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Suzanne Brindamour

Releases two albums on one CD

Family

&

Shaded by Trees



Together on one compact disc, two new seven song albums by Suzanne Brindamour prove nostalgic and deeply personal. In *Family* and *Shaded by Trees* she celebrates unconditional love, simpler times, and childhood memories. She fabricates idealistic and fantastical worlds, mourns profound loss, and makes a plea for social justice. While sharing a CD and some of the same themes, Brindamour's albums are quite different. Lively, poppy, and layered with both edgy new sounds and retro elements, *Shaded by Trees* employs a full band. Intimate arresting vocals with paired down, ethereal arrangements in support of her signature fingerpicking style on guitar and ukulele mark the tunes on *Family*.

When she began these recordings in 2011, Brindamour had already released two albums of original songs to rave reviews (*The Washington Post*) and enjoyed success writing scores for film and television. Personal challenges, the loss of two close friends, and other life-altering events stalled progress, however. During the Covid outbreak, despite the logistics of bringing musicians and vocalists to her home studio, she was able to finish production and released *Family* digitally in late 2022.

Brindamour says she is inspired by "nature, loss, and a passion to bring more love, peace and acceptance into the world." This was her aim for *Family* and *Shaded by Trees*. "I wanted to combine my talents as a composer and arranger with my songwriting skills to create soundscapes and rich layers. It's quite gratifying to create something from scratch. Writing for me is cathartic and brings me great joy, but what I hope most is that my music will sooth or uplift listeners and inspire positive change."

Since an early age Brindamour has had a passion for music, art, and helping others. The youngest of five children, she grew up in a suburb of Washington, D.C. in a household filled with artists and musicians. "Making music has been my greatest passion since I was a kid and nagged my older brothers to let me try their guitars. By the time I learned to play guitar and some piano I had developed an interest in writing poetry as well. Combining the two, songwriting become something I had to do because my soul craved it."

A degree in communications led to work in both television and radio production; and a natural talent for creating music on guitar and piano led to writing scores and songs. By the time she decided to enter the spotlight as a singer and songwriter in 1999 she had written music for *National Geographic Explorer*, *America's Most Wanted*, and Mercedes Benz; and copy for a radio ad campaign that won her a first place ADDY award. She also had developed her unique and meticulous style of fingerpicking. Over the next decade she performed all original songs regularly at various venues in the D.C. area including the National Theatre, State Theatre, Iota Club and Cafe, and Jammin Java. She did a tour on the west coast in California and a couple shows in Europe. At the same time she continued working in video production, taught guitar lessons, and was employed as musician-in-residence at a children's hospital. Tracks from her first two albums appeared in film and network television including an excerpt of "Dear Sevda," used for *Popstars* (then on the WB, now CW and MTV). This powerful ballad told of her correspondence with a Bosnian refugee. Brindamour continued to write scores for film and television. In 2009, she wrote the score and the song "Fireflies" for a documentary on public TV called *Barnstorming*. The soundtrack provided her third album release.

All lyrics clean	
1	The Boy & the Tree 4:23
2	Family 4:20
3	Here Today 4:21
4	Etude for Erika 2:59
5	One Human Race 4:59
6	Worry No More 4:38
7	The Creek at Georgetown Hill 4:45
8	In My World 4:01
9	Only Your Love 2:44
10	I Am Here For You 3:33
11	Wake Me 2:28
12	Pilots' Anthem 3:44
13	Let Me Go 3:44
14	Best Things in Life are Free 3:43

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Family album:

1. The Boy & the Tree

“The Boy and the Tree” is a song about unconditional love, inspired by a great romance and Shel Silverstein’s book *The Giving Tree*. The tree (in the book and the song) is promising to be there for “the boy,” and offers everything it has. The melodic, romantic song showcases Brindamour’s signature acoustic guitar picking and features violin, lush orchestral strings and ambient pads.

2. Family

The title track, “Family,” is a quiet reflection on leaving the familiar to embrace the universal unknown. It describes scenes as someone says goodbye and drives through their hometown “past the schoolyard and the market, monkey bars and lovely gardens.” The song closes with an optimistic observation that most people love their family more than their fortunes, and asks the question: “What [would it be like] if all the world felt like one family?” A simple, hypnotic ukulele part anchors the song accompanied by ambient synthesizer.

