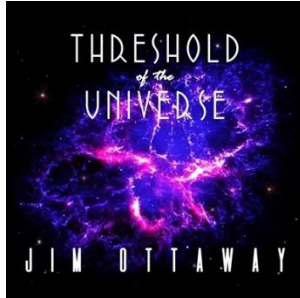


Jim Ottaway

Threshold of the Universe



Electronic music wizard **Jim Ottaway** hits the heights of improvisation on his latest offering, **Threshold of the Universe**. Jim takes nine different paths to get to his destination and they all converge deliberately on a unique album to get lost in. Contradictive? I don't think so. The recent deployment of the Webb Space Telescope will rocket the space sciences into the next era of discovery. Luckily, Mr. Ottaway has afforded a very good soundtrack to accompany those new discoveries. Example: track number one.

Beyond Space and Time opens the journey. It is a promise kept as the music cajoles you into taking your first step. You move through space like a mote caught up in the updraft of a solar wind. Ottaway's mesmerizing cosmic anthem suggests that you have no course but go where universe wants you. Enjoy the ride.

Looking through the glass darkly we perceive a vision that distorts and confuses. With a great deal of time we see the disambiguous truth. Ottaway captures that truth in the tune **Celestial Parallax**. Low, moaning bass lines sweep into mid-tone elementals and the great expanse is before you. Distance is imperceptible and time, well, time means absolutely nothing. Your mind has a direction, but the destination is unsure. Great tracks for those lost in space.

You come out of null space and there it is. The first blue star man has ever witnessed firsthand. And it is an **Alien Star**. The music paces, pulsates, and pops. Suddenly, a single tone cavorts like a disembodied dancer. The blue music is a siren song for some alien race. And you cannot help but be drawn to it. It is going to change your idea about what alien really means.

Two Trillion Galaxies is one of my favorite on Threshold of the Universe. The very title staggers the human imagination. Ottaway's concept goes far beyond the number of stars in our sky or the number of grains of sand on every beach and in every desert on our humble little planet. Wave after wave of sound mixed with beeps and burbles and with a remarkable keyboard melody make the track an endless voyage beyond our mind's imaginings.

Anyone that delves into comic books in the least several decades knows of dark matter. Imperceptible in the known light spectrum it is there nonetheless. Ottaway's song **Dark Matter in Distorted Light** is a brooding, shadowy remark on something we cannot really see, but there it is. It is errors, it is doubts, and it is despair hidden in our souls. This is another fine work that makes the listeners think about their environment, inside and out.

The final cut is **Threshold of the Universe**. Jim Ottaway opens an unseen door for us with a gentle persuasion of rich harmonies and fluid sounds in this title tune. It sounds like some cosmic hand waving us in to the unknown. Beckoning us, inviting us to take the journey. You don't have

to ask me twice. Other tracks include Starburst in Celestial Darkness, Infinite Space, and Parallel Suns.

Threshold of the Universe adds to space ambient Australian composer Jim Ottaway's copious repertoire of more than thirty titles. His albums extend past just ambient fare, sometimes mixing in New Age, electronic of course, relaxation, and other genres, as well as music for film and television. Ottaway's music is in demand not only for his incredible solo works, but also as a collaborator for many other artists. I liked every track on Threshold of the Universe. Highly listenable. - R J Lannan, Artisan Music Reviews