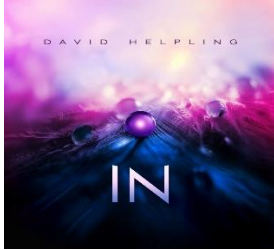


David Helpling

IN



Welcome to the infinite and varied world of the microcosm. You're going to have to look close, but what you will see is the universe in a drop of water. Or perhaps a cosmos in a grain of sand. It may be even more than the James Webb telescope can handle. And better still, you will come to know what it sounds like from the latest recording of multi-instrumentalist **David Helpling**. The album is simply called **IN**. I recall reviewing Helpling's epic album *Rune* and wondering what he might come up with next. No disappointment here. **IN** is a collection of ambient textures and sounds that are rich in emotion and offer an abundance of tranquility, but the complexity and depth are astounding. David's love of the ambient guitar comes to solid fruition within the recording. The album is two discs with thirteen tracks and every one of them more than palatable to the ambient appetite. Here is a tasting of several tracks.

Disc 1

It takes a gentle wind to create waves, and this wind is the breath of the earth. David's first track, **Waves Dream of Breaking** has a lot of kinetic energy, but there is also an unmistakable rhythm in the undertow. The sun polished notes shimmer as the waves roll in. Once they touch the shore, it is like a kiss. The meandering music is also effected by the talents of **Matthew Stewart** on synths.

The plaintive cries of vocalist **Nidhi Bhatmuley** rise like a prayer on the wind on the tune **This Burning Sky**. If you are infinitesimal, the sun rising or setting is a world shaking event. You see everything as fire. Red, copper, and gold are all interspersed and light up the heavens. The ritual of night and day give purpose and timing to life.

Bright harmonics make up the refrain of **Still as Stone**. In this world, every grain of sand is like an obstacle that you must get around, go over, or dig under. These stones never move. And yet, we crave the adventure that is found on the other side. David's music reminds us that adventure is to be had if only we venture forth. Take that first step.

The Bliss You Already Carried has the exotic sound of the esraj, a traditional stringed instrument of the Sikh Kirtan and played by **Benjy Wertheimer**. The poignant echoing notes fall like tears of happiness in this delicately sweet ballad. David's music suggests an overwhelming emotional sense of revelation as if seeing the first ever rising sun, or perhaps even the very face of God. This is a beautiful piece of music and my favorite on **IN**.

The iridescent intonations of well-known chanteuse **Miriam Stockley** are heard on the track **Slipping**. The breathtaking music itself is a conveyance into the world of otherworldly dreams. The music feels like you are falling down the barrel of a child's kaleidoscope into ever changing patterns of light and sound and a great deal of color.

Additional tracks include **Only What's Been Taken** and **Here All Along**.

Disc 2

David's masterful guitar work is prevalent on the tune **The Cold Distance Between**. The arrangement of clanging bells, the whispery voices, and the waves of serene sound all help to measure the vast space in between unseen worlds. With the eyes and ears, the expanse is endless. With the spirit, it is measured in a single heartbeat.

The next tune, **You Already Are**, features the deep, resonant voice of the cello as performed by **Matthew Schoening**. Bits of pulsating, glittery sounds and a driving bass background come full circle back to the cello. The movement is vibrant and positive. If you wanted to be somewhere in particular, just open your eyes.

A bright touch of hand pan is in the intro to **Following the Lines**. The track is tastefully spiced with a little bit of Asian flavor as the music unfolds. It is like a musical diagram. From point "A" to point "B" to points unknown, the music pulls you along on an endless electronic journey of discovery.

I Too Am Coming Home is almost a sad return to before. Before you discovered there was more than one world. A world that you hold in the palm of your hand. A place that you could only see with the eyes of your heart, of your spirit. The whole ordeal is melancholy at best. Helping's song is an anthem for the spiritual traveler.

Additional tracks include **Bending Towards the Night** and **In Waves of Fire**.

IN has some wonderfully transparent sound that has a clarity and a purity thanks to over the top production values, partly by courtesy of producer **Howard Givens** and the artist himself. David Helping has put a lot of movement throughout this recording. It is as if we not only move from place to place, but dimension to dimension. With the use of audacious cues, highly emotional music, and incredible variations, no ordinary musical journey is this. Mirrors show what might be and music has the property of healing. In a word, transporting seems to come to mind. Excellent. - R J Lannan, Artisan Music Reviews