

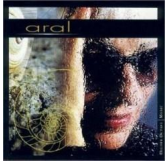
## Catherine Lara – Aral (2000)

Written by bluesever

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## Catherine Lara – Aral (2000)



1 *Eastern Land* 5:13 2 *Unity* 5:31 3 *Aral* 5:02 4 *Blue Dawn* 4:26 5 *Requiem For A Dying Sea* 3:59 6 *Gypsy Tears* 4:19 7 *In Between Nowhere* 4:54 8 *Deeplara* 5:10 9 *Marayeva* 3:34 10 *Yoponomo* 4:01 11 *Sea U Soon* 1:34  
Accordion – Michel Sanchez  
Conductor [Orthodox Choir] – Diane Neny Drums – Neil Conti Guitar, Bass Guitar – Sylvain Luc  
Keyboards – Eric Mouquet, Michel Sanchez, Thierry Eliez Producer, Arranged By, Mixed By – Catherine Lara, Eric Mouquet Violin [Solo, Additional Strings] – Catherine Lara Vocals [Backing] – Claude Lauzanna, Gino Ceccarelli, Marie Ceccarelli, Thierry Eliez  
Woodwind [Uilleann Pipe] – Patrick Molard

International violin star Catherine Lara has been playing around the world for nearly three decades and the experience and worldliness that she brings to her playing shows on this album. Featuring Eric Mouquet of Deep Forest, the album journeys around a world of musical textures, always held together by the clear tones of Lara's violin. ---Stacia Proefrock, AllMusic Review

Catherine Lara is a violinist fluent in various genres. On this, her eponymous first release -- well, eponymous if you read her name backwards -- she collaborates with Eric Mouquet, the visionary responsible for Deep Forest. This artistic connection should immediately align your compass of expectation and point it in the proper direction -- you're getting lots of immaculate synth effects, rollicking drums and anthem-like inspirational melodies. And don't forget the strangely organic enfolding of unadulterated human voices from around the globe.

In Deep Forest, Mouquet wove the otherworldly magic of a Pigmy jungle into a highly



contemporary context without stylistic conflicts, achieving a unique balance between hi-tech and ancient worlds and creating a powerful symphonic/neo-tribal synthesis that sold millions.

In Aral, Mouquet hands over the keys to his genre-defying music module to Lara, who jumps into his aural vehicle, revs up its engine and follows her own muse. Although her journey is definitely her own, it is also influenced by Moquet's vision and craft. They make a great team.

The title track starts as a gently rumbling up-tempo synth & drum groove, followed by a brief tribal yodeling fragment that sets the rhythmic pulse, before Lara's electric violin introduces the geometrically jagged theme. Soon a parallel harmony line is added to flesh out the melody. A weighty background chorus of Russian baritones and basses then intermingles with the thick synth carpet and pulsing drums, anchoring Lara's con arco violin exploits in the celestial canopy. As absurd as it sounds on paper, it is powerfully appropriate musically. A rollicking interlude of inter-channel voice effects, laughter and hard-driving percussion takes us to the violin's melodic reprise before, in true run-amok Yello fashion, the track goes into overdrive. It turns into a splendidly dense and multi-layered high propulsion energy jam so electrifying that a fatal crash would be the inevitable result if the team was actually on a road. Fortunately, it ends up in a literal splash into some water instead.

That track captures Aral's essence. A joyful spirit of celebration pervades the entire album -- call it pan-global gracefulness. It's like an ecstatic whole-earth musical prayer session. Forget the stern and solitary traditional Zen navel gazing -- think communal global village dance rave, instead. It honors our human earthiness by delighting in our senses. Like a life-affirming tantric gesture, it's grateful for the body's capacity for ecstasy. Bopping and whirling, grooving and sashaying, it's a tacit embrace of humanity's glorious diversity and creativity.

In short, Aral is a hi-tech extravaganza of the first order filled to the brim with the sparkling biodynamic juices of Spirit. What's more, it's my first high-five musical discovery of 2001! Too bad our annual industry m  le in Las Vegas tends to be such a stuffed shirt affair. One feels self-conscious and unwelcome for wanting to play this type of thing instead of the ubiquitous female jazz vocals. I swear it'd give most of the hi-falutin' equipment there a great and much needed enema. ---Srajan Ebaen, soundstage.com

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