

Mp3 George Sawyn - Happy Holidays



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Ukrainian Christmas music; mostly acoustic guitar accompanied by electronic orchestrations. 10 MP3 Songs WORLD: World Traditions, EASY LISTENING: Mood Music Details: Happy Holidays is a collection of Ukrainian holiday music, which celebrates the Christmas and Epiphany holidays. These songs are undoubtedly my earliest musical memories; they are usually heard sung a capella by church choirs, or by the family at home. When I first acquired some multi-track recording equipment, back around 1990, I decided that I wanted to try recording them, and given the synthesizer and sequencer capabilities of the time, to arrange them in various instrumental settings. 1. Good Evening To You - Steel-string acoustic guitar embellished by some synthesizer orchestration: strings, woodwinds, chimes, and choir. 2. Carol of the Bells - The only piece in this collection that has no guitar on it. I set out to do a synthesizer orchestration of this piece, intending to add guitar, but it didn't seem to need any. 3. A New Joy Has Come - Classical guitar, bass, and percussion, with a phenomenal flugelhorn sound provided by the Korg M3r playing the lead. I tried very hard to make this sound like a real trumpet player was playing it. Also a music box intro and exit. 4. Schedrivka (1) - A "schedrivka" is a song for Epiphany. I found this tune in a book of old Ukrainian songs, which provided no harmony or chords; just the melody. I played the melody several times through, and added various synthesizer sounds fading in and out. The idea was to portray myself playing the song, and imagining or fantasizing what other instruments would sound like along the way. Strangely enough, this treatment was partly inspired by a scene from the Marx Brothers movie, "The Big Store," in which Harpo is playing the harp, and imagines seeing himself in two mirrors, playing other instruments. 5. On The River Jordan - Solo classical guitar plays the tune twice through with various reharmonizations. The third time, a very soft, dark string trio (cello 2 violas from the Emu Proteus) accompanies the guitar. 6. Schedrivka (2) - One of my earliest musical memories is hearing this song

performed (on record) by a Ukrainian mens choir, who accompanied themselves on banduras, a multi-stringed instrument held in the lap and played somewhat like a harp. 7. God Is Coming - Classical guitar, bass, and some really interesting ethnic percussion from the Emu Emax sampler accompany the Fender Strat. The lyrics to this song portray the classic Christmas setting: a Nativity scene, Mary, Joseph, a donkey, sheep, angels everywhere... The third time through the song, the melody is played by a synthesizer patch which I thought sounded like some exotic Middle Eastern reed instrument. At least one friend has asked me, Is that supposed to be the sheep? Sleigh bells were played live by my friend Len Szymanski. 8. Heaven and Earth - When I first started arranging these pieces, I had just gotten an Emu Proteus, which had incredibly good solo instrument sounds, particularly woodwinds. When I heard them, I knew that I had to do a woodwind quintet arrangement, and this is the result, with classical guitar playing the melody. 9. In Bethlehem - The Allman Brothers playing Ukrainian Christmas music... To quote from another CD of mine, My playing generally favors the soft and mellow, but once in awhile, something rowdy comes out... Norm Murray on bass and Len Szymanski on drums. 10. God Eternal - My dad, Borys, singing, accompanied by me on the classical guitar. This is one of my most treasured recordings now that my father is no longer with us; it was the only piece of music he and I ever recorded together. We ran through it once in the studio just to agree on the form, and then recorded it in one take. Unless you are Ukrainian, you will probably be unfamiliar with most of these songs, except for Carol of the Bells. But if you're up for something different from the usual American traditional and popular Christmas music, give it a try!

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