

Infinitus

By

Mark Barnwell

Written by

Steve Sheppard

From the very start of this latest release by **Mark Barnwell** you will set course for gloriously warm regions of the planet; what follows is one of the most exciting performances on guitar you have heard for a long while, one that will literally set your very soul alight.

Starting with the effervescent and rhythmic opener **Jalapeño** we feel the pull of the sun kissed realms of *Spain*, a more vibrant start you could not wish for, and a piece that contains the energies of *Incendio's Liza Carbe* on a sumptuous bass, accompanying the incredible performance on Spanish guitars by the artist in a breath taking beginning.

I played this one the other day on one of my shows, and it is so deliciously tempting musically, it is a track with such colour and textures called **Exotica**. The added instrumentation of *Maria Grigoryeva* on Violin can be heard here, plus a very rhythmic percussive performance by *Larry Salzman*, all of which make up one of the most sensual offerings from the album.

This next track is one of the most beautiful on the release, and here within lies some very clever interplay built into the construction of the piece, with two guitars, bass, keyboards and percussion. A name I had not heard of for years is within this offering in one *Kit Morgan (Glidepath 2006)* and when you add Barnwell's fluency on Spanish guitar, heavenly magic is created in the name of one of the most outstanding arrangements of the album in, **Forever**.

Ladies and gentlemen, it's now officially time to just chill, and you can do this by sipping your cocktails by the pool and listening to the artist perform

Sambana. This is one of those pieces you cannot help but fall in love with, it has a real lightness of touch and the energy is so calming and relaxing, a true chill out masterpiece.

Now, as someone said, it's time for something completely different, we now cross the borderlands of a new genre with **Celtic Dreams**. In what maybe a first for the artist, Barnwell explores this new musical narrative with all the skill and professionalism of someone who has been doing it for years, the net result is a composition that has a sense of narrative that is both compelling and fascinating; it is noteworthy to mention the interplay between the violin and guitar here.

As I started to listen to this next piece I felt a *Santana* moment come into view, **La Habana** is truly something special and I loved every second of it, but how could one not just adore this musical gift of magic, especially when *Incendio's* *Jean-Pierre Durand* joins Barnwell, and once again gifts us a sublime moment of duel guitars on a truly evocative composition indeed.

Infinitus is a sparkling album packed full of glistening musical gems like this one entitled **Montecito Shores**, a track that contains the tempting warm sea's lapping up to the even more tempting warm sands, and what comes from this most delightful of places, is as laid back as you would expect it to be.

Time to emphasise the global fusion and world element with this next offering called **Kaftan**, this is a piece crafted cleverly and inter woven with a deftness of touch, can you note the performance on *Greek Bouzouki* here by Barnwell, a first I believe, this is a true eastern delight that you cannot help but allow yourself to get pulled into.

I was most eager to hear this one called **The Sage and the Sorcerer**, here was **Mark Barnwell** going long form and gifting us a near on ten minute composition. This manifestation of genius is well worth multiple listens and contains the work of *Francesco Ganassin* on Armenian Duduk and Clarinet in one of the best examples of east meets west from the release. This is the longest work that I can see from the artist to date, and the interplay between Barnwell and Ganassin is truly splendid and very memorable indeed, in what was one of my personal favourites from the album.

We arrive at the very last portal of the release, but before we make our leap home, the artist has one more musical gift for us entitled **Enchantment**. There was a colourful New Age energy about this one that I particularly liked, especially the addition of flute from *Ian Smith*, this performance was utterly transcendent and added a wonderful texture to the track that really enhanced the quality of the composition greatly.

In my view I rate **Infinitus** by **Mark Barnwell** as his best work so far, the artist has taken a lot of time and care on this project and it clearly shows, the addition of quality musicians on the release creates a wonderful colour and musical dimension to an already classy album, and this this has to be the best acoustic release of the year so far with ease, easily one to recommend and even easier to listen to again.