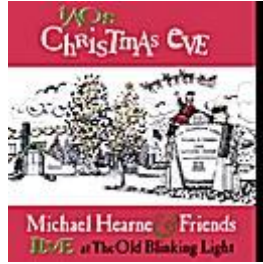


Mp3 Michael Hearne & Friends - Taos Christmas Eve - Michael Hearne And Friends Live At The Old Blinking Light



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11 traditional and original Christmas songs recorded Live at The Old Blinking Light with Mike Hearne's special Northern New Mexico touch. 11 MP3 Songs COUNTRY: Country Folk, COUNTRY: Traditional Country Details: Year after year, Michael Hearne has claimed our souls with his soothing voice and thoughtful songs. Thousands of two-steppers have danced and twirled to his tunes while he has become synonymous with Taos music during the last quarter century. Born in Dallas, this Taos legend began making music when he was only eight. Born in Dallas, this Taos legend began making music when he was only eight. After seeing him play a tennis racket in time to the radio, Michael's grandmother bought him his first guitar in Mexico. By age 11, he had organized his first band. Mike was lead singer and his band covered Beatles tunes. They played school dances and anywhere else that they could find an audience. Young Michael spent hours listening to his dad's Gordon Lightfoot; Peter, Paul and Mary; and Limelighters records. His uncle, Bill Hearne (of former Warner Brothers recording artists Bill and Bonnie Hearne), introduced him to country music. "I would hang out at Bill Hearne's shows and was stunned by his guitar playing," Mike recalls. "It really inspired me!" At some point, he "stopped turning on the rock radio stations and began listening to the old country stuff." In high school, the music really took over. He could simply pick up a guitar and learn songs off the radio. He says, "It just came natural. Some songs took a little time, but then I knew them." At 17, he started sneaking out of his house to go to the Rubaiyat (a famous Dallas nightclub) to see acts like Uncle Walt's Band and Bill and Bonnie Hearne. He played some open mics, started writing songs, and played clubs where his talent got him in the door and on stage, even though he was too young to drink. Soon, he put together his first major group, The Galactic Cowboy Band, and began playing country rock. His journey to Taos began right after high school when

he moved to Austin, performing solo and playing with his next band, Just Lucky. In 1978, he went to Fayetteville, Arkansas for a brief visit, which turned into another band and a yearlong party. During this time, with Boy Howdy and the Other Brothers, he added bluegrass to his eclectic musical influences, which opened up a whole new world and forced him to master the guitar. At that time, Bill and Bonnie Hearne were booked throughout Texas and the Southwest. They asked Mike to be their lead guitar-player for nearly a year. "It was one of the coolest experiences of my life," he remembers. The shows in this area gave Mike his first taste of the magnetism of rugged Northern New Mexico. The tour played the Mother Load Saloon in Red River where he met Rick Fowler and his band, Three Faces West. They offered him a high-paying gig in Red River playing four nights a week. New Mexico had captured him! Mike and Rick formed a group called the River City Band. There, he perfected the art of playing for dance audiences, with just the right mix of two-step, waltzes and swing. He adapted songs he had known for years to make them danceable. "One day that still amazes me," Hearne says, "Michael Martin Murphey asked Rick and me to be part of his group." Hearne on lead guitar and vocals joined Michael Murphey and the Great American Honky-Tonk Band as they criss-crossed the country playing venues such as Carnegie Hall in New York and Red Rocks in Denver. Mike played with Emmylou Harris, Tammy Wynette, and Johnny Rodriguez, among other top acts. Tour buses, roadies, and the trappings of stardom followed. As he walked on stage, a soundman would hand him a tuned guitar. Mike savored the success. The band played dates from Los Angeles to New York. There were so many that he says he can't recall them all. It was "the big time!" For six years, the money was good, the music was great, and the adventures were the best. By now, with "a pretty new wife and a baby boy at home," Mike was writing more songs of his own. The road was growing old and Mike longed for the mountains of New Mexico. He decided to quit. Carmen Acciaioli, a member of Murphy's band, joined with Eddy Lee Bullington to form Eddy Lee and the Ace. Mike began sitting in and, in 1987, the three formed South by Southwest. They became popular playing local spots like the St. Bernard and the Sagebrush, where Mike and Eddy's mountain-air vocals invigorated the dancers. In 1991, Mentor Williams (who wrote the classic hit "Drift Away") hooked them up with Warner Brothers, who gave them \$20,000 for a demo. They were a breath away from making it onto the national stage but, unfortunately, due to a complicated series of events, "it just didn't work out," Mike says. Other producers and offers came and went, but the music business is often more about business than about music. By 1993, Eddy Lee was out and Zeke Severson, a

