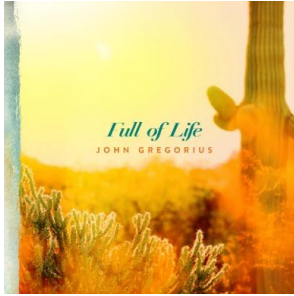


John Gregorius  
Full of Life



This is my first encounter with the music of guitarist **John Gregorius**. I'm happy to report that the music is more than fine. Grab some boots and a daypack. His 12 track album **Full of Life** is bulging at the seams with exhilarating, desert stricken ambient guitar. The music conveys to the listener that the wide open spaces you crave can be visited right inside your own living room via sometimes invigorating, sometime thought provoking melodies. Gregorius's energetic, spatial, and endlessly playable electric/acoustic guitar compositions have just enough accompaniment to make it interesting with vocals by Kimberly Daniels, bass by Rick Baptista, cello by Kayla Daniels, and drums by Mitch Cross. Nothing intrusive, just good contextual additions. I could feel the desert heat of Tucson in the mix, along with the respect for the vastness of the desert and the knowledge that solitude can be a welcomed state of being.

**The Expansive Sky** opens the album with a greeting of the highest order. The azure desert sky is limitless in depth and energy. Above you the sun powers the whole planet, eagles soar on unseen thermals, and the heat makes more changes than the eye can see. The music has a wondrous flow to it as if you are in one of those *Blue Planet* time lapse videos where things happens at a rapid pace, but you can see everything clearly.

There is a defined poignancy to the song **Unfolding Beauty**. It is slightly sad and deeply beautiful as John's evocative melody resonates with the timeless sound of man waiting for something miraculous to happen; the clearest blue sky you ever saw chasing away the clouds or the purple bloom of a cactus flower or better still, a gibbous silver moon in the black night sky sliding in and out of the clouds.

The mild tempo of the title tune **Full of Life** slows things down a little, but just enough to gather your daydreams and make them a reality. John's effortless and sophisticated acoustic fretwork paints sound pictures that are vibrant, colorful, and boundless. It quickly became my favorite on the recording.

**Path of Renewal** is John's way of proclaiming the delight he found in rediscovering his joie de vive. Some places on this planet have innate spiritual power. The desert is one such place that offers the combination of unseen elements. They bring about a sense of calm, beauty, strength, and spirituality to anyone that is looking, listening, and feeling. Gregorius's acoustic guitar tune is a driving, primal force, a musical magnet for many potentials.

A small touch of electronic warble, lush guitar, and a mesmerizing melody make up the tune **Monsoon Clearing**. The soft vocals and muted percussion does not impede the main theme of flowing, dynamic movement. The music washes over you, eroding away the cares of your beleaguered world while pushing and guiding you to a new place of peace.

The gold of the rising dawn over the desert is a treasure of which even Midas could not have dreamed. **Early Reflection**, like any admirable sunrise starts off muted, soft, and gentle, but increases in intensity until there is no doubt that the power behind it is Divine. The music has an organic resonance that ripples through the air like your own personal mirage. Great cut for reflective reverie.

The final cut **Rincon Fading Light** pretty much brings the recording full circle. The tune is pure electronic ambience, with waves of sound coursing gently over the spirit. It draws from the final vestiges of warmth that the planet has to offer before turning its head and sleeping. Somewhere in the valley, the Saguaro waves goodnight as we hear the tolling of a distant bell.

Gregarius uses a nimble touch on all of his compositions imparting the music with a free form lightness. Hidden in the notes is a celebration of just being alive and I liked the album for that. All twelve tracks as a matter of fact. Beauty is where you find it, and John Gregorius has found it in the Sonoran Desert and he has transposed it into accomplished ambient soundscapes. We can find it in his music. – R J Lannan, Artisan Music Reviews