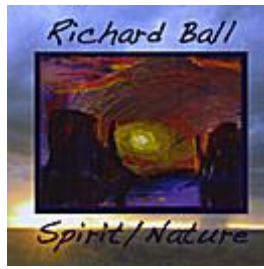


## Mp3 Richard Ball - Spirit/nature



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Earthy, Indigenous flutes and sounds of nature, making it's way to light jazz. The story of Shamanic culture making its way in the modern world. 9 MP3 Songs in this album (36:52) ! Related styles: NEW AGE: Ambient, JAZZ: Modern Free Jazz People who are interested in Jan Garbarek should consider this download. Details: "Spirit/Nature" is a limited pressing CD. Each physical CD is individually numbered, and has a piece of sacred sage inserted in the spine (for that reason, the CDs are not shrink-wrapped.) The CD was manufactured by Diskfaktory, and features unique art in addition to the recording. Following are the liner notes, which are only available on-line. Spirit/Nature Liner Notes Nature of the Recording: The technique of 'looping' utilizes small digital recorders which are typically operated by foot pedals which allow a performer to record, in real time, a 'loop' - a recording of any length from a few seconds to several minutes which repeats. The looping devices allow the performer to 'overdub' multiple layers over an initial loop, creating layers of sound. As a multi-instrumentalist, I have been previously unable to play more than one instrument at a time. This technology allowed me to record layers of percussion, flutes, digeridoos and so on. I used this technique to perform "Multi-instrumental improvisations," where I would improvise on one instrument, pick up another instrument and 'overdub' it, and add additional layers of sound. I had been doing this for years with studio recording equipment to create sketches of compositions to share with the band, but looping technology has allowed me to perform in front of audiences as a 'one-man band.' The recordings on this CD extrapolate from these performances. Instead of looping devices, I am using recording equipment and computers to record and manipulate the loops. This allows me the convenience of time, being able to record and erase, move loops around and use different effects and stereo panning to create a more pleasing product than the rather raw improvisations audiences have been subjected to. I could work with my loops over long periods. However, in the tradition of

multi-instrumental improvisation, these tracks are not composed prior to recording. Instrumentally, I have used many historical instruments, many dating to the ancient period. In order to preserve the sounds I think of when I think of these ancient instruments, I have limited the recordings to drums and wind instruments. There are some percussion instruments which are digital or sampled in order to compensate for my lack of mastery as a drummer. However, I have used actual drums when I could make it work. I have used a number of unusual, historical flutes, including a little-known Hopi flute, used by Hopi flute cults. I have used pan-pipes and bamboo side-blown flutes, the Japanese Shakuhachi and the Native American flute (which, thought to be only a few hundred years old, may be the most contemporary flute I have played...) The oldest wind instrument is the didgeridoo, which archeologists date to between 40,000 and 100,000 years old. Drums are obviously older and more visceral than the wind instruments, and the dates of the earliest drums date right back to the earliest humans. The drums used on these recordings include a large, deer-skin, ceremonial drum made from a tree trunk, African hand drum djembe, and it's Middle Eastern cousin, the dumbek. I have also used the cajon, which is an instrument developed in Peru from shipping crates. I have recently acquired a Brazilian berimbau, which is a bow instrument with a long string made from steel that is hit with a stick, and there are a number of shakers, including a Hopi gourd rattle and goat hooves.

Philosophy of the Ancients: The original title of this recording was to be "Philosophy of the Ancients," and the first few tracks of this album are indicative of that intention. I was planning to record an entire album of music inspired by ancient, earth-based philosophy and using only ancient musical instruments. As the year, and the recording, progressed, I found myself instead contemplating the difference and seeming crisis between the ancient and modern; or moreover, the world of spirit and the world of matter. For poetic sake, I have called these contrasting world views Spirit/Nature and have interpreted this more as the world of the seen (nature) and the world of the unseen (spirit.) It seemed to me that these worlds were contradictory and irreconcilable, and I would find myself leaning toward one or the other from day to day. As the year bore on, however, I seemed to find a way to embrace both worlds, each with their own gifts to offer. The songs then took on a different direction than the original nature of the project, and became a document to the explorations I took while reconciling these worlds. I had also intended this recording to contain a great deal more of the spoken word. I did include a short poem on "The World Need Never Apologize," but I have chosen to either scrap the rest of what I had written as it no longer was compatible with my philosophy, or to save it for compositions I am

