

Damon Buxton

## Love in the Time of War



There are many different kinds of war. There is the kind where two opposing factions fight for supremacy. Then there is war of ownership. What's mine is mine. There is the war over conditions or environment. Then there is the kind of war from within oneself. Every type can have a tragic ending, but not in every case, and certainly not in this one. If the recent pandemic has taught us one good thing, it is that people who fight and win that war have resolve, purpose, and **Love in the Time of War.**

Guitarist and composer Damon Buxton transposes that power of will, that sense of intestinal fortitude, and dogged persistence into each and every note on his new album *Love in the Time of War*. Damon's forgoes his mostly subdued methodology for a sharp emphasis on not only melody, but also in delivery. There are some very sharp notes in the mix, and not the kind that are half tone more than normal. His music is precise and insistent and its details become the focus of interest in almost every piece. Buxton takes the listener on a journey of sorts, allowing him/her/them to escape for a time. A time and a place where there is no war.

The album opens up with the song **Istanbul**. The famed city in the middle of the known world was once called Byzantium, Constantinople, Lycos, and then Istanbul. It was the crossroads of the planet in the early history of man. Buxton's tune captures the energetic, spicy flavors of every culture that lived and thrived on that vital land bridge to Asia.

Next is the title tune **Love in the Time of War**. It has several parts. The first part describes an examination of conditions. Where am I? What am I doing? Where is this all going? The second part is the search. There is no stone left unturned to find what you are looking for. The last part is the discovery. And it did not come from where you thought it would. You were surrounded by the answers and there were some hidden within.

Damon offers up two classical selections that, by their familiarity alone, suggests a comfortable ambiance in which to daydream. Beethoven's **Für Elise** and **Brahms's Lullaby** are re-imagined for a modern world. Für Elise takes on a new complexity under Buxton's careful hand and Brahms's Lullaby tenders a peaceful respite for listeners of all ages.

**A Sending Song** is timid and tentative. It is an ending and a beginning for all the lost souls that left this earth in the last year or so. The melody is a prayer, a hymn, and a mantra for the unexpected departures of the friendly smiles, their warm touches, and their kindly advice that will no longer be there. This is the last hug that you will remember forever, even if you never got to touch them again. This is a deeply poignant song.

One of my many favorites on *Love in the Time of War* is a tune called **History is Made**. It is a song of hope for the future and a turning of a corner in the lives of everyone here. And by here, I

mean where ever you are. It is an anthem for the search for peace, for reconciliation, and for positivity that our lives seemed to lack like a serious vitamin deficiency of the soul. All we have to do is wait for the elixir to take effect.

We go to sleep each night with a prayer in our hearts and a longing for better times. **Faraway Morning** and **Faraway Morning (Reprise)** have a touch of melancholy in them, but the overall theme is one of expectation. The stars have given way to a new dawn, a Faraway Morning that every one has prayed for and here it is. The light is dim now, only a glow, but it will grow as will the warmth. It does not matter if it rains or shines, because today is a fresh start. Enjoy the gift.

Damon Buxton's dozen solo guitar pieces offer a lot that cannot be seen, but it can be sensed on many levels. Somewhere, deep in the soul is that spark that was quashed by despair, by hate, and by uncertainty. Mindful music like this ignites the spirit once again and fans the flames of hope. Every living being on this planet only asks two things from the Creator. Peace and Love. It turns out, we have to furnish those things ourselves. Let's get cracking on that love part. The peace will arrive shortly thereafter. For an experience of quietude and calm, this album fills all the nooks and crannies while still allowing a modicum of silence to balance it all. Highly recommended. - R J Lannan, Artisan Music Reviews