

Nightfall London

By

Rick Sparks

Written by

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When I think back, I have had an extensive career in broadcasting and media and I am always amazed when I come across albums that remind me of my past and **Nightfall London** does just that, in fact the melodies and performance style takes me back to my fledgling years as a broadcaster on local radio in the late 90's. In those days *New World Music* was a label at its peak and the sound of New Age melodies floated forever across my turntables. **Nightfall London** returns me to my new age music roots, but also brings us up-to-date. It captures all that was good back then and releases new energies to the world with a lush sweet production.

Listen to the opening piece called **Across the River**; this has to be one of the prettiest beginning pieces I have heard for ages. It has a delicate angelic repose; the piano is ethereal and loving. This is one of those tracks that you could easily watch the nightfall over any place or bridge in the world; the narrative is so redolent of the subject matter and drawn so well.

The title track is amazing and of course called **Nightfall London**, the opening bars are a real scene setter, swirling back and forth, and creating musical imagery with every note played. I use to live just down the road from London, it was my place of birth and while things have changed there, this piece of music, creates for me a memory filled palace of emotive moments, of when I was a child and looked at everything, and saw only goodness with an innocent wide eyed wonder.

After a classic moment of new age musical brilliance with the title track, we're once again on our musical journey and we come across a composition called

Little Angel. The performance here is ultra-delicate; it is as if we are a china doll waking up to find that we are alive in a world so vast and incalculable. Listen to Sparks on piano here, the fluency is amazing and a pleasure to listen to.

The sound of a distant flute greets our ears on this next track called **First Love**. This is actually a very clever composition, a steady build and growth of musical mastery can be found here, but somehow Sparks takes on the subject of love, which at times can be both painful and all-consuming, and covers all the bases musically with a consummate ease.

At the half way juncture, we shift location and find ourselves walking in the **Tokyo Rain**. The performance style gives us a subtle, but calming motif of an eastern flavour. One day I would like to go to Japan and I may well include this delightful piano piece on my playlist if I do, it would be perfect. A supremely well played arrangement indeed and one that depicts with ease, a warm summer rain drifting down from the skies above, and onto the puddled streets of Tokyo.

As we now move deeper into the album we come across a charming composition called **Beyond the Stars**. A personal favourite subject of mine all of my life; I am a firm believer of an abundance of life throughout the universe. This track has a really beautiful flow to its arrangement and really reminds me once again of early new age music, from artists like *Terry Oldfield and Stephen Rhodes*. One can also find a movement of a slow rotation within this piece, perhaps our journey through and beyond the stars to the many myriad of dimensions that lay in waiting for us.

Now it does seem rather strange for me, I'm sitting here in shorts and a short sleeve shirt, in temperatures of near on a 100f, and listening to **In the Bleak Midwinter**. The funny thing is it is one of a couple of carols that I do find most appealing. Once again Sparks does not only do the original song justice, he adds to its initial construction, by bringing an angelic choir and orchestration into the mix, I will have to remember this one for my Christmas playlists.

We are now drawing to the end of the release, and we find a lovely track called **Hearts as One** waiting for us in the corner of the room, to the left of the log fire, this is charming. I mention the fire, only for the purpose of the romantic vision that it draws in my mind's eye, as I could see myself laying with my

beautiful wife upon a fur rug, snuggled up as our hearts beat as one to this stunningly heartfelt composition. A more romantic and all loving piece you would not find elsewhere.

Our penultimate offering is called **Highland Rose** and it also gifts us a little moment of Celtic magic as well. The piano of Sparks manifests a painting of the highlands with ease, and whilst the tune plays and the melody wraps itself around our senses, we can drift off to a place so remote, but blissfully beautiful to behold. This is the skill of a master composer, listen as the orchestration kicks in, it's subtle, but draws a compelling and graphic narrative.

The end of the road has been reached with **Rick Sparks** and we are gifted just one more song to take with us along on our way, this one is called **Evening Prayer**. A gentle piece is created before our willing ears, and what a clever and respectful way to leave the album. Listen carefully to the calming and healing manifestation of chords and notes here, it is really exquisite and the addition of the ethereal choir only added to the magnificence of the overall composition.

Nightfall London has indeed brought me full circle and I thank **Rick Sparks** for his efforts on this album, it has been created with love and intention and a delicacy of care and attention. **Nightfall London** must be ranked as one of the best New Age albums I have heard this year, its production and quality, along with its stylish and creative and self-assured performances, will bring a smile and a warmth to all who listen to this release, you just have to make **Nightfall London** part of your musical collection.