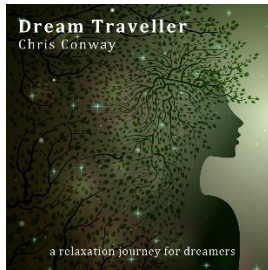


Chris Conway  
Dream Traveller



Multi-instrumentalist **Chris Conway** has over 150 albums in his repertoire, but this is only my second listening to his work. His music on **Dream Traveller** is creative, complex, and cohesive. The finely crafted music invites us on a journey that will comfort the spirit and ease the aching soul. All that is required is a little aural participation and off you go. Dream Traveller is nine Celtic, World fusion, and New Age tunes that are the harbingers of the reverie. The Irish whistle is the dominant instrument in many of them, but the light touches of piano, bells, and zither compliment every tune.

The first track is called **Enter the Dream**. The echoing Irish whistle floats in the air like a ghostly invitation. Waves of sound appear in the mix. The dreamy, tranquil blend is mesmerizing. Do you think you are ready for something new? Something different. Here it is.

A moderate tempo, a warbling Irish whistle, and a peripheral piano invite you to begin the journey. I know I couldn't resist. I willingly went **Through the Earth Portal** which is the next tune. Bold piano notes are laid down like a lane, easy to navigate with the help of the Irish whistle as a guide.

The sound of rain and mournful Irish whistle mix in the tune **Rainforest Path**. The sun has shunned the day and gray colors the sky. We hear the Irish whistle as it wanders through the forest ducking into shadow, hiding under leaves, and then back out on the trail. The canopy of trees above makes a new sky. Dark, mottled, and foreboding. The Irish whistle is joined by a twin and the music doubles in intensity. Was that thunder?

The bells are all around you in the tune **The High Mountain Pass**, but this is not the apex of your journey. Kantele (Finnish zither) and Irish whistle pair up to accompany your passage through the gap in these venerable mountains that features the exposed layers of sandstone, the blue sky, and the cool, crisp air to be found there. It feels positively Andean.

Some water roars through the valley, some shushes. Chris' melodic piano piece, **Peace by the Great River** flows quietly along, keeping your mind calm and your spirit afloat. The tune has a hymn-like quality, perhaps a prayer to the water Gods, both reverent and grateful. This water is life everlasting.

Conway takes an old Ulster tune and makes it his own with Irish whistle and soft accompaniment. **The Flower of Magherally**. If you walk up the dusty Kilamcrew Road and down to the church you will find the place where he first saw her and fell in love. She was Catholic and him not, but he loved her fiercely. Chris melodically tells their story and how the man dared to defy conventionality for the sake of love. What a wonderful story song.

At eleven minutes, **Pathway to the Sky** is the longest and best track on Dream Traveller. Shimmering chimes, percussive piano, grand guitar, kinetic keyboards and more decorate this new trail. The otherworldly diversion is welcomed to the weary spirit. You feel light, unencumbered, and free. This tune has a lot of movement, some of it aurally omnidirectional. But you always return to the right path.

The piano is clearly deep in the void on the final tune **Sky Portal to the Next Dream**. You have made the journey, you have relished and reveled in the freedom, and you are ready for what comes next. This is the way to go. Conway's finale is an up spiral of bright, light powered movements, angelic, ethereal, and weightless. You drift in the up currents, always rising.

I truly enjoyed every cut of Dream Traveller. As I listened I felt as if it took me way from the noise of the everyday living and helped me to build my own dream fantasy. The music is strong, a restorative, a medicine that should be taken twice a day and savored for its curative abilities. You just have to pay attention. Highly listenable. - R J Lannan, Artisan Music Reviews