

Media Reviews

The following Reviews are from various Music Industry magazines and online music sites who have reviewed Dusty Dreams music.

Be Still and Breathe
Facingnorth.net

We've enjoyed several of Sharon West's albums over the years (specifically, World Journey and Notes from the Woods) and her latest offering, Be Still and Breathe, is a rich collection of guided meditations.

I've been listening to guided meditations since the 1980s, and have led others on trance journeys since then and I know how easy it is to create an adequate journey when an exceptional one is called for. Guided imagery isn't just about making pictures, but about using a specific set of symbols rooted in one's personal language of relationships and associations to effect a specific outcome.

When you link the vocalization to musical phrasing that complements and supports the imagery the combination can be powerfully transformative. Such is the case with Be Still and Breathe. The second CD is the music alone, allowing the listener to play it as background music during spa work, or massages, or other creative endeavors.

Dusty Dreams has an extensive collection of free listens to Be Still and Breathe at their website. I encourage readers to hear for themselves Ms. West's lovely voice, melodies, and the imagery used. Highly recommended!

- Lisa Mc Sherry, FacingNorth.net, March 2010

Canvas of My Soul
HOT INDIE NEWS .com

"Sharon West's instrumental album "Canvas of my Soul" is much more than a relaxing soundtrack to help listeners unwind after a long week. Rather, with songs as insightful as classic literature and with beauty as striking as a treasured painting, West proves her ability to transcend the boundaries of a traditional musician.

Just like the title suggests, "The Sculptor's Dream" takes listeners on a trip through the mind of a sculptor as she molds humanity out of clay. The mood changes from heavenly to ominous to other-worldly in a minute and fifteen seconds; from confusion, to elation, to relaxed, every emotion is felt in this wonderfully complex tune. The tone is constantly changing, just as each person evolves throughout his or her life. From classy piano to jazzy sax, and even upbeat drumming, West creates a perfect depiction of the human experience.

Taking on a much slower pace, "Shores of Time" also takes readers to a calm, desolate beach at sunset as they can imagine themselves watching the peaceful waves crash into the shore and glide back out into the sea again, only to

repeat the motion all night. The song even allows listeners to become the sea, feeling themselves float back and forth between who they are today, and who they were yesterday. With the sweet violin serenading through this harmonious bedtime story, it also leaves time for contemplation about who to become tomorrow.

Another highlight of the album, "Day's Joy," includes a synthesizer melody that plays straight to the soul. Here, listeners get the sense that they are still near the sea, gazing at its wonders, but what's different about this song is that it has the power to turn the focus inward—to analyze the very depths of one's being. And this, undeniably, is a talent so amazing it can only be attributed to a true musician. Through "Canvas of My Soul," Sharon West makes it clear that she has a brilliant understanding of not only music, but also of nature and the human mind.

- Liz Singer, HOTINDIENEWS.com, November 2008

World Journey
Facing North.net

"We highly recommended Ms. West's earlier album, Notes From the Woods and were looking forward to her newest, released at the end of 2007. Happily, World Journey is a lovely album, warm and pleasing, providing the listener with an excellent blending of contemporary 'new age' music with a wide variety of world rhythms. This is not 'dance' music, but is better suited for background music or meditation (follow a single instrument and see where it takes you).

Opening with the catchy "Return to Capistrano" (whose instruments include twelve different kinds of drums from ten different countries/regions) the listener is treated to just under an hour of a musical journey all over the world. The textures and layers of each song are remarkable, and the album as a whole is phenomenal. I particularly enjoyed "Light through a Broken Stained Glass" and "Five Sides to Every Story". Highly recommended.

- Lisa Mc Sherry, FacingNorth.net, October 2008

Amazing Sounds

"With a noteworthy warmth, Sharon West builds an exquisite collection of emotional themes, mostly within the sphere of Contemporary Instrumental Music. Some elements of Atmospheric Pop and World Music can also be appreciated, especially in the rhythms. The scope of feelings that the music expresses is wide, spanning from happiness to melancholy: All in all, "World Journey" is a pleasant work the listener will undoubtedly enjoy."

