

Tom Eaton

weathering

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One of the greatest impediments to success is self-doubt. You can have the means. You can have the talent, but when you question yourself it is difficult, almost impossible to build upon a foundation made of the crumbled, discarded stones of indifference. Such is the condition in which composer Tom Eaton found himself. Believe me, there never was a real cause. Eaton is extremely talented not only in writing and producing his music, but by making the lives and careers of others successful through his more than persnickety efforts as record producer, engineer, and side man. On his latest album **weathering**, Mr. Eaton bears all to the public features of his own scrutiny and review. Don't worry, he wins in the end. Here are my impressions.

With a short, poignant intro, weathering is eight long playing tracks of contemporary music that chronicles the experiences of one man's journey from the colorless, formless land of self-distrust to the high, vivid plateaus of emotional achievement. While carving out his own solo career, Eaton for some time has been a master engineer and producer for Imaginary Studios, the brain child of Will Ackerman as well as his own studio *Sound & Substance*. You can always tell when Eaton's hand is at the controls as all of his recordings have this clearly defined aural purity. His contributions as a side man and music writer has earned him multiple Grammy Nominations. But this music is about Tom.

prelude to the lost years and **the lost years** is a chronicle of a heart and mind, and especially a soul, walking aimlessly about. Eaton is a lost ship at sea passing no one in the night. He instills a profound sadness in the work, something beyond the power of tears. His beautiful melody hypnotizes the listener, putting one into a deep fugue of retrospective thought.

above the mad river is my favorite tune on weathering. Eaton's insistent resonance in the piece along with its scenarios of darkness versus light is the formula for lucid dreaming. He mixes sparkling elementals with a repetitive piano riff that seems to ask a question for which there is no answer. I played this one a lot.

I would have thought that the song **the empty page** would have been more hopeful. It is everything but. Instead, it is a free flowing blank canvas of neutral emotions waiting to be colored. Eaton's beautifully expressive refrain seems to be painted in transparent notes giving the listener a choice to add their own emotional colors. Another favorite as it reminded me of some kind of musical prose without words.

weathering, the title tune is a homonym whose ambivalence is not lost on me. Tom invites you to take your pick. Something that endures the test of time despite the erosion of an uncaring

world or the action of the erosion itself, wearing down the layers of emotion one by one. Eaton's fretless bass is a mournful companion, but still not alone. A wonderful track.

the beach, the rain, and hope was a turning point for Eaton. You can hear the change in the music. He imbues a softness in the melody on this track that seems missing in the previous tracks. There is a jewel like quality to his song; something bright and sparkly. He finds his Sarah. The music is now light, tender, and above all, purposeful.

the world with her in it is easy to understand. Musically, it is Tom's interpretation of what it is like to come out of a shadow and into the light. His now soft, soothing piano ballad has a new energy, maybe some of that light, too. Glistening touches and waving guitar echo in the piece. All it needs now is a chorus of angels to make the scenario complete.

when clouds give way to stars, the last cut, is Tom's life finally with some clarity in it. With love comes purpose and direction and a great deal of responsibility. His raison d'être is to keep his promises, make the words mean something, and to keep his balance in an unstable world. when clouds give way to stars is deeply dreamy, emotionally rich, and entirely uplifting. To me the music says, "Isn't lovely when a dream comes true?"

Tom Eaton's weathering is one of the most poignant albums I have heard in some time that directly transforms pure emotion into pure music without any kind of filter. You do not have to listen too closely to hear Eaton's soul existing in a despondent world only to be lifted up by an angel to understand it. Even Picasso finally emerged from his blue period. This is Eaton emerging. Excellent work. - R J Lannan, ArtisanMusicReviews.com