

Mp3 Don Robertson - Keys



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Beautiful, inspired piano pieces with orchestra 6 MP3 Songs CLASSICAL: New Age, NEW AGE: Meditation Details: Don Robertson was born in Denver, Colorado in 1942. His love of music permeated his childhood. Being allowed to use the family 78rpm record player, the young boy was able to listen to classical music that he loved beyond anything else. His favorite records were those in the Beethoven 5th Symphony record album, however. Because of his interest in classical music, he became a piano student of Antonia Brico at the age of three and he studied with her for several years. Dr. Brico, who was also Judy Collin's teacher, handed a photo of the young student to composer Jan Sibelius when he invited her to Finland to conduct the Helsinki Symphony Orchestra. "I told him that you would one day be a great composer," she said upon her return. Don was fortunately able to attend the young-people's concerts of the Denver Symphony Orchestra, and also go with his parents and grandparents to the supper clubs where he watched the local dance bands play. Young Don lived and breathed music. In addition to classical music, he loved the popular music of his time as well. One of his favorite composers was Leroy Anderson. Don's dream was to one day become a composer himself, and using little composition notebooks, he tried to write down the childish melodies that he could create on the upright piano that his grandmother had donated to the cause. In 1948, when Don was six, his mother and father made a trip to Aspen, Colorado. There they watched composer Igor Stravinsky conduct the Aspen Summer Festival Orchestra. Young Don already knew Stravinsky's Firebird Suite and looked forward to seeing the composer conduct. During the intermission, however, the youngster disappeared. His parents searched for him frantically, but to no avail. Finally, at the end of the intermission, as the musicians re-entered the stage area from their break, Don's parents were relieved to see their little boy entering the stage area along with the musicians. Asking where he had been, Don replied to his worried parents: "Back stage

talking with Mr. Stravinsky. He's a really nice guy." Early Years As a child, Robertson created music in his head, humming symphonies in the far corners of the school playground while the other boys played ball, or lagging behind the troupe while on cub scout hikes. In 1953, when he was eleven years of age, he wired together various record players, his tape recorder, some microphones, and created a home radio station that broadcasted programs of his favorite music out into the neighborhood. The signal for his little radio station had a range of several blocks using a small transmitter that his parents helped him finance and build. A year later, an impressed neighbor arranged for the twelve-year-old to have his own weekly DJ show on Denver radio station KFSC. The show was called Teen Tunes. In 1956, Don Robertson and a girl friend went to see Elvis Presley, an amazing new singer in the pop world who was performing in Denver while traveling with the Faron Young country-music tour. Elvis' music prompted the young man to become interested in the guitar and soon he had saved enough money to buy a Silvertone electric guitar from Sears and Roebuck. Then, in 1959, Don discovered the music of the great French jazz guitarist Django Reinhardt and his interest in guitar blossomed into something more than just playing the chords of simple rock and roll songs, and he began to learn how to play jazz guitar. Robertson graduated from South Denver High School in 1960. Because of poor grades, he was unable to enter college. His father convinced him to join the Navy. After he had completed basic training in San Diego, he was assigned to the destroyer USS Los Angeles, home-ported in Long Beach, California. It was aboard this ship that the young man realized what had taken place: he had committed himself to being trapped aboard a ship for four years, unable to live the kind of life that he really felt drawn to. Up to this point, however, he had not given any consideration to the kind of life he was interested in living, and so the door was now open wide. Asking himself the question "What really matters in my life," he was stimulated to reacquaint himself with the music that had permeated his early life. He realized that because he had been afraid of ridicule from fellow students in junior and senior high school, he had been denying his love of classical music. He began using his spare time to not only reacquaint himself with the music of his youth, but to realize his desire to compose. Soon he was involved in a full-time study of the fundamentals of music: orchestration, theory, counterpoint. Weekly trips to the Long Beach Public Library supplied him with the scores of the great classical works as well as textbooks that unlocked the keys to musical composition. Meanwhile, Don continued to practice and learn guitar and he formed a jazz combo aboard ship. After a year of self study, Don Robertson began writing a symphonic work, using his guitar to pick out melodies and chords.

