

Journey of Tears

By

Monica Williams

Written by

Steve Sheppard

I have been a fan of flute based music, ever since I found my first *Nigel Shaw* album back in the 90's and ever since then the ride has been a magical one, now with this new release by **Monica Williams**, called **Journey of Tears**, that journey has become even more picturesque and exciting.

I have an absolute delight, whenever an artist uses the natural sounds of a thunderstorm within their music and Monica does just that on the opening piece entitled **Raining Tears**. The deep energy of this composition is only highlighted by the power of the storm in the background, and the never ceasing rain which falls like tears from the sky above. This is a passion packed offering to start with, and as such the performance is equally empowering and moving.

The magical ride continues with the bright and energetic song that we have arrived at now called, **Conversations Within**. The addition of *Darin Mahoney* on guitar was inspired and adds so much to what is already a truly fluent and exciting offering. Williams on flute excels and shines in her performance on this her debut solo album.

Guitar and flute once more combine on this next and somewhat deeper track called **New Horizons**. While there is a certain mournful quality about the overall construction of the piece, there is also a clever level of hope built into the composition, thus leaving the listener with perhaps a sense of hope, that on the far off reaches of a struggle, a new horizon will beckon.

The shortest offering on the album at just less than two and a half minutes long is called **Unconditional Love**. This is a quality of love that is so rare and so barely touched by many, but once done so, life is never the same again. In an amazingly imploring narrative **Monica Williams** sums up this condition with a breath taking performance on flute.

At the half way marker a rhythmic percussive beat draws us into the musical narration and the flute of the artist manifests a song that is so moving, yet also deeply fascinating and called **On the Edge**. I rate this to be the cleverest track off the release as Williams sets us up at the mid-way point of the album, with a composition that has an undeniable level of tension; it is as if we are literally walking on the edge of what maybe or may not!

Soothingly we can now caress a new offering called **Finding Peace**, it may feel that after the preceding track that we did in fact find the right portal to pass into, and peace has indeed be found. The sonic backdrop of swirling, but delicate and peace filled keyboards creates a perfect stage for the narration of that successful find, and the flute of Williams celebrates with a confidence in a performance that is simply stunning.

To be able to ride the winds of life, you have to be prepared to deal with the realities of one thing, **Constant Change**. We can hear a sumptuous and very rhythm based percussive beat here, enabling William's flute to relate the mood of the piece perfectly, the keyboards are perfect in their role of allowing the artist to allow her flute to sing loud and proud and with such fluency, on a track that is empowering in enabling us to all ride with the winds of constant change, rather than against them.

I nearly got lost in this next offering called **Wandering**; there is a certain meditative quality here that captured my senses and drew me far east and into foothills of *Shambala*. This would indeed be a perfect composition to meditate to and drew so many wondrous images of mountain side villages and snow tipped tors. The flute floats across the mists of some inner dimension in what is the most mystical, but attractive offering off the release.

We have arrived at the doorway of the penultimate track off the album, now I mentioned the great *Nigel Shaw* in my first paragraph, and the first sounds of the flute here really remind me of his work on *Dartmoor Roundhouse* back in

the early part of this century. Williams on **Love From A Distance** has produced the same reflective and mournful haunting energies; I could listen to this one for hours, this is flute straight from the heart.

I could stay in this dimension for days, but sadly we have come to the end of our voyage with the artist, but she has one more performance for us before we must leave and it is simply gorgeous, it is called **The Great Beyond**. This is one of those arrangements that I would call a grandstand piece, it is the longest offering on the album at over eight minutes and if it had lasted an hour I wouldn't have minded. The wordless vocals of *Alexia Nodromia* are utterly breath taking and some of the best I have heard for ages while the guitar and Williams flute, depict the sheer vastness of an uncharted realm called, **The Great Beyond**.

I would have to say that **Monica Williams** in producing **Journey of Tears** has probably created the best flute based album of the year and some. The mood set, the narrative and reflection of life and love and its emotional backdrops are simply exquisite. Williams may have just produced her first solo album, but if this one is anything to go by, she is well on her journey and I see a long and happy career at the top of this genre for the artist. **Journey of Tears** is an incredibly passionate album, packed with emotive and beautifully played compositions, and without a shred of a doubt, thoroughly recommended.