3. Here Today

“Here Today,” is an homage to Nick Drake, one of the artist’s favorite singer-songwriters. In the song Brindamour wonders, as others have speculated, if Drake meant to end his life or if the overdose of pills was accidental. In addition to the lyrics, the driving acoustic guitar part is inspired by Nick Drake’s unique guitar style. Atmospheric synth sounds enhance the mood.

4. Etude for Erika

In the haunting and heartbreaking “Etude for Erika,” Brindamour honors a dear friend who lost her battle with breast cancer. Like the other tracks on the deeply personal album *Family*, it is delicate and light with ukulele, violin, and subtle ambient synth pads.

5. One Human Race

“One Human Race” was inspired by the tragic, racially motivated mass shooting in Buffalo, New York in May of 2022. After hearing Garnell Whitfield II (son of one of the victims) make an impassioned speech, Brindamour felt compelled to protest in song, using some of his own words. She shared it with Whitfield and pledged to speak out about racial injustice and “do better” as the song implores.

6. Worry No More

“Worry No More” recounts two young sisters’ fantastical journey to escape a difficult home life. They hop a train and along the way see bears and balloons until they make the leap and jump from the train. Brindamour’s unique guitar picking drives the song, layered with ethereal and esoteric sounds. A listener is left wondering if what occurred was real or just a dream.

7. The Creek at Georgetown Hill

“The Creek at Georgetown Hill” is inspired by Brindamour’s fond childhood memories of catching tadpoles from a nearby creek, celebrating a time of innocence before the age of device and social media addiction. The song shows off Brindamour’s sound design skills, layering dreamy ukulele together with the sounds of children playing in a creek, ambient keys and electric guitar. The tune eventually gives way to a full band evoking the joyful exuberance of childhood.

Shaded by Trees album:

8. In My World

Drums introduced in the last tune on *Family* carry on in the album *Shaded by Trees* with jazzy upbeat brushes kicking off “In My World.” The bittersweet tune expresses the artist’s wish to create a better world through art. Children “can play outside in the garden, their bodies are safe, their minds are free, their hearts never harden.” Over the infectious beat are acoustic guitar and lively bass with layers of harmonies and atmospheric synth sounds. It’s a song that sounds happy but those who listen attentively will catch its desperate plea for change. All bass parts on both albums are played by John Previti, one of D.C.’s best musicians who for years played with guitar legend Danny Gatton.

9. Only Your Love

Lively, poppy with a touch of ‘Santana’ was the aim for this tune. “Only Your Love” is an upbeat love song that features electric guitar by one of D.C.’s greatest players—a student and heir apparent to the late Danny Gatton—Dave Chappell. Synth, acoustic guitar and a tight rhythm section also drive the song.

10. I Am Here for You

Another happy love song, “I Am Here for You” was written to pledge devotion and adoration for a beloved. The snappy rhythm changes grooves between verse and chorus. The tune features an infectious acoustic guitar picking part, banjo, sweet harmonies and an upbeat rhythm section.

11. Wake Me

“Wake Me” reluctantly challenges a love interest to pursue her despite her own fear and skepticism. “You tried to wake me from my sleep; to get into my bed and get inside my head and raise me from the dead” is the repeated refrain. A rock song at its core, acoustic guitar and bass are joined by drums and edgy electric guitar licks to accent the raw message in the lyrics.

12. Pilots’ Anthem

This homage to pilots who fly small aircraft teeters on the boundary of folk and bluegrass. It has the feel of a spirited jug band without the jug. The minute-long prelude was originally written by Brindamour as part of the soundtrack for the documentary *Barnstorming* which aired on PBS. This version has heavier instrumentation and features ukulele, soaring violin, banjo, and bass, with a kick drum and embellishments to hold it all together. The song picks up speed like a plane taking off over farms and fields. It’s an upbeat journey with lively fiddle, pulsing rhythm, banjo and guitar while the vocals celebrate flight with the pilot musing “from five hundred feet I can smell the sweet corn below.”

13. Let Me Go

This song is a plea to an ex who is bordering on stalker to leave her alone and let her go. The arrangement is haunting with catchy Chris Isaak style electric guitar licks over Brindamour’s acoustic guitar. The drums are driving yet slow enough to contemplate whether the “desperate pleas” are “really about love” or an attempt to control.

14. The Best Things in Life are Free

This energetic and joyful song takes another nostalgic look at childhood. It celebrates simpler times and tries to remind us that the best things in life such as “listening to streams...laughing with friends, walks on the beach” are free. It features Dave Chappell on electric guitar again, and a lively full band feel.