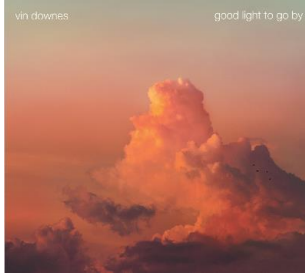


Vin Downes  
good light to go by



Some writers use complicated ideas to flesh out the characters of their stories. Guitarist and composer **Vin Downes** uses intricate notes, warm nuances, and finely crafted compositions to give life to his music. In this case, he uses lots of light. The title is the giveaway - **good light to go by**. I have known of Downes and his music for many years now and he is on anyone's Top Ten as one of the best acoustic guitarists on the planet. **good light to go by** is one of those recordings that you put on and escape for a while. Careful! You may decide you can fly. In fact, you may realize that you are aloft looking down at the world. Vin's music is a form of transportation for the spirit. Hold on tight.

Please note every song has a title that disallows the use capital letters. The first cut is called **falling into place**. There are days and, there are days. Once in a while you get your ducks in a row, the cats stay within the boundaries, and life feels good. Time to play a cheerful, upbeat ballad that suggests a lot of sunshine and blue sky. Vin uses a friendly melody in this light, idyllic tune.

**the flawed heart** take us into an emotional exploration of the dangers of making mistakes. Don't get itchy. Life is full of them. Downes injects a touch of melancholy into the notes and the mood is one of sadness for a time. Misconceptions and words left unsaid often lead to those kinds of mistakes. The song travels along looking for answers and finally does, but at a price.

One of my favorites on the album is a freewheeling ballad called **oak lane**. It is a play anytime tune that is bright and full of potential. This not a high energy tune, but has a flow that your mind can follow along with and literally, get lost in. If you're walking, slow down a bit and admire those petunias Mrs. Bloomindale set out. If you're driving, roll down the window, let the fresh air in, and take another spin around the block.

None of the songs on the album are ebullient, but there are subtle nuances of warmth and emotion secreted within the finely-crafted notes of Downes' polished compositions. The title tune **good light to go by** is one of the more sedate offerings on which less notes says so much more. It is a placid tune, but the light is famous for its trick, so beware. Maybe it is okay to follow the light this time. This beautiful tune should be played on REPEAT as a sacrifice to the spirit. It is calming and contemplative, and should be used as often as necessary.

Downes pay homage to one of his favorite guitar heroes, the legendary David Crosby on the tune **the red shirt is for crying**. The lyrics are from a heretofore unreleased Crosby song. Downes plays a gentle role here, and although the lyrics aren't present, the sentiment of the tune is obvious. The instrumental is emotional, but transcendent in its tender delivery. Perhaps compassionate is the word for which I search.

If you walk out the door of the Belmont Hotel in Seaside, New Jersey and walk two and half blocks east, you find yourself staring at the vast gray-green Atlantic Ocean. Just beyond the waves and over the horizon you can imagine the rocky shores of Portugal. To the south is Morocco and frankly, the rest of the world. Vin's introspective tune, **belmont**, gives boundless flight to the imagination. Think of it as a starting point.

The final cut is called **each other's home** and it is the only tune on which Vin has accompaniment. There is Kenny Withrow on guitar and slide guitar and Mai Leisz on fretless bass. The tempo is slightly less faster than a heartbeat, but the sentiment is clear. Two become one on every level. This is a powerful tune in which the vibe gets stronger as the story unfolds. Another favorite.

No surprise that I liked every track on **good light to go by**. Vin Downes is an extraordinary guitarist and he has a paucity of albums on the market, but every one of them has an abundance of evocative and emotional rewards. This is mood altering music that placates the soul and adds lift to the impending journey, no matter what the destination. Highly recommended. - R J Lannan, Artisan Music Reviews

Vin Downes

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**BLURB**

Singular Guitarist Vin Downes returns with an exceptional incursion into contemporary music. This 12-track collection called good light to go by diverts the senses into a world where light and sound seamlessly converge. The consequence is an amazing, peaceful refuge of thought provoking, soul-satisfying music.