

Darlene Koldenhoven

Traveling the Blissful Highway



After successes with her last two albums, *The Grand Piano Spa* and *The Grand Piano Spa Legacy*, GRAMMY® Winner and three time GRAMMY® Nominee **Darlene Koldenhoven** returns with an even brighter, more sophisticated and amazingly melodic album entitled **Traveling the Blissful Highway**. The wonderful journey is a dozen tracks of contemporary/New Age orchestral music that can accompany you to countless places, real and imagined.

There is no better way to greet the day than with **Cheerful Mohana**. The stunning raga has a lot of beautiful moving parts and elysian elements to start your day. With a joyful flute by **Ron Korb** and subtle tabla by **Venugopala Raju**, Darlene's rapturous opening number is all the energies in the universe soaking into your being. Time to take that first step.

With heralding horns the **Time Traveler** walks through the gateway and finds herself in a very different realm. Darlene's dappled notes are meandering, drifting, and expansive. They invite you to a time when the air was cool and clear, plants were tall and lush. And the land was an Eden for all. A give and take of the melody clears the path for exploration. This is a favorite.

Now that you're here you can experience **Jade Dreams**. Korb's Shakuhachi flute invites you into a Zen Garden with shady paths that disappear around corners. The dulcet ethereal chorus lets you know that there are quiet ponds, emerald lily pads, and pure white lotus blossoms aplenty. Violinist **Charlie Bisharat** transforms his instrument into an improvisational erhu and the mood is tranquil and transcendent.

Waves of sound wash over you from Darlene's spatial synthesizer in the song **Sweet Peace**. Close your eyes, breathe deep, and drift along with this decompressing music. There is something to be said and heard about this lush, tonal poem. Sounds like warm drone, soft guitar, water drops, and sparkling piano all blend together to create a free falling vibe.

Another favorite of mine on *Traveling the Blissful Highway* is called **Osmium Glow**. One of the most rare elements on the planet, osmium is the unobtainable, the exceptional, and the extraordinary and this is a day to remember those gifts. In this music the radiance is achieved by the like of **Cathy Del Russo** on oboe, **Mike Miller** on acoustic guitar, **Charlie Bisharat** on violin and Darlene on keyboards and synth. **M.B. Gordy** provide the percussion and the tune has a John Tesh kind of feel that I liked.

No wandering is complete without a nod to the wayfarer's delight, Bonnie Scotland and Darlene's homage includes an airy tribute with the tune **Highland Mist**. Irish flute, whistle, and oboe take the high road while voice, keyboards, and tickling percussion take up the low road. Not to worry, they all meet a bit down the way. The tune is a guid folk's dance just as the moon

comes out and the fires blaze. It says, “Noo jist haud on”. That’s Scottish for take your time, my friend.

There are shimmering sounds, happy horns, and kinetic keyboards accompanying the traveler as she finally finds her well-worn path. And it may not be paved with stones, or dirt, or grass, but created with the power of the spirit. The last tune **Blissful Highway** completes the circle. Whispy voice, pronounced bass, and an electric guitar sets the tempo for her journey home. But you know you/she/he/they will be back again.

Darlene Koldenhoven, always noted for her incredible vocals, has taken up residence in her role as creative composer of instrumental music and out done herself on *Traveling the Blissful Highway*. You cannot help but be transported by this ironic recording; one that offers you a clear path to relaxation, but also one in which you are soon quite lost. Highly listenable.

- R J Lannan, Artisan Music Reviews

Leave your cares and worries behind. You'll barely have time to pack as you begin *Traveling the Blissful Highway* on the latest album from New Age composer and GRAMMY® Winner and three time GRAMMY® Nominee Darlene Koldenhoven. This imaginative creator takes you in a dozen delightful directions as the memorable music restores and renews your spirit. - R J Lannan, Artisan Music Reviews