- MARCELLA CIRIGNOLA, Amazing Sounds, June 2008

Massage and Bodywork

New Age musician Sharon West's latest CD is a fusion of sounds from Asia, Africa, Europe, and North and South America. West composed World Journey to impress upon her listeners the commonality of life's struggles and joys, regardless of background. Synthesizers anchor instruments that range from the Zulu drum to the Tigris bodhran. Choirs and chants from Tibetan nuns complete the sound.

- Massage and Bodywork - May/June Issue 2008

The CRITICAL REVIEW Service

"World Journey is an instrumental journey into world sounds, a musical tour-de-force that presents dozens of exotic sounds and instruments...all woven together in a sonic tapestry that is a listening pleasure. I was taken on a musical journey to many parts of the world. Each cut offered exotic, strange, and unique musical instruments and fresh [to my ears] new sounds. I gathered that these were actual sounds--the real instruments played...and hopefully not a sampled sound.

Truly, I was blown away by the nuances, the textures and layers on these songs, and the rhythms and melodies that point to the place of origin of these sounds. Personally I try to isolate an instrument [or sound] and listen to it throughout the track, then select another and focus on it. Eventually I can identify many of the exotic sounds made by these unique musical tools. I really enjoyed this album and the wide range of sounds and cultures that come into play. This album is a truly fabulous work from Sharon West. It is one of the best I have ever heard in the genre of World Music/Instrumental. I HIGHLY recommend this work. It is perfect for just plain listening but can be a great background for reading, meditation/contemplation, or relaxing."

- A. Canales - The CRITICAL REVIEW Service - March 4, 2008

The Entertainment Guide

"This is what happens when you let an engineer near a keyboard. Sharon West was the kind of kid who took piano lessons and then tackled other instruments. When she went to college, she opted for engineering courses over music, but she never lost her taste for musical expression. This is something like her fourth or fifth album of new-age instrumentals, done on new-age equipment such as synthesizer and computer. But she traces the rhythms of life she has encountered in her travels about the world and builds upon them, so that her music is both fanciful and real."

- Nightflying: The Entertainment Guide, February 9, 2008

Corazine.com

"Sharon West's charming instrumental world music manages to bring together the non-ethnic specific appeal of contemporary new age music and the very much culturally rooted aspects of various regions of the world in a CD that lives up to its title. With an artistic reach that touches on continents around the world and draws these influences under the creative banner of West's own signature style, "World Journey" manages to be soothing, lively, alluring, exotic, friendly and beautiful. World has become a popular discount bin filler and with some CDs, it's easy to understand their placement there. All I can say is that if West's disc ever ends up piled in with the generic world music crap that passes for musical culture, it's an undeserved fate. Four stars."

- Upchuck Undergrind Upjohn, Corazine.com - Jan. 15, 2008

MidwestRecord.com

"Fun little instrumental set that's just as much NAC as it is world beat. Contemporary instrumental with an edge and a lilt that's made for kicking back as opposed to making a statement or taking a position. West skips along the surface like a graceful skater and makes music that today's over scheduled mom would probably like to hear in the car as she rushes from the job to the soccer field and wants something just a little different and quite pleasant."

- Midwest Record, MidwestRecord.com - Jan. 12, 2008

Notes from the Woods

Facing North "Sharon West's Notes from the Woods was inspired within her by years of nature walks through gardens, parks, and The Morton Arboretum. Sharon's works capture the diversity of nature's gifts with a unique blend of sounds ranging from what is considered New Age to World Music, along with a hint of Jazz. Instruments include piano, strings, flutes, harps, oboes, trumpets, guitars, percussions, soothing choirs, and woodland drums. Sharon's musical celebration of the beauty and tranquility of nature creates a mood of contemplative and reflective ambience within one while listening to this album, which is not only inspiring, but also enables the listener to do some soul-searching while journeying with the music…. Each time I listen to this magnificent album, I find that the feelings I received when first listening are growing and/or maturing along with noting the new perceptions/emotions that I hitherto had not felt before. Personally, I truly enjoy the majestic sounds that are found within the natural world, so this album's recreation as it were of nature's sounds truly resonated within me. I highly recommend this album."

