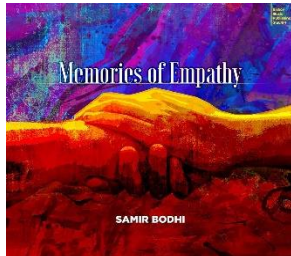


Samir Bodhi

Memories of Empathy

Samirbodhi.hearnow.com



Why would a billionaire send a car up into space? Because he can. The cost? Ninety million dollars. It is quite a lot to squander to make a point. The state of the world, specifically, the inequality, the poverty, and the indifference is not addressed on YouTube videos or in public relations releases. It is all around us as we walk down the street. Or when we see the news. Or talk to our neighbors.

Composer **Samir Bodhi**'s latest album **Memories of Empathy** is clearly about the search for balance, for basic equality, and perhaps a hopeful outcome. Bodhi is a music writer, guitarist, and producer still riding the wave of acceptance from his first album *Stairway to Nirvana* which garnered quite a few awards. His music is what I call modern progressive rock meets Indian style World music. You can get a lot of mileage from crossing several genres of music and Bodhi does this well. *Memories of Empathy* is six tracks of ethnically driven World fusion tracks boldly trying to bring attention to the state of the world.

**Affinity** featuring a modest vocal lead and ethnic elements, is offered up not so much as a ballad, but as a prayer. Spanish guitar and Santoor (**Sandip Chatterjee**) intermingle in the theme like musical cousins. As inequality is a world problem, our affinity should be global, and not just local, but it must start somewhere, sometime. Bodhi's heartfelt composition suggests it should begin in our own hearts.

**Compassion-Karuna** is the search for mercy in an indifferent world. As the Gautama Buddha teaches, we must radiate our compassion in all directions. Bodhi's song starts at the ocean shore and reverberates inland. Multi-instrumentalist **David "Vito" Gregoli** performs on the mandolin to give this tune an old world feeling. He literally plays several roles on this recording. The music suggests that we should open our hearts to the suffering of others. Let us right the wrongs. Let us allow our actions to define mercy.

With the strong, mature, and appealing voice of **Madhumita Chatterjee**, the tune **Have and Have Nots** has that organic sound of Indian ragas, but with a bit of groove. **Supriyo Dutta** is the answering voice in the polyphonic based melody. In many parts of the world, India included, the caste system is very much alive. And the poorest of the poor continually suffer for lack of compassion. Perhaps an Occupy the World protest is way overdue.

One of the most complex tunes on *Memories of Empathy* is called **Heaven So High**. Lustrous guitar mixes with ethereal flute in an instrumental that is the most joyful on the recording. Bodhi's emotional guitar melody offer a respite from the sadness and worries of the heavy heart.

**Indifference** pretty much says it all. The tune with a very commanding vocal is a mantra of sadness mixed with a prayer to Durga. *Indifference* uses the scared sound of Om and the words

from the Gayatri Mantra. You do not have to know Sanskrit or Vedic meter to understand the pleading words of this mantra. *Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan* offers the best translation as “We meditate on the adorable glory of the radiant sun; may She inspire our intelligence” from *The Principals of Upanishads* (1953). The tune is quite beautiful.

The album concludes with the tune **World of Empathy** in which a door opens and, optimistically, it is a door to tomorrow. Bass guitar from **Sanjoy Das** drives the tune as the piano builds the theme. There are some sparkling elements throughout, but the tune has some unexpected jazz components that are remarkable as well. An echoing horn travels throughout the tune in a seamless manner blazing a musical trail for others to follow. It is hopeful ingredient. Of all the songs on the album, this one is the best example of World fusion. And it was a favorite.

Other players on the album include Partha Paul on synth, Joydeb Nandi on tabla, and Louis Banks on electronic piano. It appears that composer Samir Bodhi has a promising second album in *Memories of Empathy*, not only for its complex as well as interesting musical components, but also for its poignant theme. Highly listenable.

- R J Lannan, [ArtisanMusicReviews.com](http://ArtisanMusicReviews.com)