

Beyond Summer

By

Scott August

Written by

Steve Sheppard

Scott August has become a well-known name on the flute circuit, but Scott is more than that, he is a well accomplished multi-instrumentalist, as you are about to discover on this his latest release **Beyond Summer**.

The effervescent opener entitled **Spirit of the Canyon** gets our voyage underway, this lively and very fluent opening composition is a great place to start to what looks like is going to be a journey through many musical realms. This is a truly happy indigenous offering, with a colourful flute and a perfect percussive beat, one that dances with the flutes engaging tones.

Empty Highways is next up, this piece gives us a totally different perspective and paints a delightful picture of a vast open highway to ... somewhere! The flute, piano and guitars of August here create a fascinating musical narrative, one that compels us the eager listener to pay attention to each and every detail performed. This is quite haunting at times, but one with ease could imagine driving down a highway completely alone as if traveling not only in distance, but through and into a whole new dimension as well.

As we turn the corner of our highway we are greeted with the wide open spaces of sand and heat, as musically we are gifted **High Desert Dreams**. At just under nine minutes this is the longest offering on the release and certainly one of my favourites. The desert is an eerie place to be, some say pure silence can be found here, but then there is always the wind. A gentle tempo gifts us some utterly sublime flute that reminds me of our friend in *Dartmoor*, *Nigel Shaw*. This is a really beautifully chilled out offering that has just the right amount of percussive awareness about its construction. Now for those who

love to feel the build and progression in a track, listen to just before the 2 minute forty second segment, which ushers in a wonderful and artistic moment on keyboards, and with the slight elevation in energy the piece builds momentum, but never loses its original cool vibe.

The title track is up now, this is that moment when we feel, see and hear the overall essence of the album come to fruition. **Beyond Summer** starts with pure percussion, the rain stick that hovers throughout the opening refrain floats from one channel to the other, like a snake crawling across the desert itself. The nature of a title track is clear, this is the canvas on which all else is born, this is simply masterful; a combination of keyboards and flute and all the while the constant ever onward movement of the percussion drives us forward and perhaps beyond even summer itself.

There is something to treasure in this next piece entitled **A Day with You**. That moment of bliss is the flute of August, his multi instrumental performances are of course sublime, but here the flute is really in the driving seat and produces a truly warm feeling that we can all enjoy. That sense of movement is still there, but more gentle now, this is one of the most mesmeric offerings on the album and one that you're really going to want to go back to many times over.

We now move across the borderlands of the album and as we reach the half way juncture we are greeted by the tones of a new composition called **Buffalo Dance**. I count myself very lucky to have been within five foot of a bull Buffalo and I'm still alive to tell the tale. The power and energy of this marvellous beast is simply incredible. It is of course no surprise that this track has an indigenous feel to it, and whilst the flute cries out the drum beat and keyboards create a wonderfully graphic wide open musical narrative, and I am once more transported to the open plains of *Turtle Island*, this is without doubt my favourite offering off the album.

As we arrive at the track called **Chaco Mystery** we are gifted something really fascinating and deeply felt. August's flute here gives us such depth to enjoy, this is a really dream like offering that takes us to realms far away from anything we have ever known. It was also good to hear a solo flute performance at this point of the release, almost like a pause before we move off and onward again.

I love the energy of this next piece called **Valley of Gold**. Perhaps we have gone back in time now to the lands of the Inca's? The flute is in total harmony with the percussion, the rhythm of this piece has to be really listened to, to be enjoyed completely. I also adore the keyboard segments that seem to open up different musical doorways for this piece to travel, then the guitar just adds a little more to the every changing layered aspect that resides within this amazing composition.

Journey to Kashgar is now upon us, now if I remember this right, *Kashgar* was one of the trading points on the old *Silk Road*. There is a really interesting mixture of Asian energy and native energy on this piece that make it for me, incredibly addictive to listen to. I love the build and progression within this offering; the major minor chord changes make this another absolute favourite of mine. The keyboards create such a mood here that is just irrepressible, whilst the percussion drives the piece onward in total partnership with the flute. I would go further to say if anyone is making a documentary about the *Silk Road*, then I suggest you contact the artist to use this piece, it's outstanding.

I must admit I was looking forward to this one; it's our penultimate offering and called **Temple at Dawn**. This has to be the most atmospheric piece off the release and drew me in with its peaceful energies and it's gently caressing musical tones. This is a beautiful composition, one that should bring a moment of bliss serenity to the listener. August's flute simply hovers around the forest glade where the pathway to the temple begins. In my view this has to be one of the most idyllic offerings on the release, a musical moment of tranquillity indeed.

How clever to finish the album with a piano performance, I certainly didn't see that one coming, however **Shadow of Time** has a grandness all of its own and manifests some of the richest colours from the release. The ambience that is created here is sublime and truly spectacular to listen to. The overall energy of the composition is elevated at around three quarters of the way into the piece, creating a magical moment I won't forget in a hurry, to end the album with such a classy track like this was nothing more than inspired.

Beyond Summer for me is **Scott August** at his very best, he has produced one of the most listenable albums of the year and it is a journey I am more than willing to go on again. Each piece is played with such precision and care, the quality production and overall arrangement of this fine collection of compositions is stunning, for me **Beyond Summer** was a combination of multi instrumentalism and flute mastery at its very best, and one very worthwhile recommending.