

Mp3 Chuck Pyle - Affected By The Moon



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Southwestern Acoustic folk with a light sprinkling of Country by the Zen Cowboy 13 MP3 Songs FOLK: Modern Folk, COUNTRY: Country Folk Details: Love, or a dazzling concert, or some chance moments in the spotlight are typical inspirations listed when musicians explain what propelled them into the performing arts. But for Southwestern Acoustic singer-songwriter Chuck Pyle, it was a busted piano string. "When I was about 5 years old, my parents brought a friend to the house to play piano to inspire me. They knew I loved music because I'd already picked melodies out on the piano by ear," he recalls. "This guy was a professional, and played so loud and hard that, not only did he rock the whole house, but broke a string on our upright Grand. I never forgot it and, after that, always wanted to learn to play." And so he did, leaving his native state of Iowa for the more creatively fertile Colorado Front Range 30 years ago. In those anything-goes early days, Pyle paid his dues playing guitar "at the bottom of the food chain," doing cover songs at Colorado ski lodges and other resort areas. Sheer love of playing music helped him overcome his essentially introverted nature: "I practically threw up before I'd go onstage because I was so shy ... [but] the first time I made an audience laugh, I wanted to do it again." So much so that now, despite his respected songwriter status, he considers himself a performer first and foremost, deadpanning that when he started writing songs he just "wanted them to be good enough that I at least wouldn't be embarrassed." Looks like he succeeded - Tish Hinojosa, the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, Suzy Bogguss, and the late John Denver all recorded songs by Pyle, as have Chris LeDoux, who had a top country hit with "Cadillac Cowboy" in 1991, and Jerry Jeff Walker, whom Pyle cites as a "huge influence" on his early musical career. He jokes that he first learned to play music so he wouldn't have to be a businessman, but his songs are far more observant and thoughtfully crafted than that jest implies. Famously labeled "the Zen Cowboy" by a reviewer, Pyle is currently promoting his seventh album,

Affected By the Moon. A year and a half in the making, it includes amiable nods to more traditional Western music - the drowsy "Cowboy's Christmas Dream" and "Romancing the Moment" - but is predominantly a showcase for the lyrical sustenance that longtime Pyle fans have grown to expect. "If Not Now" is a gently tango-ing example of his gift for coloring romantic stories with existential themes. Intriguingly, the easygoing troubadour says it resulted from the ongoing struggle between "the Spirit of Manana" and his self-proclaimed Type-A personality. The yearning "97 Hillside Road" stands as one of the prettiest songs in his oeuvre, and the gypsy jazz-flavored title track provides a snappy showcase for his heavily rhythmic "Rocky Mountain Slam Pickin'" style of guitar playing and longtime sideman Gordon Burt's elegant fiddle work. Page 2 And then there's "Inside of My Face," a sly, clever rap that just may qualify as the quintessential Chuck-Pyle-as-Zen-Cowboy song, with its hilarious invocation of short-wired brainstems, "reptilian gangliates" and "psycho feng shui":

A day can turn into certain disaster
When you're the servant and your mind is the master
You become the director of a tragic play
Where none of the actors seem to see it your way
Stuck in your head with this arrogant snob
You'd think he would've thought himself out of a job...
Reality is nothing but a collective hunch
Everybody's point of view, gathered in a bunch
People with opinions believing one another
Brain against brain, brother against brother...
At this point in his career, Pyle considers himself as much a philosopher as a troubadour. "I'm certainly entering into geezerhood," he wisecracks. "Most of us, when we're this old, tend to get philosophical - what else is there to do? So I definitely will sit around and sound like I know what I'm talkin' about. "I have really worked to be calm, and different times in my life I've carried on a practice of some sort, whether it was yoga, tai chi, or one meditation or another. I maintain my sense of humor - that's the most important thing. If I can get a sense of humor together then I can usually get back to center." When he isn't performing (approximately 100 shows a year), fishing, biking, riding or hiking the great outdoors, Pyle's working on Zen Gallon Hat, a one-man theatre piece with music that he describes as "a one-fact play" (said fact being "some things must be believed in order to be seen"). "It's a conversation between two old curmudgeons, which I certainly can play with authenticity," he explains dryly. "One's an old Zen master and one's an old cowboy. They think they're different, but really they're saying the same thing." Like his songs, Zen Gallon Hat wraps hummable melodies with warm stories, low-key humor, and spiritual questions posed in Western settings. "I started to learn how to entertain people in my shows and that was a breakthrough for me," he says, recalling a pivotal moment in his artistic growth. "When I became more

social and started listening to other people's stories, I began to realize that all I needed to do onstage was talk truthfully about my life, and that that would be the funniest and most moving thing I could talk about. Nobody ever thinks their story is very interesting because they lived it. But everybody's life is a great story. Everybody's."

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