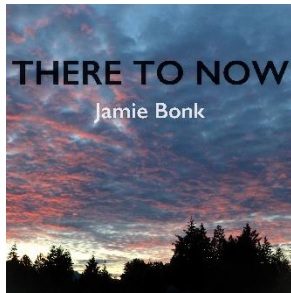


Jamie Bonk

There to Now

jamiebonk.com



I have always known Jamie Bonk to be a brilliant guitarist. I haven't heard his music for a while now and here he comes with a new album that is so far afield from what I am used to that I had to check the label twice. Now the new album's title makes so much sense. **There to Now**. This ten track album is an intoxicating mix of vocals and instrumentals that range from contemporary to jazz to the fringes of New Age, but just barely. What intrigued me was the finely crafted ballads that were intermingled with the instrumental arrangements.

Last Thing First opens the album and sets the tone. The instrumental music is complex using a lot of tools and voices. It is an animated song with a lot of quick interludes by other instruments. The background is full of swaying vocalise. It is the gathering of energies. Good Start.

The next song is a vocal featuring singer **Wendy Irvine** called **Hopefully Me**. The song has this quirky intro that is part banjo and part electric guitar. (No banjos were injured during the making of this album). The song is about second chances. Bonk's well-rounded composition could be an intro to any modern day rom-com on the box.

*"This time I'm bound to find a way back to the start
This time you'll see hopefully me right side up".*

Here Is turned out to be a slow, descending instrumental with **Henrik Bridger** on bass answering to Jamie's bright, seductive fret work. It is the kind of tune that will have you close your eyes and begin the fantasy. Lot of that lucid dreaming going on in this album.

Get ready for some great jazz-flavored flute on the tune **Inlet**. The song is dynamic and well-tooled and it sounded as if it was an improvised thing. The band has a good time on this one as you can hear the energies floating around in the air. Just like **Jim McBirnie's** flute notes, everything is alive. One of the best cuts on *There to Now*.

Jamie's polished guitar plays friendly ally to a possible pop/country song called **It Always Will**. The tune, full of regret and angst, features the gravelly voice of well-known song writer **Ron Scott**. The midtempo, expressive ballad would be comfortable on any stage where story songs and good music mix to give the weekend some purpose.

Look Closer is another instrumental that blurs the lines of specific genres, but it grabs and pulls you along. Bonk's fret work really stands out on this one as it sets the tempo and timbre on a song describing the journey more than the destination. This is another favorite.

The final track is called **So Now I Know** and the fluid, provocative jazz theme just drips off the tune like candle wax at the end of the evening. Bonk uses the surreptitious interchange between Bridger's bass and his sultry guitar like a hushed conversation of late night lovers. You are going to want to play that one again.

Other tracks include **Anything At All**, **Pull You Up**, and **On the Line**.

There to Now is an album you play when friends are over and they say, "Who's that?" and you get to tell them about the artist and the pleasure his music gives you. The heads nod and they make the promise to explore more later on. This is Bonk's seventh album and I hope he creates more. His music is a refreshing break from the FM radio claptrap that we are subjected to these days. It is a Play and Repeat album for just about any time. Highly listenable.

- R J Lannan, Artisan Music Reviews