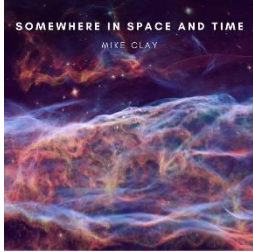


Mike Clay

Somewhere in Time and Space



**Somewhere in Time and Space** is a notable follow up to electronic composer **Mike Clay's** previous album *Imaginary Edges*. Both have an unmistakable flowing vibe that promotes introspective journeys, in this case utilizing the vast medium of space. The music is well balanced in the sense that it never gets overbearing with swells and loud passages. Just a measured, careful combination of melody and subtle elements to coax forth the message or theme. The ambience if you will.

The album opens with a cut called **Ambient Memories**. All of the tracks have common attributes, that of depth and distance. The listener travels a great expanse to find traces of an unknown civilization. The carvings on a cold black rock are indecipherable. Clay's theme is somewhat haunting as it drones and vibrates. The sound travels through you into a blackness, an inconsolable emptiness. Maybe the music will reveal the answers.

**Comet Crossing** has a mild calliope feel to it which includes all the vibrant notes going around in a circle, some sparkling elements, and a dizzying after effect. What we think of a cold balls of ice and rock are harbingers of an unknown future. Their shining tails paint the night sky with silver dust and hopeful dreams.

With a rapid heartbeat tempo, **Time Passage** goes by faster than any memory can recount. Mike uses bell-like tones to mark the pace and illustrate that time is unstoppable, relentless, and often unforgivable. There is ominous tension to the track as if we are holding our collective breaths waiting for the next happenstance.

On **Memories of Space** the sound of a cosmic vibraphone takes the lead. It has this whispering in the background as if the ether is spreading rumors. Once again, Clay's music is somber, but not stodgy as the melody expands. Waves of sound and the vibraphone connect like synapses in the brain. Are we remembering facts or is everything a dream? The music, acting like a soporific, blurs the lines.

There is a lonely church somewhere up in universe. Currently, the cosmic organist is playing **Beautiful Bliss**. Something between a hymn and a quite lament, the pipe organ reverently streams with its melancholic, bassy prayer. As I sit in this imaginary pew, I look up to see the stars forming an amorphous roof, swirling clouds of color as the stained glass windows, and the delicate joy of Clay's flowing tune fills all my senses. One of my favorites.

**Nebula Rising** had a fascinating effect. I could actually feel the vibrations of the music soaking into me. It was unnerving and exciting at the same time. My whole world became the inside of a giant bell that tolled with smooth, rolling ambiances. It turned out to be a very calming vibration field. Something almost mystical.

The last cut is appropriately titled **End of Time**. It consists of waves and quavers, ticking and popping, and with no horizon in sight for this humming finale. It is an electronic round, a loop of endless possibilities. This one had more obvious physical rhythm than most tracks. The theme of distance was suspended. Clay managed to suggest a continuous flow, as if time was also in a loop.

Like many artists that started with a different instrument at the beginning of their careers, in this case a trumpet, Mike Clay was enthralled with the synthesizer. In the early 70s German electronic music was just catching on and as the new genre grew, so did Mike's enthusiasms. Flash forward to several decades later and this retired teacher is anything but retired as it pertains to his spatial, highly developed music. For some well-conceived escapism, I recommend *Somewhere in Time and Space*. - R J Lannan, Artisan Music Reviews