

Tom Caufield

Arrive and Disappear



At my age I no longer have the dependence on a wrist watch I used to have or on a cell phone chronometer. Not even a clock on the wall. I'm old school. I acknowledge the passing of time by witnessing the seasons. I allot three months for each. Sometimes they overlap. Sometimes they hurry by. But they all **Arrive and Disappear**, just like the theme of contemporary guitarist **Tom Caufield's** newest album. Caulfield has literally changed his tune for his last couple of albums, adding very light accompaniment. A violin here. A cello there. It turned his already extraordinary guitar compositions into musical experiences. You're going to want to devote some time to this. The recent pandemic has given us time to think, to worry, and for some, to hurt and even despair. That same period gave Caufield time to create an album of contemplative healing music. Let's give it a listen.

The music on track one, the title track, **Arrive and Disappear** comes on gradually, like a new dawn. First there is just a hint of light. A faint glow. Then the horizon lights up and there is light. And warmth. And energy. And life. Caufield's main guitar theme is the impetus for that light. It is time to begin again. Every day is a fresh start.

Caufield has an esoteric point of view and sometimes he is hard to follow. For example the tune called **The Vermont Feather Revival**. It is a capricious ditty with a hometown, U S A feeling. Or it's a sepia vignette of images in a card board box. It's up and down the dusty roads, the county fair is next week, and where does the time go? Maybe Tom is telling us just go. Have some fun why don't you?

A tribute to Mike Oldfield's 1975 album, the tune **Ommadawn** is somewhat nostalgic in its intent, but melodious in form. Oldfield is and always has been more than just Tubular Bells. His complexities are interesting, his melodies pensive when listened to in the right atmosphere. On Caufield's rendition Judy Kang's cello adds a sense of folksy, warm companionship. Like the first version however, the music provides a great deal of comfort. Caufield's version is a bit more delicate than the original.

There is no wise man behind the curtain. There is no sage at the top of any mountain. Tom's instrumental called **If We Knew Why** sends us looking for the right answers, but no one knows. This is one of the best tunes on Arrive and Disappear. It has a poignant, polished melody which features cellist Mark Edward Lewis with various strings and horns for ambient emphasis.

**Tomorrow's Road** is, if anything, promising. Caufield cleverly tucks a feeling of hope within the notes. Everyone is hoping for that new sunrise, that sense of peace that they once knew or searched for in their everyday dreams. This gentle, unpretentious tune is like a musical hug.

In life, **The Little We Choose** determines our fate. Tom's beautiful ballad reminds us to give thought to our actions. And we must be as careful in our thoughts. Let us help instead of hinder. Let our eyes smile behind a mask instead of frowning. Should we not love one another rather than choosing someone to hate? Tom steps up the bass in this modern day sonata while quavers of sound sparkle throughout the piece. Time to make a choice.

The final tune is called **Weather Vane**. At a little under a minute, it reminds me of a quote from Augustus Hare who wrote, "*Thought is the wind, knowledge the sail, and mankind the vessel.*" It's time to follow the wind.

On Arrive and Disappear Caufield plays several guitars, keyboards, and recorder. He is joined by two cellists, Judy Kang and Mark Edward Lewis. I have had the pleasure of reviewing Tom Caufield a number of times. I am always amazed at this man's talent. From simple guitar themes to complex orchestrations, Caufield never disappoints. He is the thinking man's guitarist who creates mindful compositions in which every note is diligently thought out, carefully placed, and lovingly performed. As I celebrate the arrival of spring and the disappearance of winter, I know I have just the right music to pass the time. Highly Recommended. - R J Lannan, Artisan Music Reviews