- Lone Eagle Eye. Facing North, Jan. 2007

The Critical Review

"SHARON WEST presents us with a beautiful album filled with lots of instruments

that capture the beauty and wildness of nature. The talented artist delivers 12 original works that include instruments such as piano, strings, flutes, oboe, trumpet, and guitar along with woodland drums and more. The music goes beyond the standard New Age sound. This is more a creative and reflective enjoyment and capturing of the creation and a celebration of nature and sound. There's not the sometimes endless New Age effects of water sounds or electronic effects and

sounds. This is more true to the land and true to nature and shows off the nice music. The album can be used for listening, background music, for meditation or

contemplation, or even for exercise. It was a very nice listen and say that we need more of this relaxing music. Recommended."

- A. Canales, The Critical Review, Oct. 2006

Midwest Record

"SHARON WEST/Notes from the Woods: Corporate drop out that always had a thing for music decided to follow her muse and see where it led her. She starts with the basics, and impressionistic set inspired by her local nature walks. Ever hear the saying you get out what you put in that applies here as it seems like she really got something out of these walks. Very good music - an easy adult set that doesn't go the typical DIY new age cheap out route, this is a well textured set that spares no expense to let the new age good times roll. Solid adult listening."

- Midwest Record, Oct. 2006

Sea of Tranquility

"Notes From the Woods is a mix of New Age, World Music, prog, and a touch of jazz, from multi-instrumentalist Sharon West…. It's all extremely well done, and although you shouldn't expect anything that's going to reach out and throttle you, there's plenty of soothing and lush sounds here that will cascade through your speakers. The melodies created by the soaring flute mixed with gentle synths and piano on "Beauty of the Ginkgo" are quite lovely, and the lead flute lines on "Willows By the Stream" can really conjure up some stirring emotions. While Sharon is primarily a keyboard player, she really does a good job here on all instruments, especially the flute and various forms of percussion. The song "Woodland Heartbeat" is an especially interesting piece, with intricate acoustic guitars, warm synths, and an array of ethnic sounding drums & percussion, sounding almost a little like the band Oregon. As New Age music goes, Notes From the Woods is overall pretty enjoyable, and much more than just background muzak."

- Pete Pardo, Sea of Tranquility, Sept. 2006

Nightflying

"Inspired by nature walks, these gentle pieces are to remind us that we need to take care of the natural beauty around us and not just because it is beautiful. A healthy environment keeps us from suffocating in our own fumes. So brew you up a nice cup of green tea, sit back, relax, and listen to these quiet, mellow tunes. Better yet, get off your duff and go for a walk in the woods. And try leaving your I-Pod and your cell phone at home; you will feel bettah."

- Nightflying, Nov. 2006

ChickenFish Speaks

"Sharon West has got really, really good timing. She's like a metronome or something, only instead of soulless hypnotic clicks, she makes truly heartfelt, if lethargic, background music. Her compositions are not particularly strong, but they're certainly well thought-out, and arranged with a nearly masterful touch. The overall sound is very clean and covers all the sonic sweet spots pretty well. If you like to relax this badly, and prescription medication just isn't working out like you'd hoped, do yourself and your family a favor and check this out."

- Jeremy Mutant, Chickenfish Speaks, Oct. 2006

Canvas of My Soul All Music Guide (AMG)

".... West maintains a reflective, contemplative ambience, which isn't to say that all of her material sounds the same — that isn't the case, thankfully. Parts of Canvas of My Soul favor a spacy, European-sounding approach to synthesizer music (especially the title track), but "Day's Joy" and "Voice in the Wind" project a gentle, innocent sort of sweetness — the type of sweetness one associates with Erik Satie's "Gynopedie." European classical music is a definite influence on Canvas of My Soul; West isn't claiming to be a classical artist in the traditional sense (or even the modern sense, for that matter), but her new age performances do incorporate Euro-classical elements, and they incorporate them effectively. Canvas of My Soul is unlikely to convert those who have nothing good to say about new

age music, although it's a decent sophomore effort from West. "