working on for future projects. I also branched out in the recordings from solely ancient instruments to include the piano, saxophone and modern percussion which are a strong part of the modern world, and the world of a great deal of music I play. The Songs: 1.Spirits Awaken - This opening track was the first recorded for this project in May 2008. The instruments on this piece include a large, tribal drum, hopi rattle, goat hooves, the eagle bone whistle, Aztec death whistle, Native American flute and voice. This was inspired by some of my experiences on the Navajo, Hopi and Ute Reservations over the past 15 years. There, in some of the most isolated, desert wilderness in the country, devoid of anything modern, except what I can carry on my back, I feel I have experienced the true face of Spirit. This piece captures that feeling more than any other recording I have made. 2.Shapeshifting - Shapeshifting is an ancient sorcerer's art whereby one can change into other animals. It is a strong element to many earth-based philosophies. There is a debate as to whether this happens physically or merely as a state of mind. Having never experienced such a thing directly, I can apply it to the modern world as a shift in state of mind. That is to say, a means of changing one's point of view: In a situation where one is upset or uncomfortable, a person can choose to remain that way, or 'shapeshift' into a different paradigm where what is happening is more acceptable or makes more sense. This type of 'shapeshifting' in my own life has allowed me, over the last few years, to become more accepting and open-minded, and less anxious about many things. A number of animal sounds can be heard here, including the eagle, wolf, and mountain lion. 3.The World of the Crow - building upon combining natural and music sounds, I recorded The World of the Crow with the sounds of the bird and the Hopi Flute, an ancient, end-blown flute that is rarely played outside of Hopi ritual. 4.Modern Man Becoming Thunderbird - One of the most widely spread shapeshifting stories of Native America is that of the thunderbird, an enormous bird that fights evil spirits and can shapeshift into a human form. This is the first work on this album that combines ancient and modern. It uses pan pipes and didgeridoos, both instruments so ancient that relics have been found dating back to some of the earliest man. However, modern drums and a sequencing program have been used to manipulate the loops. 5.Rekindling Passion - This song uses the ancient African instrument, the kalimba (thumb harp), the Brazilian berimbau, which has roots in ancient Africa, and an Indian, bamboo flute, the bansuri. One thing the technological world has done to people is deprived them of their passion. Perhaps this is why it receives so much criticism. However, the modern world approached with passion can be as rich and rewarding as many imagine the spiritual world to be. Perhaps the reason the spiritual

world is embraced with so much more passion is its mystery. The world of matter can seem mundane when compared to a world which we can imagine with limitless possibility. Furthermore, as we fall into the rut of daily survival, we can lose our passion. 'Shapeshifting' into a paradigm where the earthly world is as full of wonder and possibility as the world of spirit is a way to rekindle that passion.

6.India - This song is named more for the instrumentation, scales and approach than any aspect of philosophy. It uses the tamboura, bansuri and electric tabla combined with both acoustic and electric basses and saxophone. This song is another pivot between the ancient and modern, with the flute remaining in strict conformity to a raga, and the saxophone more exploratory in scale usage.

7.Contemporary Shamanic - This song explores a drum beat frequently used by shamans during 'journeys' to the spirit world. There is a drone which is made by layers of flutes, including the bass quena and bansuris, and the lead instrument is the soprano saxophone. One of the rewarding parts of playing music is that each time I play, it is like altering my consciousness to take a journey wherever the music leads me. This is particularly true in improvisation, where the path has not yet been explored. The amount modern man tends to improvise is little. We are addicted to predictability, and in the interest of feeling safe and comfortable give up the wonder of exploration.

8.The Earth Need Never Apologize - This is a modern recording with modern instruments, indicative of the free jazz I typically play. I have added to it a poem about the earth to balance it from being too completely modern. I have seldom recorded myself playing the piano even I frequently play it and compose at it all the time. I am very poor about getting my piano tuned, and attempts to tune it myself have been less than successful. The piano here is electric, as are the drums, though both have been played in real time, not pre-programmed or looped. Over this, I have recorded the soprano saxophone in the style I most often play these days.

9.Parallels - I enjoy the saxophone on this, and like that it is a little 'spooky.' It is recorded over electronic strings and electronic and acoustic percussion. The message of this piece are that the world of spirit and form are parallels, both full of wonder. Most people tend to lean to one side or another. The balance seems to be in the middle. Perhaps this is Buddha's middle way, although modern Buddhism typically views the material world as an illusion to be overcome to achieve enlightenment. Thank you. I hope you enjoy the recordings here.

Please feel free to contact me if you have additional question. Richard B. Ball

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