

## **No Way Out – Clint Slate & Iona James (from the EP ‘The Silent Sea’)**

It is good to see the ‘Auld Alliance’ still working well with France’s Clint Slate and Scotland’s Iona James. The Silent Sea is four beautifully crafted pieces of music reflecting the influences and backgrounds of the two musicians.

The EP opens with No Way Out, a stunning track, superb musicianship, superb singing which creates a superb atmosphere.

Being Scottish myself, I am naturally attracted to Iona James and her wonderful voice. She is a superb singer, most certainly in the same league as Capercaillie’s legendary vocalist Karen Matheson and Clannad’s Moya Brennan. These Celtic influences resonate beautifully in Iona’s singing.

After a Pink Floydish introduction (Division Bell era), choiry background, guitar chords. Iona opens the singing to be joined in harmony mid-way through the verse by Clint. Their voices work very well together.

The lyrics seem to inhabit a bleak world of no hope and despair:

‘Stranded alone, alone in the crowd, Prisoner in my own head, There’s no way out’

However, it appears amongst the gloom the subject is at rest with his or her fate as shown in this lyric:

No way back, no regrets

The second verse sees Clint lead the way with his distinctive voice with Iona joining in with the harmonies. This is very reminiscent of the duet between Clannad and Bono (of U2) in the song ‘In A Lifetime’.

Special mention should go to the ‘wall of sound’ backing chorale, what an effect this is, adding atmosphere both tension and angelic. The bass work is also worthy of note, plenty space between notes and phrases allowing the vocal and guitar melodies to be heard clearly. No clutter – wonderful. Finally, no fantastic one million note guitar solo, something far better. Glimpses of solos, counter melodies to all of the voices, all beautifully played, all beautifully spaced out.

As I said at the start of this review Scotland and France shared the ‘Auld Alliance, this more modern version is an alliance between Iona, a Scottish nurse and Clint, a French musician who, luckily for us, met along life’s road and got together to write a song for a radio contest.

It is also an alliance of various music genres, folk music as in Iona’s singing, prog rock with the musical accompaniment, electronica with the choice of instruments, all put together by Clint.

This is emotional music; this is superb music and it finishes with the lyric:

‘No Way Out’

I slightly disagree with that, close your eyes and listen to this lovely music, it will transport you to better place for a little while, at least. No bad thing, and if you want transported even further, please listen to the rest of the EP, it is a masterclass in song-writing collaboration and production.

Inspiring!!

**Drew Jarvie – The Delerium Trees**

**Brecon Indie Review Team.**