

Johnson's latest effort shines light on loved ones, life on North Shore

By John Berger

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-- ADVERTISEMENT -- -- ADVERTISEMENT -- **"From Here to Now to You"**

Jack Johnson*(Brushfire)*

Home, family and memories of younger days are recurring themes in "From Here to Now to You," the sixth studio album by Hawaii recording artist Jack Johnson.

It's Johnson as the world knows and loves him: acoustic guitar, some keyboards, a minimal amount of bass and various amounts of percussion, everything played as laid-back and mellow as a lazy summer afternoon in the North Shore neighborhood he grew up in and still calls home.



The Hawaiian word "nahenahe" (sweet, melodious) applies to several selections; on other songs the rhythm section, Adam Topol (drums/percussion) and Merlo Podlewski (bass), take things into rock territory. Ben Harper, a longtime friend, adds the nostalgic sound of acoustic steel guitar as a guest artist on a single song.

Johnson is the primary songwriter. Much of his work is frankly autobiographical. "Tape Deck" recalls the experiences of four teenage would-be rock stars. According to the lyrics, the worst guitarist of the bunch was forced to become the drummer. They lost their living room rehearsal space when a parent heard them doing songs by the post-hardcore rock group Fugazi. And, Johnson sings wryly, they "chickened out" of an opportunity to play in a school talent show when they realized "we can't sing, we can only shout."

Other compositions are love songs for his wife, Kim. "Never Fade," beautiful and sweet, describes when they met. "I Got You" brings the relationship forward to their present loving partnership. The couple has three children, and a song titled "You Remind Me of You" sounds like something a loving and musically talented father would improvise on the spot for his youngest.

Johnson shares another view of North Shore life with "Home." At first it's about coming home to a garden that needs tending, birds nesting in the attic and a dead lime tree. In broader terms the song tells listeners that home is where one shares love.

In other selections, Johnson ponders the meaning of existence and the nature of free will. The arrangements are conducive to simply enjoying the instrumental interplay between Johnson and his musicians, but don't overlook the deeper questions his lyrics pose.

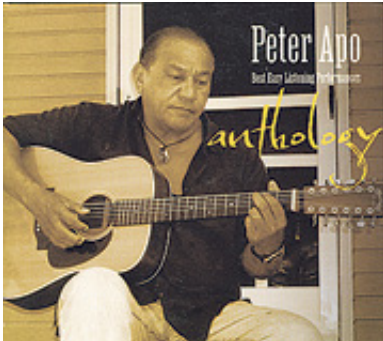
Johnson, Topol, Podlewski and keyboardist Zach Gill share composer credit for "Ones and Zeros." The lyrics suggest that even the idyllic North Shore paradise of Johnson's youth is not safe from outsiders' plans for development and the climate change that is already in progress.

"From Here to Now to You" hits stores Tuesday.

www.jackjohnsonmusic.com

"Anthology"

Peter Apo(*Mamo*)



Peter Apo made history in 1990 when he followed up on his Na Hoku Hanohano Award-winning partnership with Del Beazley by releasing "Hawaiian Nation: A Call for Sovereignty," a compilation of newly made recordings of mele kue (songs of resistance) and narrative readings by an assortment of Hawaii recording artists. The project was a milestone in music.

In the years since "Hawaiian Nation," Apo has recorded as a member of Peter Apo & the Rainbow Nation Band and as a solo artist. With this collection of 15 songs culled apparently at random from past releases, Apo displays the breadth of his repertoire.

"Anthology" is available online at www.mele.com and at Hungry Ear Records, 418 Kuulei Road in Kailua.

» "Wai'anae"

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