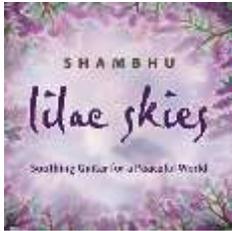


Shambhu  
Lilac Skies



Takes a goodly portion of jazz, add a little R & B, include a modicum of contemporary music, shake it up a bit and chill slightly and you end up with an amazing upbeat album by talented guitarist and composer **Shambhu** and his friends. It is called **Lilac Skies**. What gives the eye and the heart more pleasure than a lavender sky to start a day? Lilac skies at night perhaps. In either case, the fourth release by this jazz style guitarist is ten tracks of mellow music guaranteed to uplift, soothe, and entertain all. Joining Shambhu on the album is Kai Eckhardt on bass, Frank Martin on keyboards, Celso Alberti on percussion, the ubiquitous Premik Russell Tubbs on flute and sax, Alec Hamilton on the Hammond organ, and Kristin Hoffman on background vocals. Sit back, relax, and enjoy the ride.

When dawn decides to grace the land, the combination of light and clouds makes for a marvelous display. Those lavender hues seem to please the soul like no other. Shambhu transforms those colors into musical notes with the same magic ability. The recording opens with the title tune **Lilac Skies** as a musical icebreaker so to speak. The animated tone of the album is well expressed in this first piece and it not only promises a blissful journey, but also delivers.

Next Shambhu features his unique fretwork on a melodic ballad called **Unspoken Words**. These are not utterances left unsaid, but words expressed in a language understood by soft smiles, bright eyes, and inspired hearts. This is a truly beautiful guitar piece with a languorous flow and mellifluous refrain. Dynamic guitar riffs and ornate piano counterpoise in the tune **Blue Whispers**. There's something dark and steamy about this one. There is subliminal heat and heavy emotion disguised as a bluesy ballad like a Robin Ford song. This is one of the best of the best on Lilac Skies. **Open Your Heart Sky** is a sophisticated song with a lot of sentiment. It is one of those that easily becomes an anthem for the cause with its strong compositional elements, jazzy electric guitar, and complementary Hammond organ trimmings. Percussion and deep bass add the extras that pull it together into a unified theme. This is an invitation to soar, to live, and to breathe. You might as well surrender.

There are some terrific piano riffs in **Inspired by the Night** and **Seeing You Again**. Together, they are probably the most complex tunes on the album, but individually, they are like night and day. Inspired by the Night has some groovin' bass licks by Eckhardt that drive the song forward. Your nocturnal encounter consists of a black, bountiful blanket of stars, some warm breezes, and don't forget the most important component of all, thou. Seeing You Again is the final cut on Lilac Skies and presents a warm and quite fond farewell. It is celebration of sound with no regrets. The listener has partaken of the joyful menu and ends up a satisfied customer.

I liked every track for its diversity, yet its loyalty to the main theme, that of unwavering joy. Shambhu has done a brilliant job of not only offering up the music to keep your mood in a positive vibe, but also bringing together just the right talents to make it happen. Highly recommended - R J Lannan, Artisan Music Reviews