop of sound for this theatre of magic to play out.

We are now nearing the end of our journey, but before we knock on that door we can enjoy this moment of happiness on the piece called **Sacred Space**. Yes this is the penultimate offering off the release, when we are in our sacred space, as I am now; we can not only feel safe, but feel a certain oneness of spirit as well, and can then say to oneself perhaps that, all is as it should be. This is a wonderfully connected composition, utilising the skills of *Ian Maksin* on Cello, oh how I adore that instrument, we can combine that with the guitar of Qureshi, and this manifests a moment of tranquillity that allows Jewers sublime brilliance on Native flute to come to the fore, and what is a smooth yet sparkling performance on keyboards by Mitran to lift your soul into bliss itself, all you need to do is breathe and smile.

So we are here, the end of our musical voyage with **Al Jewer** and **Andy Mitran**, this last offering is called **Full Circle** and shows with great quality and style just what an amazing journey we have been on. One can without doubt feel that sense of completion, we are whole again, joined with all that there is and will be, this halcyon moment is provided by the duo plus the ever moving and totally special talents of *Biff Blumfumgagng* on violin; as end of album pieces go, they don't get much better than this.

Perihelion ... the turning point, is one of those albums you will literally find difficult to stop playing, I have poured over it many times myself now and still want more. **Al Jewer and Andy Mitran** are master story tellers in the genre of contemporary instrumental music, with each and every album released they

have created moments of unforgettable musical narration, this album is no exception, simply put, there are 14 pieces of music here and each one of them has been crafted with a precision of an uncut diamond, bathed in love and produced at a level few would find hard to reach. **Perihelion ... the turning point** is an album that contains some of the finest artists in there genres today and one that I completely recommend, it simply doesn't get much better than this.