

REVIEW • JAM MUSIC MAGAZINE

Randy Armstrong

No Regrets

DOMO Records

by William A. Huffman

Rating: 10

Randy Armstrong, known for many incarnations like Unu Mondo, DOAH, Armstrong and Aichele, is mostly seen as a world music artist in simple songwriter's clothing. Take his *Dinner on a Diner* album that he created for a PBS series of the same name. *No Regrets*, the new album, is familiar territory to him, but not necessarily for us. It's basically and instrumental acoustic guitar CD.

Armstrong is like a one man band. The list of instruments he plays is astounding: acoustic & nylon string guitars, synth-guitar, bass, keyboards, sitar, mbira, djembe, axatse and atoke bell, just to name a few. Yet, most of the "worldly" instruments are relegated to atmosphere, which is wonderful.

The 11 tracks on this album are all wonderful pieces of music. The guitars themselves have the ability to invoke mood and emotion, but its the tableau of accompanying instruments that makes it all work so well.

Despite all that, my favorite piece is "*Love Has No Boundaries*". Using a Lakota courting flute to welcome the listener into the tune, sets a tone separate from everything else on the album. And, of course, it lends a more "world music" feel. The percussion is a little more expressive, too. And the guitar melody is the best. In fact, the blend of straight-ahead acoustic guitar work and Armstrong's love of music inspired from other lands allows for this to be considered "new age", as well. Crossover appeal is a good thing in this era of music.

And before people cringe much further of the "new age" label. That genre is not just Yanni and John Tesh. It's Paul Oakenfold, Enya, Kitaro, Enigma, and much more. And all four of those are "worldly". And I don't think Armstrong has any regrets about it.

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