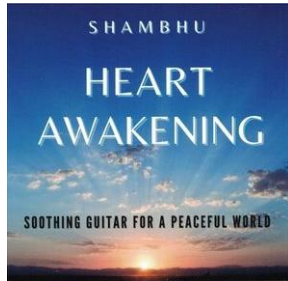


Shambhu

Heart Awakening



New Age/jazz guitarist **Shambhu** offers up a bit of respite from the weighty, prolonged journey of the pandemic on his latest release **Heart Awakening**. His aim is to encourage the spirit with hopes that life shall improve despite tribulations of a troubling, weary world. I for one, need the peace that this music tenders. Shambhu leads the way on electric and acoustic guitars, while accompanied by Celso Alberti on drums and percussion, Premik Russell Tubbs on soprano saxophone, Frank Martin and Geoffrey Menin on piano, Matteo Palmer on electric guitar, and Todd Boston on percussion. This jazz/New Age/contemporary five track EP offers up an extensive, time freezing experience for those that want to bring back daydreams and fantasies of great things to come.

The title tune **Heart Awakening** is a slow, drowsy tune balancing on the head of pin. Weightless, and without cares, the transcendent music transports you into that place where clouds are born and water flows endlessly, transformed into rain, rain into ocean. Meanwhile, the sun exudes benevolent warmth. And hey, the day is just beginning.

Infinite Eyes has a Slack Key guitar feel to it, and with it comes that peaceful, easy feeling we are all looking for. Dreamy acoustic guitar up front, jaunty electric guitar in the distance, and in the middle is the impartial piano balancing everything very well. Harmonics are used sparingly for punctuation, but the message is clear. What is in the distance will be right before your eyes tomorrow.

Sounding like something out of the George Benson songbook, the tune **Preparing for Flight** takes you on a jazz versus blues journey with a little sampling of samba mixed in. The tune has a great flow with Tubbs' fluid flute and a polished piano lead that takes you along for the ride.

Little B's Poem is my favorite on Heart Awakening. This heartfelt melody combining Shambhu's guitar and piano by Frank Martin makes for a very poignant tune. The music comes from legendary vibraphone player Bobby Hutcherson's gift to his young son. Decades old, but fresh in its sentiment of love for family. The band treats this song in the most tender fashion and I just could not get enough of it.

The final tune, and I am sad that it is, is called **Song for You**. It is a strong guitar ballad with an aim toward friendship. Friendship that is built one note at a time and stronger than any manmade bastion. Music does that. Great music does that tenfold. Premik Russell Tubbs soars on this one, but Shambhu's electric guitar is right alongside. It is a great pairing as each musician takes his turn and complements the others. You can hear the bond in the music.

I wish that there were ten songs on the album, but I take comfort in the five allotted to me. Each tune pulled me in and helped me remember the positives in life. The blessings that I forgot for a

time: love, friendship, sunny days, and peaceful dreams. They are all here in Shambhu's music and all you have to do is listen. Not surprising, this album is Highly Listenable.

- R J Lannan, Artisan Music Reviews