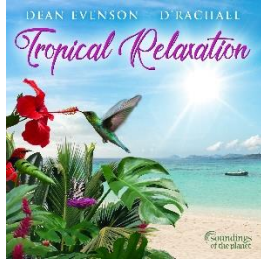


Dean Evenson and D'Rachael

Tropical Relaxation



I was misled, pure and simple. I looked at the cover art for **Tropical Relaxation** by legendary flutist **Dean Evenson** and harpist **D'Rachael** and thought, okay hummingbird, hibiscus, palms, ocean, yeah, this is gonna be a Reggae-esque paradise. I could not have been more wrong, which just reinforces the “you can’t judge it by the cover” axiom. Within these ten transporting tracks was a vacation full of musical vignettes that offers the soothing action of waves, the perceived warmth and beauty of a sunset, and the opportunity of introspection on your own self-made island. Sand optional, but I like the green kind.

Flutist and award winning composer Dean Evenson is a noted veteran of the New Age movement that has been making music for four decades with more than 80 albums to his credit, mostly along with his wife, multi-instrumentalist Dudley Evenson. D'Rachael is a well-known flute player and harpist that has been composing since the early 80s. The collaboration between Mr. Evenson and D'Rachael has been a long one. They are apparently, simpatico even when they are improvising. The music of *Tropical Relaxation* has that easy, organic feel as if it was improvisational, but with enough coherence to give the compositions structure and remain true to their delightfully light themes.

Blissed Off, the first cut seems to take advantage of a play on words, but the mood is unmistakably joyful as flowing flute and harp arpeggios, along with inorganic chorus set the scene. The ebb and flow of ocean waves permeates the music, giving it a briny realization. The sun is strong, but clouds are playing tag overhead, and the tropical breezes are a balm to the spirit.

There is an innate sense of comfort and consolation in the tune **All of Us**. The family that Dean's flute and D'Rachael's harp suggests is not just the usual, but the family of man on planet earth. We share this planet with more than just ourselves and the music reminds us that not all of the family members walk on two legs. Some use air and some use water to get around. It suggests further, that we tread lightly.

Dean's flute meanders like a butterfly on the tune **Sublime Seeking**. D'Rachael's harp is a soft, complimentary voice as the music folds over itself with layers of light and warmth. The ocean in the background is like the planet Earth, breathing, growing, and nourishing our souls. This music is the remedy for the beleaguered lifestyle. This may be music of discovery.

Mirroring on the philosophy of mindfulness, the tune **The Moment is Now** is a drifting, harmonically rich experience in which the flute plays a major part in setting us free from stress and toil. Ocean, sky, earth, all play a part in your experience. Immerse yourself in the assuring atmosphere of peace and harmony.

Surprisingly, the flute opens the tune **Harping on Love**, but is soon joined by the harp. They decide to become friends and dance in the clear, azure sky. D'Rachael offers her melodious musings to complement Evenson's flute and they play with such balance, such equality that is almost as if one spirit has two voices. Electronic expressions soothe in the background and the free form dance ends with a bit of whale song.

My imagination sometimes supplies a scenario based on the music and oftentimes it is not what the artists had in mind. **Pleasant Knowing** further employs the water theme and cetacean song with a fluid, coursing melody, but with a weightier, mysterious tone. There seems to be some allusion to darkness, to caverns, and to a secret pool where their frolicking becomes serious.

The last cut is called **Flowing Forever**. It has a music box quality as if you open it and the magic comes streaming out in musical notes. It is slow tune suggesting that time really does not matter and the days were made just for you.

This is an album to get lost in. You can play it a countless number of times and the moods it produces seems to rearrange themselves around your frame of mind, all positive. Take the time. Highly recommended. – R J Lannan, Artisan Music reviews