

Sean O'Bryan Smith

Musings of an Occasional Somebody



Not since Erik Scott's *A Trick of the Wind* many years ago have I heard a bass player take the lead and run with it like a kid with scissors in their hand. **Sean O'Bryan Smith's** album **Musings of an Occasional Somebody** takes a genre bending course through the world of ambience and grabs your interest like a music powered flash-bang. With Mr. Smith on upright electric bass and multi-string basses, it features guitarist John Gregorius, Tommy Ogle on sax, Keith Medley on guitar, Rick Krainak on guitar as well as Dieter Spears on keyboards, Chinmaya Dunster on Sarod (more about this later), and Brannan Lane on electric piano, and least but not last John Fluker on piano. There was an alluding in the material that this album is New Age, but more accurately it is adventurous music suspended across a wide spectrum of genres including ambient. Every song has a different story.

After many listenings, the opening track, **The Great Mystery** became an instant favorite. This sinuous, stylistic tune has a magical flow and an unusual presence. John Gregorius' guitar seems to be omnipresent throughout the music. There a remarkable difference in this tune than the others. The difference being listening to a regular performance, the players are in front of you playing laterally. Gregorius' performance is orbicular as if you were in your own sphere of sound. I liked that. Going back in soon.

Dramatic percussion and a bold bassline combine in a tune shrouded in questions called **The Fog**. Every drum beat is a step in the wrong direction. The guitar, with a sitar like tone, adds an eastern sense of shadowy enigmatic emotion. One wonders where the edge of the cliff is though.

Over Land and Sea is a bright tune full of idiosyncratic motion as the adventure continues. The Hindustani sarod, a stringed instrument with a warbling voice is used judiciously to create a sense of movement to distant domains. It's a trip I don't mind taking again as no physical conveyance is necessary.

Another outstanding track on *Musings of an Occasional Somebody* is called **Isla del Paraiso**. If this be paradise, leave me here. Gregorius plays opposite **John Fluker's** lavish piano. Together they weave an intricate fabric of brassy sunshine, blue skies, and sparkling seas into an experience that leaves time behind as a distant memory.

Around Every Turn is an eccentric, earthly departure made up of Mr. Lane's electronics, steady yet subtle cathedral like bass, and a free spirited melody. It is like being inside a changing scene of musical textures and colors. Every note produces something new to imagine.

A bouncy beat tags the tune **New Day** as a journey for discovery. Once the sun rises the planet is ready to explore. But who said this was your planet? Sean's otherworldly theme is expansive and ebullient. There's a hint of jazz in the background of this bold undertaking.

The final cut, **The Chosen** is all ambient. The bass line softens the edges on this spatial foray while Keith Medley's brilliant fretless guitar work puts in a lot of time. Together they make this an aural Dali-esque rendition of sculptured notes that results in a work of art that only eclectic palettes can appreciate. Very refined or if not, esoteric.

Other songs include From the East and The Albatross and the Whale. Musings of an Occasional Somebody is nine tracks of musica incognita that commands attention at every turn. On no tune does Smith's otherwise methodical bass overwhelm the other performances. Each track is simultaneously entertaining and thought provoking. The theme of the music being muse inspired seems to hold true for every song. What is unique in here is the understated bass lines combined with the engaging musical scenarios. It makes this album a winner. Highly listenable.

- R J Lannan, Artisan Music Reviews