

Mp3 Don Latarski - Guitars On Holiday



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This is the ultimate acoustic guitar orchestral sound. Tired of those tinkly, kiddie Christmas albums? This one is rich, warm, resonant and calming. The perfect backdrop for sipping eggnog and watching the lights dance on the snow. 13 MP3 Songs CLASSICAL: New Age, CLASSICAL: Orchestral Details: In a perfect world, I'd have my own personal guitar ensemble. And I'd call it "The Ephemeral Guitar Choir." We'd have a wonderful collection of acoustic guitars and create music that glorified the vibrating string in all its plucked, strummed and picked forms. Well, the world isn't perfect, so I've had to create the EGC with the help of my imagination, my son and modern technology. Even though the EGC exists only in my mind at this point, the music that this group would play is in your hands now. Guitars on Holiday is the second CD that I've produced that contains music for the holidays. The first is NorthWest of December, released in 1995. My son was about one and a half years old back then and all he could contribute to that CD was a memorable laugh. He's now nearly eleven and has been studying guitar with me for over three years. He also has a beautiful high voice that is especially effective on Silent Night. This CD came about because my son and I like to play and sing holiday songs together. We've done a couple of performances of holiday songs and people always enjoy our efforts. We'd been talking of doing a holiday CD together for a couple of years. We made a tentative start on this one in June of 2004 and after hearing the results of those initial experiments, I decided to forge ahead. Once I make a commitment to a project, I like to dive in all the way. Spencer, being more of a recreational musician, was somewhat taken aback by my fanaticism and I have a feeling he's not quite as fond of holiday music as he used to be. Still, the process of making this CD was a tremendous learning experience for both of us. All of the acoustic guitars and the electric bass parts were performed by me with Spencer adding his voice and/or some guitar (steel string) parts to nine of the songs. Each song began with me working out the harmonies with an acoustic guitar

and my laptop. Some of these arrangements took shape while camping up in the Cascade Mountains of central Oregon, others occurred on the central Oregon coast. Still others unfolded right here in my office. After notating the songs and checking for mistakes I headed to the studio to begin laying down the tracks. Each song was arranged in a semi-classical style with frequent use of counterpoint. One of my goals was to produce arrangements that would be both interesting and have enough dimension to withstand the test of time. I used what I'd call jazz harmony quite often, using half-steps between parts, droning voices and at times adventurous harmonic movement. This is not a jazz recording even though I am often called a jazz guitarist. There is no real improvisation. I appreciate the beauty of a simple melody and all of the songs I've chosen to arrange have beautiful melodies. The aesthetic I was after with these arrangements is similar to that found in the music of Aaron Copeland and the sound he was able to achieve in some of his "Americana" style works like Billy the Kid, and Appalachian Spring. The music is open and light, with a feeling of hope, renewal and promise; sentiments that people seem to be more aware and willing to share during the holiday season. A close listen will reveal an evolving approach to each song. No two verses are ever repeated exactly the same way. The songs unfold rather than reveal themselves fully after one verse. It's like floating down a gentle river in a kayak, with sights, smells and sounds that are constantly changing. I used a variety of different instruments to make this CD: a para-baritone acoustic Goodall (I Wonder as I Wander), a basic Martin dreadnought, a Chinese Cort modified to accommodate a Nashville tuning, a Takamine classical guitar (used extensively throughout) and Spencer's guitar, a beautiful little parlor sized Korean-made Cort. Some of these guitars were radically retuned to accommodate the range or emotional feel I was after. I also used a bit of Fender solid-body electric bass to provide a nice foundation. This bass part was typically doubled an octave higher on one of the above mentioned instruments. It was very common to double, triple or quadruple each part (with the exception of the bass parts) to achieve the chamber group effect. This layering is what gives this recording its depth and fullness; impossible to achieve using just one instrument. This project is the most ambitious recording I've done to date. It's been at times frustrating and challenging, but I feel the outcome more than justifies the countless hours invested, And in truth, I'd do it all again. But once a recording is finished, no one really cares how long it took to produce. The only thing that matters is what the music does for you. When you work on one song for hours on end, it's easy to lose yourself in the details. However, sweating the details is what makes producing music a joy. September 2004 Don Latarski

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