

Once Upon A time

By

Mark Barnes

Written by

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Mark Barnes has produced many gems in his musical career, and from the creator of *In the Beginning* comes a brand new compilation of moving and emotive melodies called **Once Upon A Time**.

The very first footsteps are the moving and magical **Lulu's Lullaby**, the gentleness of performance is so evident and so calming, but it also has a wonderful flowing narrative of calm running throughout the composition.

As we continue these early gentle musical footsteps into this brand new release by **Mark Barnes**, we come across a composition that is so very restful, it's called **Believe**. Mark's skill here is sublime; he produces something so delicate that one could with ease fall into a blissful and peace-filled sleep. The narrative of this piece reminds me of the golden age of New Age music, but the master narrator **Mark Barnes** continues this perambulation through the mists of sleep with the amazing and outer worldly, **Drifting**. This moment is captured with perfection by the performance on keyboards, and its angelic tones allow us to drift on the wings of peace with consummate ease.

The tempo is raised for this next one called **Simple Pleasures**. There's something very sun kissed about this composition, one could easily imagine this as a road trip anthem, the full flowing and happy narrative runs with the energy of a summer's day, the windows open, the music playing, as the shards of sunlit shadows caress our senses as we travel.

Valentine's Rhapsody is up next and a lush cinematic composition you won't find on your musical travels. There is something very emotional about this

offering and the nature of that passion can be felt within the performance on an arrangement that seems to quicken like the beating of the heart. This is one very clever composition by Barnes and credit must be given for its compelling narrative.

A complete change now as we lay in the arms of a reflective piece called **If I Could Go Back in Time**. Barnes allows the tempo to drop and as he does, he creates something we haven't heard the likes of since *Mike Rowland's "And So to Dream"* released back in 1993. This is an arrangement with a charming sense of wonder and again has that cinematic energy about its construction.

We now arrive at the half way juncture and come across one of my favourites from the release, it's called **Anthem**. This one really moved me, each hair stood to attention upon my arms as I wrote and, I am so very glad that this opus of a proud emotional nature is just shy of a blissful 5 minutes long. Barnes has built in a wonderfully layered symphonic energy to this piece that is so deeply moving. I rate this composition to be one of the best arrangements that Barnes has ever written.

Dreamcatcher felt very familiar to me, that melody seemed timeless, but very memorable, this song is so very gentle, so I began to visualise the **Dreamcatcher** in my bedroom, just gently blowing in the late summer afternoon breeze, for me there is something so very simple and easy about this one, a track I just love to pieces and reminds me a little of *Holland Phillips* last album *Circles of Eight*. I can see this one will be played relentlessly on my shows, it's truly addictive.

This whole experience known as **Once Upon a Time** just keeps on getting better and better, we now arrive at a little laid back, easy like Sunday morning piece called **Morningside**. As I swing my legs out of bed I can see the palm trees and at the end of my ocean drive the sea, the blue of the clouds and the dust filtering, dancing on the sunbeams, this music inspires me to create this description for you, it's simply divine.

A more thought provoking piece is upon us now and called **The Gift of You**, for me this has all the hall marks of a ballad bathed in unconditional love. Barnes performance here is emotive, but it's more than that, he manifests a melody that screams through the darkness of the night, 'How can I ever be alone,

when I have the Gift of You?' Simply sublime, simply beautiful, at every corner and turn of the composition.

The resonance of **Walking on Air** takes us to a whole new dimension of performance, once more that cinematic element is there, and also the energy of freedom either through dreams or running in the early dawn dew. Barnes has once again used his ever growing knowledge of composition here and manifested something that is truly remarkable and energizing.

We are now very deep within the weave world of this album, and as such we have travelled to a musical land known as, **The Whisper of Leaves**. It's good to hear the slight use of pause on this piece, and then the elevation of power as the wind perhaps shakes the cadence from the day. This track also has a wonderful sense of movement built into its arrangement, it is as if the leaves themselves are performing a dance for us, and perhaps they are.

The penultimate offering is that glorious moment of the title track and of course called **Once Upon A Time**. **Mark Barnes** as a composer has the fluency of a mountain stream, the music runs free within him and through this piece we can feel that honesty and that love for his art. At just short of 6 and half minutes, this is the longest composition off the album and one that we can literally ease back to and enjoy each and every nuance.

Now be prepared for this last track, as we leave the peaceful world of **Once Upon a Time** with a little rocky up beat number called **Get With It**. If you're a regular listener to *One World Music Radio*, you may recognise the voice introducing the piece as the one and only Bruce Gall, presenter here at my station. A totally unique way to leave the album, but one clever enough to feature both of Bruce's loves Rock and Electronic music. Always a good thing to do, leave the listener with a smile and a good feeling and this track certainly achieves that.

Once Upon A Time by **Mark Barnes** is an album of 14 tracks that takes you, on a journey through sight and sound, that at all times is both blissful and memorable. You have everything on this album that you would ever need reflection, peace and tranquillity, a heartfelt moment of deep emotion and a little fun. Barnes should be proud of his creation and I can see this being very popular with both listeners new and old.