

Year's End

By

Matt Marshak

Written by

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Is there a better time to chill? I'm sitting by my studio window, gazing out on an almost perfect autumn day, the sun is creating the most beautiful shadows you could possibly imagine, and November is a plethora of light and colour, the accompaniment to this reverie is **Matt Marshak's** release **Year's End**.

From the very opening I felt refreshed and relaxed, as the refrains of **Peace and Joy** washed over me. The quite blissful performance on guitar here made this the perfect opening foray, into a new voyage of acoustic guitar based music.

Thanksgiving Day is another fine example of the warmth that Marshak creates with his guitar, from each note played, the artist draws us a homely picture of gratitude and hope, the slight change of tempo now and then, only adds to the lush quality of the composition.

I used to adore taking a walk in the forest, now with the track **Walk in the Forest** I have the best soundtrack ever for these perambulations of the mind. The depth of performance here is really creative and very enticing; one can truly feel like they are walking through a sun dappled forest, on the edge of time itself.

We now go short form on the piece **Great People**, although only around two and a half minutes in length, Marshak has created a complex, yet light hearted narrative in the arrangement, one that is both appealing and rhythmic.

Winter is a whole new ball game living in Cyprus; we have abundant sun and a good deal of warmth, unlike the days in the west, the cold of the **Winter's Day**

always made a harsh landscape harder to deal with. Marshak on this composition creates a slow, but not a sombre piece, one that warms the hands, fingers and toes, a veritable piece to sit by the window and watch the snowflakes fall.

I applaud the artist for this piece, as musically we have attained balance. **The Light of Spring** is something to revel in, the artistic skill on creating the narrative here is sublime and the spring we seem to be exploring is an early one, the careful and sensitive guitar really draws a tentative vista of early March brilliantly.

Once more the professionalism of **Matt Marshak** comes to the fore with the middle segment called **Leave Your Worries**. We arrive at this juncture with a fairly upbeat arrangement, one that helps across the borderlands of the album with a stylish ease.

Deep Within was one of my favourites pieces off the album, as a guitarist myself I love to use minor chord's and draw a slow and mood filled atmosphere into reality with my performance. Marshak does that to perfection right here on this track **Deep Within**, a composition that wends its way around each musical bend with a caring and tentative step, in what is a truly clever arrangement.

The soothing **Rest My Child** is up next, a perfect night time song, or one to calm the furrowed brow after a bad dream, the childlike resonance here is gentle and so relevant, so settle down your sleep head, it's getting late the sandman said, your dreams are waiting.

The intriguing **This Old Barn** is up next, the finger picking style here reminded me for a moment of *Bob Ardern*. The guitar seems to be almost telling us a tale of this location with each strum and pick. I found this composition the most fascinating off the album.

We now move ever onwards and come across a remarkable piece called **Echo**. I had to play this particular offering a few times and noted that each time I did, I found something in it I had missed. The narrative here is wonderfully crafted, giving us a feeling of an inner reflection occurring within tone and mind, a superbly performed and skilful opus of sound and soul can be found here.

This very piece featured on my *Reconnections* show, a broadcast bringing the very best of acoustic guitar based music to the planet. That track is the aptly titled **Harvest Song**. The artist once more becomes the painter of tone and harmony; he uses his musical palette to show a golden autumn sunset and a job in the fields well done for another year. This piece oozes absolute class from every pore of its existence.

Our penultimate offering is based on a subject matter that is so very close to my heart and called **Along This River**. The subject matter is so dear to me and now this piece is as well, it depicts with ease a wonderfully sunny autumn afternoon and a gentle walk by a beautiful slow moving river of dreams.

So we arrive at the last window to the album, but before we sneak in and close the latch behind us, let's just listen to this very last offering from **Matt Marshak** called **Baby's First Snowfall**. The final parting of the ways, but music for a new beginning and a memorable occasion, a very clever way indeed to end this blissful musical sojourn.

If you ever wanted an album to turn off the stress and ease the mind and body back into a far more chilled resonance, then **Year's End** is the perfect panacea to cure all ills. Marshak's sublime skill on guitar will bring you a heavenly landscape of harmonious pitch and ambience. **Year's End** is an album that everyone should have if they wish to create an atmosphere of peace and serenity, as the year draws to a close.