

Mp3 Az Samad - Acoustic Gestures



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Debut album of this young exciting Malaysian acoustic fingerstyle guitarist. Percussive, eclectic, funny, moody, funky and romantic compositions. Two tracks on nylon string, ten more on steel string. 12 MP3 Songs NEW AGE: New Age, EASY LISTENING: Mood Music Details: --Press Reviews-- "... Az... qualifies as a guitar prodigy of sorts. His flair and passion are almost Latin and are revealed in his penchant for Latino jazz rhythms." - Antares, Kakiseni.com "This is one guy who can finger-pick, hold massive grape fruit-sized chords and make his guitar gently weep with the best." - Adlin Rosli, Klue Magazine "..Az Samad produces works that are richly textured, poetic and atmospheric." - Faridul Anwar Farinordin, New Straits Times "If you are one of those who think that conventional guitar-playing is limited and tired, then Mr. Samad will show you the way forward. By playing with various alternative tunings and applying unusual techniques, Az squeezes out a whole new sonic universe for the acoustic guitar. His compositions can be moving, funny or sad, but they are always well constructed and brilliantly played." -Pete Teo "Gentle and shy he may look, but the chops he possesses were simply massive. His solid performance simply bewildered the crowd, who were not used to seeing such virtuosity being displayed on the acoustic guitar." -Jeremy Lua, audioreload.com "He not only plays most beautifully his own compositions but also sways like a willow tree in a storm almost like he's dancing to his own music (although remaining seated)." -Peter Hassan Brown --About Az-- Az Samad, 24 is a full-time composer-performer who focuses on writing original acoustic guitar music. Coming from a classical guitar background laid the foundation for his unique sound that is a blend of jazz, latin, pop and new age. After completing his first degree in music, he studied with Eric Roche, an influential acoustic fingerstyle guitarist from the UK. Attending two of Eric's Residential Guitar Workshops in 2003 and 2004 proved valuable as it led Az into new directions in his music. Being nominated for the first Cameronian Arts Award for best solo performance encouraged him to

further explore his solo guitar excursions. The culmination of this is "Acoustic Gestures", an independently produced CD featuring 12 of his original compositions for solo acoustic guitar. Currently he is studying under scholarship at the world famous Berklee College Of Music, Boston, USA in the dual-major degree program, majoring in Jazz Composition and Performance (Guitar). In his first semester, he studied under Garrison Fewell, a respected jazz guitarist who previous mentors have included the likes of Jim Hall and Pat Martino. --About The Album-- Acoustic Gestures is Az's debut album featuring 12 of his original compositions for the solo acoustic guitar. Except for two tracks which feature an additional musician each, all the other tracks are purely solo guitar pieces. This is a truly landmark album as this is the first time a full-length Malaysian solo acoustic fingerstyle album featuring all original material has been released. He has been composing music ever since he started picking up the guitar 8 years ago. In the beginning, his pieces were mostly made up with ideas that he got from playing the classical guitar. It was in fact the classical guitar that founds the basis of Az's style. Nevertheless, through the years, he has been influenced by many different styles of music. Az loves jazz, Latin, world music, classical, rock, pop and more recently Celtic music. This mix of influences can be seen in the changing moods of his songs in this album. From the groove oriented-percussive laden Train To Ericland that opens the album, he moves into the dark sounding Echoes Of Bangsar which Az says is about the after hours in Bangsar when all the partying is over. In Latah Setingan, a crowd favorite in many of his performances, he plays a funky riff and explores it inside out. For those who love emotional ballads, Senja Mula Menangis and Berjalan Bersamamu are the perfect choice to relax and chill out. In fact, these songs are very much like vocal music, so don't be surprised if you start singing the song after a listen. Az says, "I love writing stuff that can be sung, mainly because I can't really sing and the guitar is one of my only means of expressing these melodies." For a glimpse of Az's humourous side, one should listen to Lagu Royalti Belum Datang (a song dedicated to his father, National Laureate A. Samad Said about the ups and downs of being a full-time writer) and to Do You Insult Me Waltz (a classically-influenced waltz which makes fun of snobbish people). Az plays the nylon string guitar on two of the pieces in this album, the aforementioned Waltz and the other one being Irama Espanyola. This is a piece that Az dedicates to his mother who loves Spain. "It's my Spanish moment on the album, so I try my best to put on my Flamenco face. I love flamenco, but I can't really play it (in the style). Still, the song has a pretty improvisational section at the end which is in the spirit of Flamenco music." In his explorations delving in