- Alex Henderson, All Music Guide (also appears at iTunes for Canvas of My Soul CD), Dec-Jan. 2006

Creations Magazine

"New Age meets pop and jazz in this introspective yet often ebullient collection of tone poems. A wide variety of synthesized "colors" are represented here. Each cut exhibits its own distinctive aura and creates its own ambience. I would not describe it as "ambient music" because there are so many interesting elements in it which pull the listener towards it and lift the music from the background. Especially notable is the title cut. Here is a CD that takes "ambient music" to new heights!"

- Mark Maxwell Abushady, Creations Magazine, Holidays Issue Dec-Jan. 2006

Amazing Sounds

"The music that Sharon West has composed and performed in this album is of a melodic romantic style. All the pieces are warm, bright. The CD in general could be labeled as innovative New Instrumental Music. By means of a very successfully achieved virtual orchestra mostly based on synthesizers, the artist weaves a collection of fresh pieces, where Classical and also Pop elements, besides some ethereal atmospheres, also appear."

- Hector Jordan, Amazing Sounds, February 2005

Midwest Record Recap

"Corporate drop out opts for the road less followed to get back to her love of music. Obviously not inspired by Barbi Benson's infomercial on how to make new age music in your spare time on your Casio, West has been a good student of film composers and sound scape artists and has learned her lessons well. Nicely moving set that seems a better soundtrack for walking in the park than yoga, this is first class contemporary, home made pop."

- Chris Spector, Midwest Record Recap , February 2005

Nightflying Magazine

"A very interesting juxtaposition, symmetry, synergistic anti-symbolism we have going here. We have reviewed several Craig Linder albums in these pages; he's a fella who plays simple and quiet one-line melodies on the piano. And then comes this woman Sharon West who plays strongly, forcefully even, on keyboards, going from the piano sound to the synth strings, and on out into the stratosphere. Ms. West calls this 'An electro-acoustic journey into the meaning of our lives.' I call it trippy. Hey, same thing. Another bit of synchronicity: earlier in this meditation I made mention of a guy recording at home and sounding like a band; well, Sharon West sounds like an orchestra."

- Peter Read, Nightflying Magazine, February 2005

Outsmart Magazine

"Sharon West's instrumental album, *Canvas of My Soul*, offers a blending of electronically produced songs that many New Age fans will enjoy. The album, featuring electronically sampled sounds such as piano, glass choir, shakuhachi flute, pastoral guitar and cello, seeks to offer an ambient and relaxing experience."

- Blaise Distefeno, Outsmart Magazine, February 2005

Smother.net

"Everyone at one period in their life questions their existence and where their place is. Consider those very human questions of the bigger meaning of our lives to be the central theme that runs throughout this art rock effort by Sharon West. Her compositions on keyboard are fascinating as she ponders our age-old questions. Originally intended as a meditation album, '*Canvas of My Soul*' instead morphed into a more engrained into your psyche experience that while ambient isn't something you'll hear in the local mall New Age store. Her playing is great and bubbles with delightful melodies making this a very special album indeed."

- J-Sin, Editor, Smother.net - "*Canvas of My Soul*" - Editor's Pick, January 2005

The Critical Review

"Clearly, West is talented...Many songs showed fine synth effects and approaches as well as creativity....The ideas and themes of the songs are beautiful....A nice album - fine listening of peppy New Age music....Recommended for those who love synthesized sounds."

- A. Canales, The Critical Review, January 2005

Dances in the Mist RealPlayer.com

"West creates quiet, thoughtful instrumentals with synthesizer textures and the occasional electronic beat. The opening cut, "*Mystical Forest*," bubbles and shimmers like a prime era Tangerine Dream track. This is calming music that, while tranquil, is anything but meditative thanks to a variety of tempo changes and invigorating melodies."

- Mike M., Staff Reviewer, Real.com - Mini-Album Review, 2004

"*Dances in the Mist*" was recently selected as a Staff Pick, New Age Category

