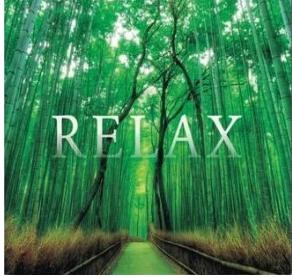


Selected Artists - Domo Records

Relax



Once in a while you come across an album that offers a suggestion and then follows through beautifully. **Relax**, the latest from the Domo Music Group, does just that. With a dozen talented artists on the recording, the music calms the waters of a troubled mind. Several genres are addressed in the collection such as electronic, contemporary, and World and even a sampling of classical music fare. In other words, something for everyone.

The opening number is a resplendent contemporary tune by Kuni Murai called **Wings to Fly**. It features lush orchestration that is uplifting and transcendent. To me the music that says, “Here is the warm sun, here is the clear sky, and now a strong wind to guide you. Do what you will.”

Sleeping Woman by flutist Luis Perez sounded almost like a Celtic tune, but then the melody changed into something from South of the American border. The myth of Princess Iztaccihuatl and how she was deceived into believing her lover, warrior prince Popocatépetl was dead, is the foundation for many a sad story from the Mexican mountains. Perez’s flute captures the melancholy of the Sleeping Woman in notes that are covered in tears. It seems every continent has their Romeo and Juliet.

One of Domo’s most popular artists is Kitaro and he contributes two songs to the album. One is Wood Fairy, which is amazing to me as I never thought Kitaro the woodsy adventurer type, but the other song, **Estrella** is stratospherically beautiful with its clear, dulcet melody. As some strings and oboe electronically dance in the black night sky along with the stars, Kitaro’s trademark quavers, synth washes, and other scintillating sonic elements make a friendly appearance.

There is a hint of classical elements and earthy blandishments in the tune **Linden** by Yu-Xiao Guang and I liked it for that. To me the erhu always sings like a saddened lover, but that is its plight. Besides being a beautiful tree, the linden has been known as a source of medicine for centuries. This time the music is medicine for the soul. So for now, let us drink the linden tea that heals with its exquisite melody. This is a favorite on the recording.

Another of Domo’s long-time artists, Dave Eggar offers up a song called **Rune**. Clear, resounding solo piano renders a smooth jazz and contemporary piece that just seems to diminish your cares and allows you to breathe. Yes, there is writing on the wall and the runes say take comfort here.

Soothing and soft guitar is featured on the tune **Aurora** by Dino Malito. Like those wispy curtains of magic light usually reserved for the northern regions, Malito’s tune dances in the ether with a mystical abandon. The tune is carefree and light, the ambience dreamy and elevating.

Pianist Steve Anderson offers up two classically tinged numbers, a variation of **Debussy's Suite Bergamasque**, I, 75 III. Clair de Lune and an arrangement of **Beethoven's Piano Sonata No. 14** in C-Sharp Minor, Op.27: No.2 "Moonlight Sonata": I. Adagio Sostenuto. Great music always seems to return to its roots. Both pieces are fitting subject matter for an album that offers poignant and polished music encouraging the concept of mindfulness. Living in the moment can be a great source of peace. Those evocative, yet memorable opening notes of Clair de Lune never fail to tug at the heart strings.

See The Light is, at first, difficult to listen to. Fumio Miyashita's minimalistic offering of just four notes seemed repetitive and paradoxical. But then all at once the cadence became soothing like an otherworldly heartbeat. Then more distant notes appear and the melody is formed. It is like an electronic mantra and it offers a level of quietude without being the least bit obtrusive.

Additional contributions are offered by Seda Bağcan, Hiroki Okano, Uma Silbey, and Benedetti & Svoboda. Domo Music Group was founded by Eiichi Naito in 1993. The label name actually means "Thank you" in Japanese, and it is one of the many unique record labels that started up during the growth of New Age Music and similar genres at the time. However, it is we that say thank you for the many years and many talents that the label has offered over the years. Relax is just another example of music that gives comfort to the soul when we need it. And we need it now more than ever. Highly listenable. – R J Lannan, Artisan Music Reviews