

Mp3 Jonathan Byrd And Dromedary - The Sea And The Sky



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Jonathan Byrd writes songs from the roots of folk music, sounding 100 or more years old. Dromedary fuses together music from all over the world, creating an exotic, yet indefinable sound that has been featured on NPR's All Songs Considered. 12 MP3 Songs FOLK: Modern Folk, WORLD: World Fusion Details: The Sea and the Sky is a suite of music that travels across a vast emotional landscape. Conceived, written, and produced by North Carolina's Jonathan Byrd, this acoustic epic features the multi-instrumental artistry of the world-music duo Dromedary. Though the album is grounded in American roots music, Dromedary weaves in music from all over the ocean -- Portugal, Spain, South America, the Caribbean, and Africa -- to paint a more complete musical picture of the world that Jonathan originally intended to create. The album is built on the energy of 2 days of live group performances in the studio, with friends from all over the east coast sitting in on bass, fiddles, and accordion. From the mouths of the characters that Jonathan created --lovers, sailors, slaves, and slavers -- we hear expressions of longing, love, tragedy, and hope. Dromedary's charango, Appalachian dulcimer, mandolin, cumbus, and flamenco guitar dart in and out of the album like the characters themselves. On The Sea and the Sky, Byrd and Dromedary take the journey with us. It's obvious from listening to their former releases that this music is far outside their previous work, a totally new adventure, both sonically and lyrically. When Jonathan first approached Dromedary with the idea of doing a project together, he mentioned that he hoped to take everyone out of his comfort zone and create truly new music. To Jonathan's surprise, Dromedary instrumentalist Rob McMaken showed up to the studio ready to sing vocals, and Andrew Reissiger even brought along his electric guitar. As a friendly rebuttal, the flatpicking Jonathan Byrd snatched the flamenco guitar out of Andrew's hands to play on the instrumental called "The New World." Background

on the Artists Jonathan Byrd released his first CD, *Wildflowers*, in late 2001. With spare production, these simple tales of love and death seemed to be a hundred years old or more. Folk legend Tom Paxton discovered Byrd's music online and wrote, "What a treat to hear someone so deeply rooted in tradition, yet growing in his own beautiful way." One of the original tunes from this album entitled "Velma" has become somewhat of a "new standard," as other touring musicians -- like Jack Lawrence and Larry Keel - play this modern-day murder ballad in their live sets. Songs from Byrd's second release, *The Waitress* won the prestigious New Folk competition in Kerrville, TX, and the folk community responded. The *Waitress* reached #22 on the folkradiochart, and folk-mag *Sing Out!* printed the words and music for the song "The Ballad of Larry" and included it on their CD sampler. By 2003, Byrd had gotten the attention of writers like Scott Alarik (from the *Boston Globe* and author of the hip new folk travelogue, *Deep Community*), who called Jonathan "the most buzzed-about new songwriter in folkdom." The critically acclaimed world-music duo known as Dromedary is known for their exciting live shows and artful compositions. In the last two years, these young musicians have been featured on National Public Radio's *All Things Considered*, toured the East and West Coasts heavily, released 2 albums, composed music for 3 films (including the 2004 Sundance Film Festival's "Dirty Work" co-produced by Edward Norton) and have had nothing but overwhelmingly positive reviews and articles written about them in the press (see dromedarymusic.com). Like Byrd, Dromedary has developed a reputation for consistently producing meaningful artistic work. In the words of North Carolina's famed WNCW, Jonathan Byrd and Dromedary is "a perfect match that no one but them could have ever dreamed up." The Story Behind the Collaboration: Jonathan Byrd and Dromedary's *The Sea and the Sky* How Jonathan Byrd, Rob McMaken, and Andrew Reissiger found each other is almost as beautiful a story as *The Sea and the Sky* itself. When Dromedary and Jonathan Byrd were both putting in their time on the emerging artist/coffeehouse circuit in 2001, they met each other through a window in Asheville, NC. Jonathan remembers, "I was playing upstairs, and they were playing downstairs. I walked in and saw this incredible array of instruments, and I thought, who ARE these guys?" They traded CDs with only a few words exchanged, and as Andrew and Rob were driving back home through the mountains, they put in Jonathan's debut CD *Wildflowers*. Dromedary's McMaken recalls, "After a few songs, I said 'holy @#*#.' And a few songs later, Andrew said the same thing. We thought that was a good sign." Jonathan apparently had similar words to say about *Artifact*, Dromedary's debut CD. Despite the fact that Dromedary and Jonathan Byrd's music at

that time were classified into quite different genres ("world/folk" and "roots/american," respectively), they began playing double-bill shows together. Much to their surprise, audiences were ecstatic about the pairing and usually demanded encores, which all three musicians played together. "These encores essentially turned into a third set, since no one in the audience showed any signs of leaving," says Dromedary's Reissiger. After a year and a half of this, and a year and a half of late night jams at each others houses, Jonathan approached Dromedary with an offer that was hard to refuse, "I've written a whole album of songs called The Sea and the Sky. I've written it for you guys, and you're supposed to play on it." Soon after this "proposal," Reissiger and McMaken were staying with Byrd at his North Carolina home. He started singing all the songs on the album and invited them to play along. "We played the whole album with him from start to finish," says McMaken, "and when we were done, it was clear - we were definitely going to start a band together. His first two albums were excellent, but this album was deeper, more musical, and extremely poetic. Andrew and I both really felt, and feel, that we had become a part of a very important transition of an artist on the level of a young Neil Young or Tom Waits, who had left the confines of being a great songwriter to become a great artist." And if that wasn't enough to convince Dromedary to do the album, McMaken adds, "It also didn't hurt that Jonathan's fianc Mary Moss is the best cook on the planet. She promised to cook for us as long as we were playing together!" Since the day that Jonathan introduced The Sea and the Sky to Andrew and Rob, the music has undergone a great deal of transformation. Performing the whole "suite" from start to finish to select audiences in North Carolina, Georgia, Virginia, New York, and Maine, the performance (and the recording) has grown into something that is "much bigger" than anything that any of these musicians have ever done. Some of Jonathan's best attributes-haunting lyricism, artful composition, and flawless musicianship-have mixed with Dromedary's unique blend of multicultural instrumentalism and telepathic improvisation to create an utterly unique performance. Now that the recording is released, look for the band on tour through summer of 2004 and perhaps far beyond that. Just as the stories and the music on The Sea and the Sky seem to travel the world endlessly, Jonathan Byrd and Dromedary seem poised to do the same.

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