Celtic music, he wrote The C Factor, a showpiece in DADGAD (an alternate tuning made famous by Pierre Bensusan, a French fingerstyle guitarist). Az however was introduced into the beauty of this guitar tuning by British-based fingerstyle guitarist Eric Roche. "I went for this guitar workshop last year called The Residential Guitar Workshop conducted by Eric (Roche), and though I've read his columns in Guitar Techniques (a well-known UK guitar magazine), I was not prepared for the stuff that Eric does. He's totally into DADGAD and other tunings, so that really opened up my eyes." "Watching Eric play also led me to explore more percussive guitar playing whereupon you hit the guitar body and play it more like a drum or percussion instrument. That just adds a whole new dimension to the guitar." In composing, Az is often inspired by different things. In one piece entitled Girl In Faded Photograph, he was inspired when he read a book written by Berklee College Of Music faculty Jon Damian. He then played around with the compositional ideas and there the piece was slowly put together. In another song, Antartika, he was inspired by a piece by Australian guitarist Tommy Emmanuel. Among the most magical moments on the album is the closing track Princess Lullaby, a song that features a duet between Az and singer-songwriter Shelley Leong. Shelley whispers a melody, much like how a mother sings to the child during bedtime. With this the album closes and one can listen to the album again. Az Trivia: The title of the album, in fact is the title of one of Az's earliest full length compositions (another way of saying a completed song!) This particular song is not in the album but Az says he will record it in the next one! (The name of the album is also the title of Az's blog site that he started earlier this year.) --The Recording Process-- The recording of the album took about two weeks including an earlier pre-production recording session prior to the actual guitar recordings that took place at Studio 3, Synchrosound Studios. Engineer Nick Lee, who has worked with acts such as Shelley Leong, Dragon Red, Naked Breed, Altered Frequency and many others was roped on board to record, mix and master the recording. Nick made the recording sessions a wonderful experience. In terms of the technical side, the recordings followed a very simple aim which was to get a good sound from the source it self. In this case it meant both the player and the guitar. Nick lended his steel-string acoustic Taylor 314 to Az to use for the recordings. Besides this guitar, Az also used his Takemine EN-60C nylon string guitar. The guitar was recorded with only two microphones, namely a BNK 4011 and a Neumann U87. For all the three days during the recording, Nick worked to find the optimal position for the mic to faithfully capture a nice balanced stereo image. Three takes of each song were recorded and the best take was chosen to be on the album. "It was great that we had a pre-production

session with me going through all the songs basically recording them once through prior to Synchro because it let me see very clearly what worked and what did not. It also made my playing cleaner when I came back to record the second time around." "At first, we actually intended the earlier sessions (which was done in another studio) to be on the album but there were some technical problems when the recording was done. Also, I realised that I wasn't as ready as I thought I was. Listening to the early pre-production takes made me see what I needed to practice to make the songs better for the recording. In the end, it was all for the better." Although it took two weeks to do the recording, the album has been in the works for a long time. Az explains: "I've been writing these songs for a long time and been performing them for quite a while, so it a natural progression for me to record them. Previously, I've done some recording in my own home setup and although it sounded pretty okey, I realise that I wanted a proper sound by recording it with microphones. Nevertheless, Nick was great in approaching the recording as well and he was very enthusiastic in getting a good sound from the start and not just in the mixing process. Also, I realise that nothing beats recording a guitar with microphones rather than recording it directly (line-in) to a computer." Additional musicians were also involved in the recording, thus breaking the mold of having a totally solo guitar album. "I went for the second Residential Guitar Workshop conducted by Eric Roche about a month prior to recording the album to seek advice and guidance. Being my first recording, I wanted to seek feedback. When Eric heard Train To Ericland, he told me that I should try to use a shaker in addition to the guitar to see how it sounds. And so I did!" Az called Zalila Lee, a percussionist friend to play the shaker in the song. "It does add more colour to the piece and adds to the train journey vibe in the song," Az explains. In the other song with an additional musician, Princess Lullaby - Az enlisted the talented Shelley Leong to sing over his piece. "Somehow, I realised that I wanted a human voice in the recording and it seemed very fitting to have Shelley sing over it. The piece is a very dreamy piece, being a lullaby and all and I picture it being sung to a small child." "In many ways, I think it is the fitting closure to the album." --The Album Design-- For the look of the album, Wong Chai Yen of Crossline studio conceptualised the whole look of the inlay and the photography session. Jonathan Ng Kin Weng took the photographs. In searching for a look that would best enhance the music visually, Chai Yen and Az had discussions about everything from colour schemes, photography angles and the themes captured in the guitar pieces. In the end, the outcome is a stunning display of bright splashes of blue, green, brown, white and red. All the different hues are also colours that Az loves very much. On the

