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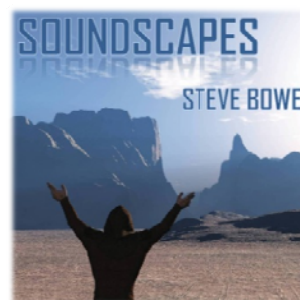
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## "Soundscapes" Review by Matthew Forss

BoweMusic is pleased to announce that a very positive review of Steve Bowe's "Soundscapes" album has been undertaken by renowned New Age and World music reviewer Matthew Forss.



Since 2000, Wisconsin, U.S.A. based Matthew Forss has been actively involved in the 'global' world music scene as a music journalist for the Edmonton, Canada-based "Inside World Music". Matthew holds an MFA in creative writing and is also a world music consultant, co-producer, and album compiler. His music/book reviews and essays have been published in Songlines, Ethnomusicology, African Music, cultural encyclopedias, among others. He diligently maintains his ever-growing collection of music from every country in the world, while looking forward to discovering (and reviewing) new music.

[www.insideworldmusic.blogspot.com](http://www.insideworldmusic.blogspot.com)

Steve Bowe is honoured to have received a top rating for his album from someone whose knowledge and experience of music from all over the world is second to none.

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### STEVE BOWE

#### Soundscapes

(BoweMusic)

#### Review by Matthew Forss

A UK-based computer programmer and MIDI expert, Steve Bowe, is trained on piano, but leaves most of that behind, as he traverses out into the global sound world of dance, new age, world fusion, instrumental, and contemporary music. Steve's use of melody, rhythm, and sound is top-notch, as *Soundscapes* represents an aural journey stemming from ancient Egypt to the rural highways of California. Frankly, nothing stands in the way of Steve's creative ear.

"Prayers" opens the album with a low drone and ethereal vocals representing a Native American chant and the voice of a boy speaking a Christian prayer before bedtime. The jaunty percussion kicks in and swishy noises with a steady, drum beat accompany keyboard washes in a cascading

manner. The drone gives way to muezzin-like call-to-prayers or Yiddish chants, before a little electric guitar livens things up, amidst a drowned-out and indiscernible voice that repeats throughout. The symphonic keyboard washes and electric guitar additions create a lively musical mix that is progressive and well structured.

“Queen of the Nile” begins with reverberating female voices and an upbeat, progressive beat with guitars, drum-kit, and keyboard. The rhythm contains angelic vocals in the background, but the keyboard technologies and drum-kit leads the song into a frenzied, solo-vocal segment with fine operatic appeal. The laser-like synthesizer intro appears throughout, but the real winner here is the energetic beat that is not quite rock, but an amped-up Ronan Hardiman.

“After The Storm” opens with a symphonic, atmospheric wash, and jingly percussion with a sweeping piano melody. The lilting percussion and sparkling embellishments provide a perfect accompaniment to the darker, brooding undertones of an indiscernible voice. The angelic vocal accompaniment and keyboard washes signal the end of the song. Overall, the song acutely represents the feeling one gets after surviving a severe weather event.

“Orpheus” contains laser-like dance beats and keyboard accompaniment that is equally home at the dance club or a recording studio. The electronic accoutrements and layered, male vocals possess a spiritual quality. The metallic squawks and screeches signify a complex, heady, and electric-guitar focused composition—especially near the end of the song. The song is more rock and dance focused than other songs, but that does not make it any less enjoyable. Dance fans will love this one.

“Sunset Highway” is another dance track, but its inspiration is drawn from California. The opening TV or radio sounds and traffic noises head right into a lively dance rhythm with keyboard accompaniment and operatic vocals that add a touch of European presence, while remaining relatively nondescript. The twinkling piano playing mid-song breaks up the pace a bit, which can be likened to the work of Ronan Hardiman yet again.

Steve Bowe’s *Soundscapes* is a musical journey with luscious dance-scapes, choral voices, lavish keyboard adornments, and powerful rhythms from a futuristic source. The use of dance rhythms and ethnic voices conjures up comparisons to Hooverphonic, Enigma, and Ronan Hardiman. However, Steve manages to make *Soundscapes* his own. The music is diverse and does not include boring repetitive choruses or lines. Though not inherently obvious, there are hints of Scandinavian, European, and Middle Eastern elements that run throughout many of the songs. Nevertheless, the dance rhythms and beats with enrapturing keyboard wizardry should entertain all who listen. A variety of sounds and instruments keeps the entire production engaging and fresh. Importantly, fans of dance music, world fusion, electronic, progressive, and computer music with a passion for filmic soundtracks should find *Soundscapes* aurally enjoyable and addictive without any negative side effects.

Review by Matthew Forss

Rating: 5 stars (out of 5)