

Vin Downes

three evenings



Fingerstyle guitarist **Vin Downes** is not what you'd call prolific in the number of albums he has released, but he is a perfectionist. Okay, he has eight albums. But on each of them every note, every nuance, and every phrase must be just so. On his latest submission '**three evenings**', it sounds like perfection is still the norm for this incredible musician. The album consists of a dozen tracks of contemporary, flawless fret work that draws the listener to the back porch, the cracking fireplace, or the dusty open road. Vin's music is for every occasion and every heart. The album is further enhanced by the careful hand of producer Tom Eaton who appears on at least one cut.

The track titles are all lowercase letters, so bear with me. The album opens with the tune '**sail down the sides**'. It is a bright, exhilarating tune that promises the wind at your back, the sun in your eyes, and a lot of sea going motion. This tracks literally cruises down the sound, Puget pun intended.

Slow and easy, '**landini's nightingale**' is Downes at his best. Complex, flowing energies produces a tune that dances in your mind. This elegant music is olde world just on the edge of perhaps a 15<sup>th</sup> baroque piece. Everyone bow to the patron, now bow to each other. This is one of my favorites on three evenings. Monteverdi would be so proud.

Thought provoking and artistic is the cut '**the impatient raconteur**'. Downes lets his music stream as if it is improvised, but when he regains the main theme there is definite direction in this lighthearted melody. Did you ever tell a story so quickly that you told it wrong? This is not that. Downes fretwork is free flowing and as always, quite precise.

One of the greatest fears in us all is realized in Vin's tune called '**never time enough**'. As in life, we have every intention of finishing that book, tackling that project, or calling that old friend, but then life gets in the way. The music has a genuine warmth, a friendliness that is as assuring as your uncle Bob and as confident as that old friend. There is no doubt that taking time to smell the coffee or the roses should be first on your list.

One of the best tunes on the recording for me is called '**belonging just where you are**'. Yeah, Downes does this cryptic labelling like one of his friends, but you get the gist as soon as you hear the tune. This is another homage-like tune that is shrouded in gratitude. It makes the heart go far and wide in the dream category.

The title tune '**three evenings**' is as laid back as you can make it and Vin does it with simple chord progressions that are very unforgettable. There's everything in the tune, old wood smoke, dusty bike trails, a spilled glass of wine, and a lot of laughter that comes more from the heart than the belly. His music is nostalgic in the same way as looking at old photographs. The images may be black and white, but the memories are in vivid color.

**‘above the meadow (for will)’** is the longest tune on the album and an homage to master guitarsmith Will Ackerman, a man that has inspired many. A gentle strum cascades into a delicate theme with Downes meandering as one does in a meadow. The music does seem to suggest that in any field, even one that seems endless, the focal point can be a single flower or a tall stalk of grass that pleases the senses.

three evenings is another finely crafted success for this this master fret worker. When it comes to mastering acoustic guitar there are few like him. Most of the other craft persons came along in the seventies and eighties. He is, like his friend *Tom Caufield*, the new Young Turk of the guitar. Vin Downes is subtle, yet exacting in his compositions and his delivery. His music can be repeated and it never wanes and it never disappoints to quiet the moment and make you think of the tomorrows that are to come. Excellent. - R J Lannan, Artisan Music Reviews

<https://vindownes.com>