artwork, two guitars that were used in the recording are predominately featured. They are the Takemine EN60-C nylon string guitar and the Taylor 314. --About The Songs-- Train To Ericland This is a song that I wrote for Eric Roche who opened up my eyes to the percussive possibilities of the guitar. I first met him when I attended his first Residential Guitar Workshop in Newton Ferrers, Devon, UK in October 2003. Watching him play just blew me away with all his energy and musicality. Even though the workshop was only a week, it changed my playing in so many ways. I wrote this piece gradually after I came back to Malaysia from the workshop. About a year later, I finally performed this piece for Eric. I'm glad he liked it. Thank you for the inspiration Eric. Echoes Of Bangsar Bangsar is often known for being the hip part of Kuala Lumpur. This is a song written for the after hours, when all the partying has died out and the dance music has faded away. Latah Setinggalan A song inspired by me playing around with Hendrix-type chord ideas and funky rhythms. When I first played it many years ago, it was a very simple piece on the classical. Nowadays, I have more fun with the song. It's really, really fun to play and this is one version of it. The title is from one of my dad's poems. Senja Mula Menangis Songs are born in different places. This is a piece that was written in Tapah, Perak (to be exact in a small resthouse in this particular small town) as the sun was setting down. Translated, the title means "Twilight Starts To Cry". Irama Espanyola My mom loves Spain. I wrote this one for her and performed it for the first time for her during mother's day many years ago. This is one of the two pieces that I played on the nylon string for this album. Lagu Royalti Belum Datang My dad is a poet, novelist and writer in many different genres. Basically, he gets paid in royalties and sometimes it comes way too late. The title for this bluesy, funny piece means "Song for Royalties Not Yet Come" Berjalan Bersamamu A love song. This is a song that I wrote basically to capture the feeling of just falling in love. Pick any romantic movie and there's bound to be a scene of the couple walking along an empty road in autumn. This is the song. The title means "Walking with you". Do You Insult Me Waltz Sometimes, in really huge grand dinner parties, where everyone is posh, hip and happening, I feel out of place. I wrote this for the snobbish guy or gal who thinks they own the world. It's a classically influenced piece and here I go again having a blast on the nylon string. The C Factor This is a Celtic-influenced piece that I wrote for a friend. It is a real fun piece to play. Girl In The Faded Photograph I was inspired by this book by Jon Damian (a great guitar teacher based in Boston) and was fiddling around with some ideas he talked about in the book. A lot of people have asked me who the girl is. Maybe you will too. Antartika I spelled it right. That's how it's spelled in Malay. I've always liked the feeling

of snow, ice and the wind blowing into your face. This tune came about when I was trying to learn Dixie McGuire by Tommy Emmanuel. I don't really remember that song but I'm glad it inspired this tune.

Princess Lullaby I wrote this song very recently and I think it's a nice way to close the album. A lullaby. I always kind of picture a mom singing to her child when I play this. --Frequently Asked Questions--

1. What style of music does Az play? Az plays acoustic fingerstyle guitar music. Commonly it is labelled as new age guitar music. This style of music is what one would say an umbrella label for acoustic guitar music that is not really classical and not really folk. It however often features influences from diverse styles of music all the way from jazz, Celtic, raggae and pop. 2. Who are Az's musical influences? In terms of guitarists, Az loves listening to Eric Roche, Thomas Leeb, Don Ross, Michael Hedges, Alex De Grassi, Stuart Ryan, Pierre Bensusan, Charlie Hunter and many others. Other musical influences include The Dave Matthews Band, Jacob Fred Jazz Odyssey, DJ Shadow, Maria Schneider and more. 3. Is Az his real name? Yes. --Album Credits-- All compositions by Az Samad. Az Samad: steel string acoustic guitar, nylon string guitar on Irama Espanyola and Do You Insult Me Waltz Zalila Lee: shaker on Train To Ericland Shelley Leong: vocals on Princess Lullaby (Shelley Leong appears courtesy of Soundtrax Productions) Executive Producer: Az Samad Produced by Az Samad Mixed and mastered by Nick Lee at Sonique Productions, Kuala Lumpur in November 2004. Acoustic guitars were recorded at Synchronsound Studios by Nick Lee on November 3,5 and 8, 2004. Shaker and vocals recorded at Sonique Productions. Art Direction and Design by Wong Chai Yen, Crossline Studio e-mail: chaiyen_crossline@hotmail.com Photography by Jonathan Ng Kin Weng (P) &(C) 2004 Az Samad For more information, log on: azzsamad.com Tags: autumn poems, sad love poems, best friend poems

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