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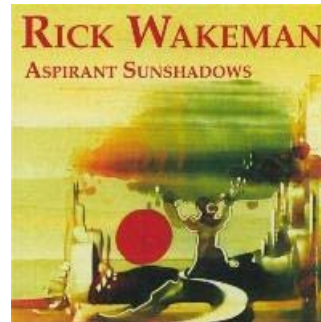
Progressive Rock CD Reviews

Rick Wakeman

Aspirant Sunshadows

Review by Gary Hill

The third CD in a trilogy of "new age" discs from Rick Wakeman, this might be the best of the bunch. In some ways it doesn't differ that much from the rest – how much variety is there in this genre, really, but a few of the tracks seem to stand up above the rest. If I had to pick one of the three to own, it would be this one.

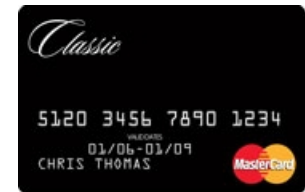


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Track by Track Review

The Nightwind

This is very pretty and has a lot of emotion packed into its instrumental packaging. I like it a lot. It does move far from where it started, but when it's as beautiful as this one, that's a minor complaint.

Churchyard

"Churchyard" is far more ambient than the opener. It feels more like organ music, although I'm sure it's synthesizer. This is pretty, but just a little vacant in some ways. It would definitely be appropriate music for relaxation.

Tall Shadows

Not as mellow as the one that preceded it, this is another pretty song. It has some nice melody lines that call to mind both Beethoven and world music in some ways. When it turns to a different melody later, it is to great effect.

Shadowlove

Pretty and restful is probably the best way to describe this piece. It's definitely listenable, but might, in the course of the CD, prompt sleep. Of course, isn't that the main point of listening to new age – relaxation?

Melancholy Mood

With a gentle and delicate sound, this is more music to help you feel rested and relaxed.

Mount Fuji By Night

As the title would suggest, this has a bit of an Asian tone to it. It's one of the tracks that actually stand out a bit here. It's a little playful.

Hidden Reflections

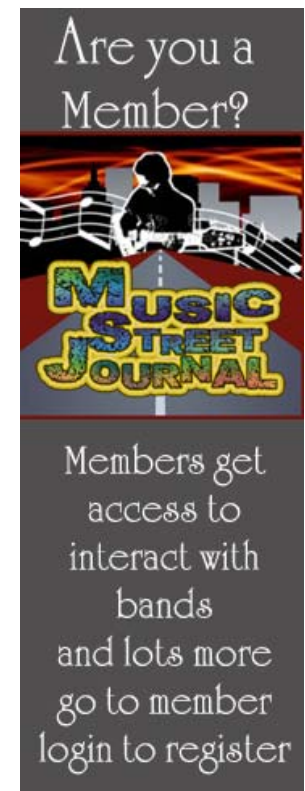
This is more in keeping with the ambient waves of sedate keyboards approach. The keys weave lines of melody and the whole piece has an almost classical texture. The later portions of the track does gain more power and passion, but it still never achieves anything to break the restfulness.

The Evening Harp

Once more proving his belief in truth in advertising, this gentle melody feels much like it is played on harp.

The Moonraker Pond

A lush pillow of keyboards beckons you to lay down for a slumber. That's about the best way to explain this piece of music.



The Last Lamplight

This doesn't vary (in the early portions) a lot from much of the other music on this CD – or in this trilogy for that matter. It definitely has both emotional appeal and a level of beauty, though. It shifts out for a time into some more dramatic music, but this does not ruin the restful nature of the piece.

Japanese Sunshadows

This rises gently from the pond. I like this one a lot. While in some ways it isn't all that different of a beast than the other stuff, the gentle melodies and flow of the piece is extremely pretty and effective.



Click on the icon to check out items at the MSJ Rick Wakeman store.

