

White Cliff Country

By

Earthshine

Written by

Steve Sheppard

Sometimes something will come up in the world of music writing that will be a surprise or a challenge and **Peter Cox** has laid that at my door by asking me to write a review for this new album. Why? I hear you ask, well I was of course born in England, but recently left the country to start a better life in Cyprus, so now the challenge is to jump deep into my memories of the past and bring forth some positive images of the old country and perhaps allow this album to cast a new perspective upon the experiences of my days there through the effect that this album has upon my emotions and imagination.

Channel Crossing begins our journey and has a defined narrative of movement driving it onwards as we make our way over the sea, and of course the first sight we will see is the famous white cliffs. It's always an imposing vista and you can tell from the arrangement, that just over the half way point this marvellous view has come into range, with the powerful crescendo of sound that greets our arrival in England.

One of the most impressive tracks I have heard for some time in the electronic genre is coming up next and is called **Beachy Head**. This is an absolutely perfect soundscape for the location, it is imposing, mysterious and deadly, and many have died here in suicide leaps over the years! The synths swirl and create an image of awe and grandeur, while the added percussion dances with the keyboards to confirm this narrative, on this take of beauty and danger combined.

Now my family used to take me to Canterbury in the late 60's and early 70's, these were indeed wonderful times, my father was from Kent and it was good

to see him happy in his home county, therefore the track **Canterbury Tales**, albeit short, at just over 2 minutes, is a poignant reminder of those times, an old almost ancient dance of the middle ages carries us through the composition and one has to smile at the energy of this crafted piece.

English Rose has a summer jazzy style feel to it, one could almost visualise laying out on a newly mown lawn in a country estate listening to this composition and watching the soft warm breeze of a July day tease the petals of an English Rose back and forth. Towards the end of the piece we are joined by some brass and the whole tune seems to head into the 60's, which of course could bring in the other English Rose, walking down the street, looking as hot as an august afternoon!

We now move to **On the Fosse**. I regard myself as a walker, I just love being out in nature, but I have never traversed The Fosse, from Lincoln to Exeter, the old Roman road must have many memories. This is a song though that would fit well as part of the journey, its tempo is evenly paced and the energy of this track is beautifully performed on electric piano by Cox, it is both lively and clear in its production.

One of my favourite places in England has to be Stonehenge and **Earthshine** have created a track that compliments both Avebury and the henge, and also does it complete justice by the piece called **Secret of the Stones**. The arrangement starts in an almost Jarre style, then transposes itself into a really ancient melody of time and memory, it is as if musically we have found a portal to the past. This fluid and fascinating composition is one of the best on the album, I could listen to this for hours.

From the stones of mystery, we now move to the secure and warming location of **Ye, Olde Manor**. Peter Cox, hasn't just taken us to the country of England on a site seeing trip, he has actually taken us back into time whilst doing so, this track is a fine example of that, I am sure that H.G. Wells would be most proud. There is a sense of regal energy here, but the string like sounds draws history from the woodwork and lays it on the table of many feasts, this is one very clever composition.

Catching the sun in England is like waiting for a world cup win, you know it happened once a long time ago, but you're never sure if it will ever happen again in your life time. Please excuse a little humour at the expense of the English weather; I am sure that this track called **Sun Bathing in Bath** will make up for it. The piano sways and dances with the beams of dusty light that crawl over the old stone walls of the city and thus actually creates a really charming arrangement of great quality and style, this is as smooth as silk and indeed gives a sun filled essence to the piece.

We now take a trip to Sevenoaks in Kent, to gaze at the **Knole Park Deer**. This track starts with a light electronic energy, befitting the care taken by a deer's approach; this whole piece included some very gentle and timely percussion, while the keyboards created the steady progression of the procession of Deer at Knole Park, a place that I have actually never been to, so far!

The penultimate track off the release also happens to be the longest one off the album, and we had to at some stage visit the capitol city on our musical journey. **London**, the arrangement, draws on all aspects of the location, it has a lively and almost cheeky tempo, which includes some extremely crafted percussion, and at times I felt we had entered into a journey within a journey, the rag jazz almost pulls us down Abbey Road. In essence Cox has created a suite here that is full of energy, movement and change, the tempo alters as we turn a new musical corner, the percussion and use of crowd sounds and the last part of the suite really gave me that Golden Slumbers feeling.

The famous words, **Mind the Gap**, you may still here this at some underground stations, but for some reason is remembered by tourists the world wide, there is something very appealing about the Underground network in London that I have yet to find anywhere else in the world, perhaps it's the history and age of the network. Having said that **Peter Cox** has really pulled off a master stroke with this composition, in my opinion this is the best piece off the album, it has a driven, energy, a perfect fluent tempo of great speed and illustrates the subject matter superbly, and the use of minor chords on this arrangement is sublime. The guitar used towards the end of the album is subtle, but very sweet.

Earthshine the project by **Peter Cox**, has delivered us a scintillating look at the country of England through music and even made me feel like going back as a tourist to sample what he has created here for us. Cox and his incredible imagination have manifested a musical travel blog, a veritable journey of musical cheer in memory and melody. This is what one would call a unique album and as such, this uniqueness should be a part of your growing musical collection.