

Cooling Pond from beVertical: Chill with a twist.

beVertical is Chris Neal and Ian Davidson: two writer-producers with a long history in pop, rock, film and television.

CD Review by Damian Castaldi, image courtesy of beVertical.

Cooling Pond is an atmospheric and riotously diverse album loaded with emotive and musical drive. Its catchy melodic tunes stand out from the usual in that they're full of compelling timbres and in that sense every track is different. It reminds me a little of the earlier work by the UK duo Lemon Jelly (Lost Horizons), with a bit of a chillout Moby influence in there (all sorts of things really).

If I had to put it on the CD rack it would sit somewhere between chill, funk or Jazz influenced contemporary electronica/soundtrack. But then it also fits into a specialised sub-set of electro-acoustic music, one where the musical material isn't restricted to the sounds of musical instruments or voices, nor to elements traditionally thought of as 'musical' (melody, harmony, metrical rhythms). Don't get me wrong, Cooling pond is a musical treat but it also admits a world of sounds, acoustic or synthetic, and combines or juxtaposes them as potentially musical.

The average track sits evenly around the 5-minute mark with two of my favourites 'Tribe' and 'After Albert' at 5:22. Tribe has a uniquely driven world music feel with influences as esoteric as John Hassel, Youssou N'dour, and to stretch the point Peter Gabriel whilst "After Albert" is more of a slow travelogue, bass driven, with a deep and quirky sampled vocal narrative and effectively employing vocal loops throughout. 'Sphinx' is another compelling electronic keyboard driven track with an infectious melody, crowd roaring with a big fat male vocal voice-over. "*You don't remember!*" blasting out at you over the top of a big funky drum & beat, conga rhythm as if you're in a stadium of the future mesmerised by the applause and the shouting of the crowd.

Nine out of the fourteen tracks on this album start with a location sound recording that then subtly morphs with either more sound design or musical instrumentation, eventually taken over by the song's melody. Interestingly then, as you listen through the tracks you remember the sound as well as the music and are transported into that space in the memory of the song. In the late 30's John Cage started composing Imaginary landscapes and around the early 80's Brian Eno produced the album 'On Land' in which he talked about a relationship between the psycho-acoustic space of the recording studio and the depiction or evocation of landscape. The potential of using SoundTools hard-disk editing software for making music out of random, ambient sounds has influenced a world of musicians, sound designers and sound artists and while beVertical maintains its musical structure and is not at all Ambient music soundfields co-exist wholeheartedly within their sound.

Chris Neal and Ian Davidson are consummate musicians both with successful careers in scoring for film and television. As beVertical they've achieved a memorable result in Cooling Pond. What I mean to suggest is that in the final mix beVertical sounds like beVertical and not a re-hash of multiple influences. And this album is really made for you, the listener to enjoy through a good sound system or headphones. Do yourself a favor and sit under the moon one night, close your eyes and soak it in.

Cooling Pond is an independent release available from beVertical Music and Spot Music Store, Avalon www.spotmusic.com.au

Give the tunes a test-run on the website mp3 player.

Website: www.bevertical.com.au

Buy the CD for \$21 USD (Incl gst + postage and handling).

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