

## **“Between Worlds” – The Hevreh Ensemble with native flutist Joseph Firecrow – The Hevreh Ens. CD**



Not totally sure how to describe this, but you'll like it!

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**“Between Worlds” – The Hevreh Ensemble (Jeff Adler, bass clarinet, native flutes, kalimba/ Judith Dansker, oboe, English horn, oboe d’amore, native flutes, percussion/ Laurie Friedman, clarinet, native flutes, shofar, percussion/ Adam Morrison, piano, keyboards, percussion)/ Guest Artists: Joseph Firecrow, native flutes/Shane Shanahan, percussion/George Farmer, doublebass) – The Hevreh Ensemble CD, 52:55:**

There have been many joint project or fusion type ensembles that seek to combine traditional wind or string ensembles with a kind of world music, or ethno-classical-jazz blending over the years. Many of these, in fact, over the past thirty plus years have been a fusion of Native American traditional musics and timbres (most typically the various indigenous flutes) with neo-classical groups and performers. Some of these have been quite pleasing, successful, even ground breaking – like the work done by the Paul Winter Consort, R. Carlos Nakai, and so forth. There have also been many of these collaborations that have been less artistic, less successful, a bit clichéd. So, it is always refreshing to put on some music that clearly is another cross-cultural effort that succeeds; better yet if it sounds like something new and somewhat unique. Such is the case with this latest by the Hevreh Ensemble.

The founder and artistic director of the Hevreh Ensemble is bass clarinetist Jeff Adler who provides the vision but who also writes the pieces for the collections; each of which seems to have a common theme or cultural connection. The ensemble has performed in a number of impressive venues and affiliations including the Juilliard School, the Manhattan School of Music, the California Institute for the Arts, Carnegie Hall and many others. Their sound is clean, tight and creative and it is easy to see why the Hevreh is a respected ensemble. Adler’s music, of course, exists mainly for the vision and exact instrumentation of his ensemble. In some ways, it is difficult at best to imagine these short, but attractive, works being played by a different ensemble or outside the context of the concept album. No matter. This music sounds wholly appropriate and actually quite engaging in the present, and intended, context. In this case, of course, the sound and feel of these works bears a connection to the history of the indigenous

North American people. Some of the titles (and sound) of these selections certainly seem to “tell a tale” or at least hint at a social issue or historical reference (for example, “Selective Indignation” and “Atrocity’s Shadow” have a certain tension to both those words as well as the music)

Flutist Joseph Firecrow is a very fine flutist and reminded of some of the very best known; with a beautiful ethereal tone and a supple technique. The various native flutes (such as those from the Navajo culture) all have a range and tone dependent in part on the woods from which they are made and the pitch bending ability and throat trills that must be the purview of a skilled player. Firecrow is a very fine artist and his sound (and that of his colleagues, Shane Shanahan and George Farmer) blends quite well with the appreciable talents of Adler’s ensemble.

The music itself, gratefully, does not fall into any predictable or repetitive pattern or genre (For example, this album simply does not fit what used to be the all too predictable niches of “world music” or “New Age”). Rather, and to Adler’s credit, there are moments that are a kind of jazz-meets-world; jazz-meets-classical, world-influenced-classical and a new sort of aesthetic that defies description.

I enjoyed all the selections although I especially enjoyed those that did have a bit of a jazz pulse to them. For example, “Walking the Lost Creek Trail” is quite nice as are “New Edens” and “Circles of Solstice.” I really think that this album has something for everyone. The Hevreh Ensemble is, clearly, a very creative and talented group. Their music is unique and appealing. I should think that everyone would find something to like here and I look forward to hearing more!