

David Darling

Reverence



There is no doubt in my mind that one of the most notable contributors to contemporary instrumental music was cellist **David Darling**. Although he began producing musical works in 1979, his definitive work, *Eight String Religion* soothed many an anguished soul in 1993 and from then on he pretty much defined his genre. His passing in 2021 created a vacuum that will probably never be filled by an artist of comparable talent. It is my honor to review his final recording **Reverence**.

The album opens with a bright and joyful gavotte called **Water Dragon Waltz**. More mythical than real, the music's tempo has the mind swaying and the heart pumping. You can visualize a small creature undulating in a green pond catching his dinner while the sun shines overhead. The one-two-three is perfect timing for a daydream or two.

For the Love of Oceans starts with a scratchy cello sound that quickly turns into a fluid fantasia of dark green sea, white capped waves, and endless horizons. David's composed melody is transporting in the true sense of the word, taking our imaginations along as passengers on a never ending voyage of the mind. There are stormy places, there are calm places, but all are an adventure.

One of my favorite on Reverence is **Northern Lights**. Delicate piano fades in, but the real show begins with the gradual arrival of the cello. Picture in your mind the green electrostatic exhibitions and you will know what the music might sounds like. The cello colors the translucent waves of this phosphorescent green melody. The light is pulsating and alive with innate energies. It is feast not only for the eyes, but also for the spirit.

The title tune **Reverence** is made up of waves of sound. It flows softly, fervently, with a soft swaying cello and just a murmur of voice by **Katie Mintle**. This emotionally rich tune gives the sense of floating, adrift on a sea of sound. For me it is an Ascension, a rising of the spirit into the heavens with a promise of grace at the completion of the journey. Quite beautiful and transcendent.

Ty Burhoe's Crystal Bowls, light guitar by **Ross Bellenoit**, and vocals and keyboards by **Paul Fowler** make up the scenario of the tune **Hindu Goddess**. Deep underground we unearth the small, out of the way temple and we praise its discovery. It is dedicated to Radha, the great Companion. The sweet swell of strings in the background and the rich, full cello blend into a cordial celebration. Krishna is omnipresent.

I never considered the term before, but Water Mirror sounded like something out of mythology. Before the discovery of metals and mercury, images could be seen on the surface of water. David's tune, **Water Mirror** has this cold, icy tone to it which makes me think that the looking glass is made out of ice. There are echoing piano tones that reverberate throughout with a

minimalistic atmosphere. Is she alone in this cold north? Is she hoping for warmth? A thoughtful, reflective tune indeed.

Additional tracks include **Emergence**, **The Passing**, and **Entering**.

The final track, **I Don't Know Yet** is an achingly sad piece. Almost a gentle lament. A last breath if you will. The slow, deep vacillating rhythms of his cello along the hovering sound of a dynamic violin combine into a kind of requiem. A fair thee well or an incomplete goodbye. It brings tears to any heart, to any spirit to know that this is the last song.

David Darling was a GRAMMY® Winner and three time GRAMMY® Nominee and all well deserved. But accolades were not his raison d'être. It was the power of music and what it could and can do. Mr. Darling was an inspiration to anyone that took up the bow in the post classical world from the eighties and nineties and later. He was an advocate for the Arts in schools taking up the banner of the Young Audiences organization. His countless collaborations and his innumerable contributions to modern contemporary music will long be remembered. Thank you Mr. Darling. I quote him here. *"I want you to go as deep as you can go. This mantra has been with me all my life."* - David Darling

Excellent Recording - R J Lannan, Artisan Music Reviews