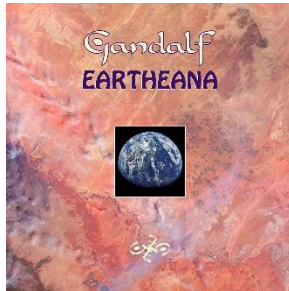


Gandalf

Eartheana

gandalf.at



Listening to legendary New Age composer Gandalf's new release **Eartheana**, one can imagine the world as one. As one planet. As one continent. And as one heart. In all fifteen tracks abides the messages of peace, harmony, and love. Many of the tracks are long playing, others are snippets, but taken as a whole this album is a monumental endeavor of sounds and emotions that tell the story of the world. And a very successful story I might add.

Eartheana Overture opens as if dawn awakens the planet. Flute, strings, and a touch of glass chimes brightens the day. The music moves forward, and the adventure begins.

North America - Somewhere in the West features Native American Style flute, rolling electric guitar, and a steady percussion throughout. We get the complete picture from the freezing north to the sunny South as we imagine ourselves looking down from great heights, all the while gliding across the azure skies.

Then we come to **Earth Theme I**. There are five Earth Themes. Short interludes that travel between the continents to give the listener a fresh perspective. The somber cello is our companion we travel to the next landmass, Africa.

Africa-Caravan Under a Desert Sky features a lush, ambitious piano theme that starts with mild percussion and changes into an organic journey across the mysterious continent. Jittery vibraphone jangles across the desert, melodramatic strings bridge the distances, and a northern ethnic lute attempts to tell the complete story. One of the longest and finest cuts on Eartheana.

From here we go north east and travel into Asia. **Asia-Tracing Ancient Sacred Lines** opens the gates to a vast exotic land where, heretofore few have journeyed. Deserts, mountains, and jungles shape the mysterious land and invite us to discovery. Erhu, flute, and percussion fall upon us like blessed rain. The caravan takes us onto a well-worn path that is as old as mankind.

We head directly east into **Europe-Floating Along the Danube**. Warm, vibrant strings, like a waltz on a summer's day introduces us to the refined land where music dwells and grows. Somewhere in the Black Forest the Danube was born and it flows south into the Black Sea. What marvelous stories this river could tell over the centuries. Gandalf tells the part of the story on gentle piano with horns and strings to keep the waltz alive.

South America-Across the Andes is next with colorful panflute and echoing piano taking us across the mountain. Each step takes us higher. Starting from volcanic jungles up to snowcapped peaks, the journey is arduous, but the rewards are great. To touch the sky is to touch the faces of

the Gods. Glorious clarinet and strings combine in a modern theme aided by a splash of Spanish guitar.

With a dramatic flourish to open the piece, we can hear progressive rock phrasing on **Australia Dreamtime Traveler**, one of my favorites on the album. There seems to be an exciting duel between orchestra and digeridoo throughout the piece. The piano takes us over the crusty land as we travel through endless ranges and high into the Seven Summits. A bit of Alan Parsons-esque guitar grinds through the music's strange veritas.

And finally, **Atlantis-Legend from a Lost Civilization I & II**. Slightly somber and reverent Gandalf's theme here is an homage to a lost era. Angelic chorus and keening violin along with heavenly organ conjoin to offer prayers for a past civilization that was known by a very few. The music is set as a wordless requiem, but the emotion is deeply innate.

If you want to know what the planet sounded like a thousand years ago, or yesterday, or even tomorrow, that Eartheana is the right recording for you. Eartheana is a modern day symphony similar to monumental works of Gustav Holst (*The Planets*) or Ferde Grofé (*Grand Canyon Suite*). Gandalf is the owner of an amazing New Age legacy that dates back to 1981 with the debut of his first album *Journey to an Imaginary Land*. His discography is more than 45 recordings and compilations. Although it is evident that he has a deep foundation in classical roots, his structure has evolved into a complex, multi-genre fabrication over more than forty years. Excellent. - R J Lannan, Artisan Music Reviews