

Suzanne Teng & Gilbert Levy

Shimmer - Ambient Flute from The Tank

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This is a situation in which being the product of the environment is a miraculous thing. In this case it is a huge, metal water tank built for the railroad in Northwestern Colorado in the 1940's. In 2013 *The Tank* was turned into a giant recording studio with some very amazing acoustics. The husband and wife team of **Suzanne Teng** and **Gilbert Levy** recently took advantage of those wondrous audio properties on their latest album **Shimmer - Ambient Flute from The Tank**. Teng is a well-known flautist and Levy is a gifted percussionist who combine their substantial talents on the recording of a dozen tunes that give wing to the ambient category and allow it to fly and flutter in a unique resonating atmosphere.

The initial journey to The Tank inspired the first song called **Hanging Lake**. The duo pay homage to the beauty of the geological wonder of Glenwood Canyon using flute and hang drum, a pleasing combination. There is something magical in the sound of polyphony. Music that floats out into the air only to return to its source in glorious echoes makes for a peaceful experience.

In the tune **Harmonic Dance** Teng coaxes her flute into producing living reverberations. Every note dances in the voluminous space and returns to her as if she held sway over their existence, a Goddess over sound. And she clearly does. Her bass flute is in tune with the planet and it is the voice of the earth of yesterday. And tomorrow.

Shimmer, the title track and a solo bamboo flute saunter, is an outstanding slice of sheer ambient bliss. Her joyous, sonic creations rise as if carried by their own transformations like embers from a fire. These embers carry their own light, their own energies, and we who are below are bathed in them when they turn into audible rain.

Catch Me If You Can is a union of hand pan and flute. The music is butterfly and flower, clouds and sunshine, water and stone. Each complementary, but then again each different. The song is playful, improvisational, and expansive. The final note lingers for a very long time.

For me, one of the standout tracks on Shimmer is **Calling the Raven**. The raven is a creature of change. Of transformation. The music facilitates that change. On this tune Teng uses the humble ocarina while Levy strums a saz, a Turkish lute, that adds another mysterious voice to the piece. East does meet West. This song takes advantage of the echoing environment as the notes just seems to resonate forever. It becomes a immersion of sound.

Sounding the Bell is a tune that rings true. It ring pure and long like a continuous wave. Think of a ripple in a pond. I don't know if it is a Tibetan bowl, a real bell, or just the unseen music of the spheres, but it softly vibrates all the way to your spirit. Suzanne's gentle flute sings a sacred

song as if it were a prayer. This is another favorite and I replayed it many times. It is completely calming.

The Crossing recounts a delicate Native American flute story that is heard from the deepest canyon on this earth. The notes are carried skyward by the endless updrafts and into the heavens. One can imagine shadowy figures walking across the desert in the night. Their only guide is the light of the stars above.

The final tune is called **Una**. Like sound waves made of cold heat, Suzanne's bass flute produces a mirage in the mind. The cold heat song produces shapes and colors, light and darkness, joy and a sorrow. Each on their own wave and all of them comingling within the tune. A suitable conclusion to the album. Additional tracks include **And the Crickets Sing**, **Mother and Child**, **Golden Temple**, and **Farewell Miranda**.

I enjoyed every song on the recording. Listening to Shimmer made me feel like I was in a separate dimension where I was in the middle of some vast, yet pleasant blackness and I was surrounded by sound. It touched me. It filled me. It kept me buoyant as if I had no physical body. Every song created its own sonic environment. I urge caution if you listen to this music in the dark. You will be affected. Excellent album.

- R J Lannan, Artisan Music Reviews