He worked on this composition, called *Moments Avant de Partir*, for over a year. When he had completed the three-movement work, an interested acquaintance arranged for the finished composition to be played during a rehearsal of the Long Beach Symphony Orchestra. In addition to his musical epiphany, Don experienced another realization. Having been an almost completely disinterested student during his junior and senior high school days, he had accomplished very little reading in his life. But during this period of awakening, in addition to rediscovering classical music, Don discovered literature, and he became an avid reader. Soon he was devouring the works of James Joyce and Thomas Wolfe, his favorite writers, and some of the great works of poetry by such writers as Whitman and Verlaine. Then in 1963, while the ship was moored at Pearl Harbor, Don, walking along the Hawaiian beaches, realized that he was going to become not only a composer of music, but a writer as well. In 1964, Don finally received his discharge from the Navy. Accepted into the University of Colorado, he moved to Boulder, Colorado where he formed a blues/jazz/light rock group. Called the Contrasts, the group became a sensation and after releasing two singles (*Summertime* and *On Green Dolphin Street*), bought a van and moved on to Las Vegas where they began performing in a casino there. At this time, Don began the self-study of piano. Dissatisfied with the glitzy Las Vegas lifestyle, Don left the Contrasts in 1965 and moved to Los Angeles to enroll in the Institute of Ethnomusicology at UCLA, where he began a study of world music. He was happy to find great teachers there, and he began learning and performing music from China, Greece, Africa, Java, Persia, Bali and the Middle East. Also while in Los Angeles, he formed a rock group that performed in clubs on Los Angeles' famed Sunset Strip. In addition to his studies at the Institute, Robertson began learning the North Indian classical musical instrument called the sitar with Harihar Rao as his teacher, and the Chinese classical instrument called the pipa with Lui Tsung Young. Meanwhile, he continued his studies of Western Classical Music, attending classes given by Henri Lazarof, Gardner Reed, and studying counterpoint privately with Leonard Stein, who had been a student of Arnold Schnberg. Morton Feldman In 1966, Don Robertson moved to New York City to pursue his dream of studying composition at the Julliard School of Music. There, he worked in the recording studios as a studio musician playing guitar and North Indian instruments on record albums and network television commercials. In addition to classes at Julliard, Don studied privately with composer Morton Feldman and Indian Maestro Ustad Ali Akbar Khan. The Tabla Under the tutelage of Ustad Ali Akbar Khan, Don began studying the drums of North Indian classical music called the tabla. In 1968, Don Robertson authored an

introductory instruction book on the tabla. Published by Peer-Southern International, the book was called *Tabla: A Rhythmic Introduction to Indian Music*. This instruction book was available in music stores around the world for over twenty years. Don Robertson has continued to study the tabla to this day in addition to North Indian classical vocal music, which he has studied with various teachers including Ustad Ali Akbar Khan. He studied tabla with Shankar Ghosh during 1968 and 1969 and has studied with Swapan Chaudhuri since 1986. While living in New York City and studying with the two masters, one from the East (Ali Akbar Khan) and one from the West (Morton Feldman), Don Robertson made a startling discovery. He found that there was a strong difference between the ancient music of India on one hand, and the modern music of John Cage and Morton Feldman on the other. He noticed that the two types of music had completely different effects on him when he listened to them or played them. Soon he uncovered what he believed was the foundation chord for negative harmony. Just as there are chords that comprise the foundation for concordant harmony in music (the major and minor chords), he discovered that there was a foundation for disharmonious music as well: a four-note chord that he named the duochord. Realizing that the then-current style of composing classical music, the style that he was himself composing in, was disharmonious and that he had for several years been composing music that was based upon this four-note negative chord, he gave up composition altogether and discontinued his studies with Morton Feldman. First Records Meanwhile, during his second year in New York, Don was offered a contract to record for MGM Records. He put together a band and began rehearsing. The resulting highly experimental group blended Western, Eastern and Middle-Eastern classical music with rock and jazz, and performed several songs that were precursors to today's heavy metal music. When Don's MGM producer heard these heavy-metal songs, he was so upset that his face turned red and he stomped out of the room. Soon, however, Don was signed to another major record label: Mercury, featured as a part of the new Limelight subsidiary. San Francisco producer Abe "Voco" Kesh had heard Don's guitar work on an album that Don had participated on for Folkways Records and he liked it. Abe, who had produced the first heavy-metal record by the Blue Cheer, had just produced a hit record with another guitar player, Harvey Mandel, and was ready to produce Don's Mercury album. Don moved to San Francisco to work with Abe and to produce what would become one of the first albums of the new age genre. Called *Dawn*, the 1969 album explored what Don had discovered in New York City: the difference between positive and negative music. Don introduced music based upon the duochord in

Dawn, and contrasted that with highly positive music performed on a zither. Positive Music In 1970, Don Robertson embarked upon a new musical course that focused on discovering the connection between spirituality and music, focusing on music that has a positive influence. He felt that a spiritual essence could be found in great music of all times and cultures, and that it gave to music its greatest purpose: the ability to uplift and heal. He embarked upon an intense study of spirituality in Western classical music that began with very old music - Gregorian chant, and extended to music of the present time. Don wrote his first article about positive and negative music in a book that he published in 1970 called the Kosmon. He then spent most the 1970s as a brother in a San Francisco-based spiritual order called the Holy Order of MANS. During the later part of the decade, he began lecturing to groups in the San Francisco area about the effects of positive and negative music. Renaissance Sacred Music Don tells the story of how he discovered what become one of his greatest discoveries in music: the sacred music of Renaissance Europe. "I had been listening a great deal to cantatas by J.S. Bach and one night I had a dream. In the dream I was shown a record album cover with the name Palestrina written on it. I had learned about the great Renaissance composer Palestrina in a music appreciation course that I had taken at Colorado University, but I was unfamiliar with his music. In the dream, I heard a voice say 'there is great music that was written before the time of Bach' and I realized I was being shown about something very important. At that time, and pretty much still today, music written before Bach was generally considered to be archaic and boring. I started listening to recordings of the choral music of Palestrina, and at first I too thought it must be boring, although I recognized that the harmonies were very pure. Soon I realized the great beauty of this music and that of the other composers of the Renaissance era: Dufay, Josquin des Prez, Lassus, Gallus, and most notably, the Spanish composer Tomas Luis de Victoria and I was astounded. I now had a new musical love!" Don began an intensive study of this music, most of which had never been not recorded. With the help of University music librarians, he was able to make copies from the volumes of music scores held in the reserve section of some of the larger libraries such as those at Stanford and Berkeley, California. Most of these sources were published many years before and employed an older style of notation, so Don began a work that occupied a large amount of his spare time for twenty years, preparing a new edition of the cream of these old masterpieces. This work was never completed, however, and still awaits publication. Don considered the publication of these masterpieces an important part of his work in music. Wagner In 1978, Robertson left the Holy Order of MANS to pursue his life's

