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Lotus Dreams - Exploring the Sounds of Asia

New Album from Award-Winning Musician Christel Veraart

Jakarta, Indonesia, April, 27, 2019 - Christel Veraart

The lotus is a universal symbol of tranquility and renewal, its exquisite flower opening, petal by perfect petal, as it rises out of the muddy waters of its origins. In this album, Christel Veraart explores that theme through both eastern and western musical influences.

The album was completed in Jakarta, a long way from Alaska where Veraart recorded her previous album, *Polar Suite*. While the contrast may seem stark, Veraart is striving for a universal musical language that unites people across boundaries.

Retaining the meditative quality of her previous albums, Christel Veraart mixes vocal and instrumental elements. Bamboo flutes, Chinese violins and the Indonesian gamelan are featured, along with western wind and string instruments. Overall the feel is calm and tranquil, with some energetic interludes.

Is this East-West fusion or something else?

"For me, it's all about dreams, says Veraart. Today many people are embracing Eastern philosophy in yoga and meditation. It's the same with music - east is embracing west, and west is embracing east, there are no strict boundaries. Some tracks on this album were inspired by pure imagination, others by my experiences traveling in Asia. In the end it is about how you feel."

The title piece, *Lotus Dreams* is an example - it echoes the soaring harmonies of her imagination. The erhu - a bowed, two-stringed Chinese fiddle - sings its soulful song throughout. Alternating between tender, sonorous, and stirring, this composition takes us to a place of calm and tranquility - a place where we might dream of lotus flowers.

A recurring theme in this album is the richness that comes from exchange of ideas and cultures. "In *Silk Road* I recall the ancient network of trade routes, a centuries-old model for cultural exchange between the East and West. A unique musical language was born of difference where piano and cello met bansuri, saz, and nay flute."

Moving to the here and now, *Liquid Zen* ebbs and flows into a new experimental genre for Veraart. A spacious melody in bamboo flute builds slowly then gives way to a web of soothing, velvety tones in a cyclic music form. The ultimate in space music, this track moves you into a different dimension.

If you enjoy yoga, meditation, or just like dreaming of lotus flowers, this album is for you. *Lotus Dreams* is musician Christel Veraart's most recent album, and it does not disappoint. It retains the meditative quality of her previous albums, exploring similar themes inspired by nature. Veraart often uses a mix of Eastern and Western instruments, but here the feel is distinctly Asian.

Genre: Ambient, World, Asian, Spacemusic

Lotus Dreams - Guide to Tracks

- *Lotus Dreams* echoes the soaring harmonies of Veraart's imagination. The erhu – a bowed, two-stringed Chinese fiddle – sings its soulful song throughout. Alternating between tender, sonorous, and stirring, this composition takes us to a place of calm and tranquility – a place where we might dream of lotus flowers.
- *Wolf Totem* is at the other end of the scale. Inspired by Jiang Rong's novel about the dying culture of the Mongols and the parallel extinction of the sacred Mongolian wolf. Veraart's music evokes shaman drums and chanting, perhaps voicing a plea for guidance from the animal spirit of the wolf.
- In *Bamboo Mist*, Veraart explores a fusion of influences, a mix of instruments from around the globe reflect her state of mind. Chinese erhu, dizi and zither are introduced to the Armenian duduk, Spanish guitar, castanets, and Western strings.
- A meditative journey to the here and now, *Liquid Zen* ebbs and flows. A spacious melody in bamboo flute builds slowly then gives way to a web of soothing, velvety tones. The ultimate in space music, this track moves you into a different dimension.
- Nepalese prayer flags flutter in *Windhorses*, sending their devotions to the sky. Their whipping in the wind reminded Veraart of sailing ships, of traveling. The track features her own otherworldly voice, accompanied by an ancient double-reed woodwind instrument.
- *Silk Road* is a composition partly inspired by Yo-Yo Ma, and the richness that comes from exchange of ideas and cultures. "In today's world I find comfort in Yo-Yo Ma's Silk Road ensemble. Veraart's own *Silk Road* recalls the ancient network of trade routes, a centuries-old model for cultural exchange between the East and West. A unique musical language was born of difference."
- *Elegy for a Cherry Tree* is a very special composition to Veraart, composed and performed at the time of a friend's death. Her own very beautiful voice carries us through grief to the beauty of new life.
- Two tracks have strong South-East Asian influences. *Jalak Bali* evokes one of the rarest birds in the world, the Bali starling. Again a mix of east and west instruments is used: piccolos sing their voices, and the tune of bamboo flutes call out their plight.

- In *Rimba Kuna (old jungle)*, Veraart uses Indonesian gamelan to give voice to the Sumatran rainforest which is home to some of the world's rarest animals and plants. The gamelan is an instrument with a sound and rhythm all of its own.