charismatic and talented standup bass player, signed on. South by Southwest has a following across the country. Tourists return to Taos not just for the skiing, art, and history; as one visitor said, "My wife makes me come back here every year to hear Michael Hearne and dance to his band." It isn't unusual for Mike to be flown off to some far-away city by wealthy fans who want him to sing at a function or party where his one-of-a-kind voice is in demand. Over the years, Mike has been involved with dozens of albums—two with The Great American Honky-Tonk Band, five with various forms of South By Southwest, and one with Jimmy Stadler and Kitty Franzetti. He has three solo albums and has produced for Tish Hinojosa, Bill and Bonnie Hearne, and a half-dozen others. Mike also appears on CDs by Eliza Gilkyson, Michael Martin Murphey, and at least 20 others. His own acclaimed "Sight Sound" album (2002) was a year-and-a-half-long project that started when he met former Nashville producer, Andy Byrd, at Jon Gold's Dead Horse Taos recording studio. The two began a collaboration that led them on an incredible journey to where music meets art. Hearne had "always wanted to find a way to marry the music I write to the beautiful images created by the many northern New Mexico artists who have become my friends over the years." They assembled a huge budget, nearly triple the size of anything Mike had previously worked with, and enlisted many friends to play. He and Andy wrote songs based upon the paintings and sculptures of 11 different artists. Mentor Williams contributed to two songs, including "The Songwriter": Is there something you missed; something you didn't say Surprised by the angels when they took you away? I can feel you here with me, close to my heart; Like this old guitar that I play, I'll be your songwriter today. There's some things in life that are hard to explain; They hit you like cold summer rain Or a message you hear in the wind. Sometimes I feel like I've been here before With old friends that I've never met, Caught up in the moment, just waiting for what's coming next. -"The Songwriter" from "Sight Sound" by Michael Hearne, Mentor Williams, and Andy Byrd "The Songwriter" won Song of the Year at the 2002 New Mexico Music Industry Awards, and the CD won Album of the Year. In all, Mike and Andy took home five awards. The votes come from national music professionals and address each major music category. Each time winners were announced, their songs were played again, and the room burst into applause. It was as if they were enveloped in magic. Called a masterpiece, "Sight and Sound" is still officially unreleased. Just weeks before its scheduled debut, its worldwide distributor slipped into bankruptcy. Once again, Hearne was forced to watch as his dreams eluded him. Recently, "Sight Sound" took on new life when Four Winds, another major distributor, picked up the CD from the defunct Valley

Entertainment. New Mexico Magazine did a write-up on Hearne and the album in their December 2002 issue. It appears that, finally, a national distributor will release "Sight Sound" early this year. Mike did not sit still and wait as the music business sorted out the fate of his biggest project. Lie did the only thing he could-he made more music. In December 2002, he released his first double CD set, "Michael Hearne and Friends Live at the Old Blinking Light." Don Richmond recorded it during two rowdy nights this past fall. Many friends, including Bill and Bonnie Hearne, Jimmy Stadler, Andy Byrd, and Kelly Stebbins, joined Mike for this live collection of his favorite tunes. People carved out space to dance despite long lines and having barely enough room to move. How could they not? Mike was singing. The audience sang along, clapping and laughing. It was vintage Hearne. In addition to appearing every Monday night at the OBL, he also plays the Sagebrush (solo and with South by Southwest). Although he has performed there for nearly 25 years, he still consistently fills the-place several nights a week, every week. Countless area musicians describe Michael Hearne as a lasting influence on their work. It's impossible to know how many singer-songwriters Mike has encouraged, helped personally, or simply inspired over the years. Mike has given us all much more than just his distinct voice, memorable lyrics, and breathtaking guitar playing-he has left a bit of his soul and creative energy with every person who has ever enjoyed his music. Mike says, "I love to make people happy, to invent music, and see people dance." Taos has been good to Mike. He says, "Sometimes I feel guilty at the radio play and steady bookings I get." But he works hard to fill the venues, be on time, be professional, and please his fans. And each night, when he tells the audience, "Thank you, you re the best audience I've ever had," he means it. (Written by Brandt. HORSE FLY: Vol.5, No.1, Taos, New Mexico, January 15, 2003)

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