work in music. Continuing his study and research of the spiritual music contained in the Western classical tradition, he spent two years researching the music of Richard Wagner, Cesar Franck, and Alexander Scriabin. He had realized the importance of these composers and, like the composers of the Renaissance era, how little they were understood by contemporary society, a society so based in materiality, that this great quality was not recognized at all in the great music of our planet.

New Age Music In 1980, Don Robertson formed his own record label and began composing music and releasing albums using synthesizers and acoustic instruments. The following year, he purchased one of the first Synclavier II digital synthesizers (a computer-based synthesizer) and produced one of the earliest recordings created using this technology, his album called *Starmusic*. Additionally, he wrote his own software system for the instrument. Called B.A.C.H., this software allowed Don to perform in just intonation in any key, modulating from one key to another. Don produced six albums during the course of the next seven years and his music found its way onto hundreds of radio stations across America and in Europe, Malaysia, Finland, Sweden, and Australia and was a part of the growing new age music genre. His albums, especially the album called *Starmusic*, were featured on national public radio on such shows as *Music From the Hearts of Space* and *Musical Starstreams*, and the album *Spring* was given a glowing review by John Diebretto in *Downbeat Magazine*. Meanwhile, Don Robertson teamed up with Constance Demby to give a number of concerts, and he produced a number of seminars that dealt with the healing effects of music. The pinnacle of this activity came in 1981 when he, along his present wife, Mary Ellen and their friend Norman Miller, organized three-day long seminars that used music, color, and art to bring attendees into states of spiritual realization.

Kopavi After moving to Colorado in 1984, Don was becoming increasingly unhappy with the direction that new age music had been taking. Since its discovery by the major record labels and its subsequent commercialization, he no longer felt at home in the genre. In 1989 he decided to abandon recording the music altogether and turn to his first love, classical music. Actually, his so-called new age music wasn't really that at all. It was music that was the result of Don's personal inspiration, influenced by the great mixture of music that had poured through him throughout his life: Beethoven, Bach, Palestrina, Victoria, Lassus, Leroy Anderson, the pop music of the 1950s, BB King, Django Rheinhardt, Charley Parker, Wagner, Scriabin, Cesar Franck, North Indian Classical music, the folk and classical music of China and the middle east were among the largest contributors. Don realized that using the synclavier as his source of music, he hadn't been successful in creating what he actually wanted to hear: the sound of

the acoustic instruments and the classical symphonic orchestra. Therefore, in 1990, he turned back to writing classical music scores. During the 1990s, he wrote two classical compositions. In 1994, he completed Kopavi for orchestra and chorus, a spiritually-based ballet. The term Kopavi itself is a Hopi word that refers what is known as the crown chakra. Then in 1996, he began composing the Southern Wind string quartet. He completed that work four years later. Books Don Robertson has been involved in a number of published books. He wrote the first, a computer book called Accessing Transport Networks, for McGraw-Hill. It was an offshoot of the computer consulting that he performed during the 1980s and the 1990s. Sundance Publications of Denver Colorado has published two volumes of the three-volume work The Street Railways of Denver, a work written along with the late authors Morris Cafky and Ed Haley about his family's business, the Denver Tramway Company. His grandfather was the president and his father the General Attorney of that company. This series of three books was the result of the fond memories he had as a child of the streetcars that ran in Denver. "As an artist, I want to share my experiences, and these books are a part of my art." He also co-authored the book Songwriting for Dummies with his wife Mary Ellen Bickford, however his name is not listed on the cover. In 2004, he self-published a small book of poems. DoveSong.com In 1995, Robertson moved to the the Southeastern U.S. with a mission to personally explore his interest in gospel music. In 1997, now rejoined with his close friend since 1980, Mary Ellen Bickford, he started the website DoveSong.com, dedicated to bringing a greater knowledge of positive music and the great music traditions that he had studied throughout his lifetime to the world. Dovesonghas enjoyed a worldwide popularity and is unique in its scope and focus. Songwriting Don Robertson and Mary Ellen Bickford were married on May 10, 1999 and currently live in Nashville, Tennessee, where Don continues his research and studies of classical music and his composition of music, both classical and popular, and where he and Mary Ellen, with her background working with film and visuals, are now pursuing their dream of working together...a marriage of music and vision.

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