

# Mp3 Fretworks, Baldwin Fretted Instrument Youth Orchestra - New Harmony



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Fretworks, America's premiere middle school fretted instrument youth orchestra performs an eclectic mix of works for Spanish rondalla, mandolin orchestra, jazz banjo band, Tin Pan Alley favorites, and light Classical. 15 MP3 Songs EASY LISTENING: Background Music, LATIN: Tango Details: The Fretworks ensemble directed by Douglas Back serves as the first modern public school fretted instrument orchestra in the United States. Since its inception in 1999 at Baldwin Arts and Academic Middle Magnet School in Montgomery, Alabama, Fretworks has performed to critical acclaim at numerous regional and national festivals and events. In addition, the group was heard by an audience of over 25 million people on National Public Radio's syndicated program From the Top in 2003. Instrumentation includes: mandolin, mandola, mandocello, Philippine bandurria, tenor and plectrum banjo, banjo-guitar, mandolin-banjo, classical, steel string acoustic, and electric guitars, acoustic and electric bass, and ukulele. The title of this recording, New Harmony, comes from the first movement of "Heavens on Earth, Suite for Mandolin Orchestra" by John Goodin. The composer writes: "Heavens on Earth" takes its title and inspiration from Mark Holloway's history of utopian societies in America. In 1825 the Welsh reformer Robert Owen purchased the town of Harmony in frontier Indiana and changed the name of the town to "New Harmony." Josiah Warren, known as the "Peaceful Revolutionist," founded other communal settlements, including one in Ohio named "Equity." In 1774 Mother Ann Lee brought the first group of Shakers from England to America. One of the early Shaker settlements founded at Pleasant Hill, Kentucky in 1806 is commonly known as "Shakertown." Many of the works on this CD share a Spanish or latin flavor. This is reflected in the three works by the Dutch mandolinist-composer Johann Kok (1889-1954), the Argentine Tango, "La Cumparsita," and the selections "Tinikling" and "Itik Itik," which are Filipino folk dances whose rhythms

and forms were influenced by Spanish colonialism. To highlight the 4-string banjo in the ensemble, traditional banjo tunes such as the "Robert E. Lee-Ragtime Cowboy Joe" medley along with the "Alabama Banjo Medley" (Alabama Jubilee, I'm Looking Over a Four Leaf Clover [Alabama is noted for its crimson clover] and Alabamy Bound) demonstrate the sound of a 1920s era banjo band. On a more contemporary note, Fretworks performs "Metro," a jazz piece by Nathaniel Davis, "Tri Tune," a selection partially composed by director Douglas Back, and "Der Heavy Metal Peppi" by Austrian composer Otto Jezek.

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