

Open Arms

By

Scott Lawlor

Written by

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Scott Lawlor has to be one of the most creative musicians around today, normally known for his long form synth work; Lawlor has gained the reputation for being one of the most prolific ambassadors of ambient electronic music this decade. However here on this latest release **Open Arms**, we are treated to a performance based on purely the piano; this collection of fine solo works starts with the artistic opener **Open Arms part 1**. There is something quite calming about this piece that I adored, I love the ambience that Lawlor creates, but here the tone seems elevated and with a certain lightness of spirit.

Lawlor is one of music's painters with tone, and on **Dream of the Empath** we see just why that is. This spacious opus of grandeur gives us ever eager listeners the opportunity to roam freely within the music, to perhaps discover what we may, perhaps like the empath picking up on emotions and feelings from others. There is a wonderful expression of suspense and a hovering attitude of potential possibility within the very structure of this extremely creative performance, one too easy to get lost within.

This has to be one of the most artistic musical collections I have heard for some time and Lawlor continues and excels further now with the piece **Come Away With Me Into The Cool Twilight**. The approach here is once more calming and tranquil, Lawlor has really worked hard here and crafted a piece that at times reminds me of music from the film Blade Runner, so an ambient Vangelis connection is created in what is truly a thoroughly deep, but soothing narrative of musical mastery.

Waiting for One Day continues the ambience beyond anything you may have heard before, personally I really adore the solo piano work of Lawlor, it reminds me of the U.S ambient pianist *Michael Harrison* and that is certainly not a bad thing. To be honest music like this I could have on repeat for hours, it becomes part of your life without any interruptions and manifests a soothing atmospheric reality around you, one that you can be very productive within.

Time to go long form now with the composition entitled **Loves Reverie**. One will detect a real mood of calmness and a pleasurable motif of happiness within this arrangement. The best thing of all is that we have exactly 12 minutes to enjoy this light and uplifting opus, but Lawlor has been clever here, whilst creating positivity in mood, the track never loses its ambient roots, and contains its spirit beautifully in a cohesive musical form.

We now move ever onward and enter into the deep pathways of this forest of beautiful music called **Open Arms**, and now come across something really colourful within this next composition called **A Gentle Embrace**. The fluency here reminds me in parts of US pianist *Attila Gibson*, especially the latter half of the arrangement which picks up energetically until its conclusion.

The longest offering on the album is this one, it's called **My Tranquil Refuge**, and at just shy of 13 minutes it's a wonderful moment of long form genius that I find personally fascinating. I have had some stressful times in my life and during these unwanted sojourns I used to immerse myself into the art work of painter *Howard Hodgkin* whilst listening to Eno. Now I have a track that can equally be my new refuge when times get tough, I can gaze into the afternoon haze and be a part of this incredibly descriptive soundscape, and just lose myself entirely.

We have now reached the penultimate track off the album and it is entitled **Waltz With An Angel**. Apart from this being an eloquent and somewhat expressive title, we have a gentle serene offering that would grace any new age album from the early part of this century with ease, those golden years of the genre would have loved this piece, but fortunately for us we have it right now before us to enjoy and bathe in.

So, we now conclude with **Open Arms Part 2**, we draw to a close this charming journey of sound with the summing up of the entire project with this last

arrangement. This ending piece is just another fine example of Lawlor's expressive charm and a soothing final offering to finish the album with indeed.

Open Arms by **Scott Lawlor** in my opinion is his best solo piano work to date; it was a moment I never wanted to end, and the creative skill he employs on this album is indeed thought provoking, but one that truly manifests a wonderful refuge away from the stresses and strains of modern day living. Lawlor's artistic endeavours have seen him bring into our world one of the finest slices of ambient piano work I have heard for years, and as such thoroughly recommended.