

Mp3 Sylken - Terraforms



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A musical tribute to planet Terra, our Mother Earth ... soundforms that brilliantly capture a mood, a feeling, a time and a space 10 MP3 Songs ELECTRONIC: Ambient, ELECTRONIC: Soundscapes
Details: "One of the Best Recordings of 2005 Terraforms, the latest release from the Canadian ensemble Sylken, continues their movement away from their earlier more textural ambient releases (e.g. PiNG and Illusions of Light) toward a more structured and accessible mixture of retro/classic EM, spacemusic, and drifting ambient music. Track length on the album varies between four and eight minutes which, for me is ideal. The members of Sylken are quite adept at nailing the perfect amount of time to spend on a theme or motif, working and evolving it just enough to satisfy yet not stretching it out to where it becomes monotonous. Some of the earlier cuts on Terraforms show a definite influence from the Berlin school of EM, such as the dynamic pulsing opening Terra Rising on which flowing retro keyboards weave a sensuous melody over a propulsive bed of sequenced beats and percussion with some neat retro squiggly effects later in the track. Landfalls blends a retro analog-ish synth sound to more contemporary elements. The piece contains intriguing sequences, percolating percussive elements, and lots of laser-zapping sounds, but done in an understated way so that a mysterious mood is evoked. On the third song, Breath of Life, Hopper and company head into different territory, featuring a mixture of sparse piano and ebbing and flowing synths, resulting in a near-pastoral mood, aided by baritone and soprano chorals that have a softly sighing character to them. Enfoldment may remind some listeners of the song Memories of Green from Vangelis Blade Runner soundtrack. Jerichos sax dips and soars in ambient-blues fashion over an assortment of keyboard washes (and some lilting flute in the background adds a nice touch as well) and the mood is warm and inviting with a hint of sadness. The Shores of Space is, appropriately, more ambient in nature and darker than other pieces here, although not in a

scary way. It shares some characteristics with Meg Bowles work on her excellent Blue Cosmos release of many years past, including the addition of muted hand percussion later in the piece. The use of massed chorals dials up the drama later in the song as well, and the infusion of rhythms imparts a cruising-sense of movement/speed to the music. Being a sucker for Jerichos ambient-trumpet playing, I loved the title track, which showcases his soulful playing alongside some muted percolating retro synths and various flowing keyboard lines. The piece has a definite haunting edge to it. Beginning with Gaias Lament, the CD heads in a more pronounced ambient direction. The songs are more on the minimal side and have few (if any) overt rhythmic elements. Gaias Lament is comprised of a variety of keyboard and synth washes which enter and then leave the soundfield, with the one constant being the presence of chorals. As the title indicates, the mood here is sad and mournful. The Drift of Time juxtaposes a reverbed minor-key 4 note refrain against a series of spacy synths and even though its eight minutes long, it doesnt gets stale owing to the way various backgrounds evolve and change. Zen Sky closes things out nicely, being a soothing exploration of electronic textures and flowing tonalities (some of which I think are being played on guitar), with enough melodicism to anchor the track with mild accessibility without losing the inherent overall drifting quality of the piece. Terraforms should hold strong appeal for a wide variety of electronic music fans, from those who enjoy retro EM or Berlin school to lovers of spacemusic or haunting ambient soundscapes. As with any recording which doesnt stick to any one formula throughout, those who dont embrace a multitude of musical approaches will not enjoy the CD as much as those for whom variety is the spice of life. What cant be over-stated, though, is the skill and care which went into the music on the album. Terraforms is pure sonic pleasure to my ears and confirms the notion that Sylken (no matter who is in the line-up) are as talented as many other more well-known musicians in these genres. The disc comes strongly recommended. Bill Binkelman, Producer Host, Wind and Wire KFAI-FM

----- "One of my top ten favorite discs for the year 2005
Sylken returns with 'Terraforms', a beautiful example of the ambient ideal. Working with some of the brightest talents in the AMBIENT PiNG community including frequent collaborator Steven Sauve, along with Wally Jericho, Jamie Todd of dreamSTATE, Terry O'Brien of Anomalous Disturbances and Gregory Kyryluk of Alpha Wave Movement, Hopper has produced a series of melodic ambient tracks of great beauty and wonder. From the throbbing pulse of opening track 'Terra Rising', where graceful arpeggios and deep pads blend together with each other to form a delicate web of sound, the listener is caught up in

the beauty inherent in all of Sylken's work. A lovely way to start the disc. 'Landfalls' follows, a track that suggests a rainforest, an environment rich with vivid colour and beauty, lush keyboard washes bringing to mind thick forests of greenery. A wonderful example of environmental ambience. Track three 'Breath of Life' slows down the tempo slightly, a fragile and beautiful piece where occasional piano dances around sweeping soundscapes that pass through the sound field like a slow wind. Fragile and lovely.

'Enfoldment' brings about a womb-like listening experience where the senses become focussed entirely on the music, Wally Jericho's sax bringing an otherworldly beauty to the piece. 'The Shores of Space' is a fine example of space music, a track that evokes the sensation of slow orbits around alien planets.

Oblique movement and gently building waves of sound are underscored by soft melodies suggestive of stars. Beautiful. Title track 'Terraforms' is a lovely percolating soundscape that brings to mind the birth of planets, continents slowly taking shape over the course of millions of years. Wally Jericho appears again, lovely trumpet work giving the track an organic feeling, the spark of a soul that reminds us that the earth is just as much of a living thing as you or I. 'World of One' blends pads and drones, echoing tones and keening notes to suggest a pulse, a heartbeat, the beginnings of life. Subtly shifting tones and the tinkling of glass play throughout, a stunning work of minimalist wonder. Track eight, 'Gaia's lament' is a poignant piece, a slowly drifting series of pads that float around the senses, playing on the edge of our awareness. Nuance and infrequent shifts give shape to the track, a million instants of change so subtle that they're lost in the blink of an eye if you aren't already in tune with them. 'The Drift of Time' follows, a delicate melodic ambient track where pads rise and fall in strength overtop a mesmerizing tonal pattern. Stunning. 'Zen Sky', featuring a guest appearance by Gregory Kyryluk of Alpha Wave Movement, closes the disc. A shimmering otherworldly piece filled with glittering notes and musical phrases, "Zen Sky" encapsulates the whole disc experience for the listener. A wonderful piece, and a lovely way to close the disc. Listening to 'Terraforms' I can't help but be put under the spell of Sylken's charms. All of the tracks bring to mind a variety of different emotions and feelings throughout the course of the disc's length, a testimony to the talent and artistry inherent in the music that it can be so evocative. Once again Sylken has succeeded in creating music that brilliantly captures a mood, a feeling, a time and a space. Stunning work that comes highly recommended." rik maclean - pingthings.com

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