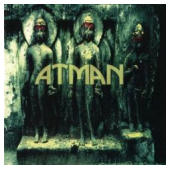
Atman - Personal Forest (2000)



1 Ovoo 1:33 2 Forest Of Karma 9:52 3 Wild Way 8:46 4 Forest Vibrations (Part Two) 2:25 5 Free Tibet 6:10 6 Green, Wild Blood 7:39 7 An Arche 4:13 8 The Talking Meadow 8:47 9 Rainbow Drums 4:16 10 Green, Wild Blood 6:45 Marek Styczynski - Woodwind, Percussion, Performer [Tibetan Liturgical Instruments], Jew's Harp Piotr Kolecki - Twelve-String Guitar, Sitar, Zither, Percussion Carlos Robalo, Manjaou Fati - Special Guests Guinea Bissau (tracks: 8 to 10) Olek Gelba - Special Guest Germany (tracks: 8 to 10) Marek Leszczynski - Dulcimer, Percussion

Atman's first American release, appearing three years after the original German issue of the record, was a wise choice, dovetailing as it did quite nicely with the post-rock and Krautrock revival scenes. While considerably more earthy in many ways than the often dry and dull tributes that appeared during the mid-to-late '90s, Atman's links to such acid-psych-folk legends as the original Amon Duul and the Incredible String Band, as well as more modern practitioners as Ghost, gave the threesome and associates both an instant audience and a chance to demonstrate their considerable abilities. The goal of Personal Forest, as its title, album art, and liner notes all indicate, is to promote connections to the Polish "deep ecology" movement, and the end result beats most of the watery, new age "rainforest" music out there by a mile. Opening track "Ovoo" is a brief amusement played primarily on Jew's harp, but the following "Forest of Karma" ups the stakes considerably. Marek Styczynski's haunting performances on various wind instruments blend beautifully with Piotr Kolecki's ruminative guitar and sitar lines, very much calling to mind the feeling of primeval woods. When Marek Lesczynski steps in halfway through on Polish dulcimer, the effect is breathtaking. From there on, the album progresses in the same gentle, haunting vein, working with circular melodies and rich production to bring out their mesmerizing performances all that much more. The drone/cries by Styczynski on various Tibetan liturgical instruments flesh out songs like "Wild Way" all the more impressively, while the low-key intensity in the concluding moments of "Green, Wild Blood" rivals that of songs at ten times its volume. As a bonus, the 1997 reissue includes three live tracks from a 1994 tour, with three guest performers from Guinea Bisseau and Germany participating. --- Ned Raggett, Rovi

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