

Mp3 Ben Hulan - The Present Plays



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Eclectic Americana from an award-winning songwriter. 12 MP3 Songs FOLK: Modern Folk, COUNTRY: Bluegrass Details: For the latest news and contact info, please visit my website sugargroveband.com ...or my NEW blog, "Americana Graffiti" blog.benhulan.com ----- THE PRESENT PLAYS is my first album, my first attempt at a musical representation of myself. It's a singer-songwriter album with various bands assembled to lend their varied musical textures to each track. I didn't know this when I got started, but it turns out I've got about 4 or 5 musical moods that keep coming back. These genres all seem to fit pretty nicely in the trendy moniker, "AMERICANA" (more on that in my blog), but you'll definitely hear a few bluegrass songs and a few pop songs. Still, I think they live together well. I hope you'll give a listen and decide for yourself! In a desperate attempt to reach out to you and make you feel like you've known-me-forever-and-therefore-can't-live-another-day-without-buying-my-CD, HERE are a couple thousand words about me and my musical evolution... Real folk music has always been a part of my life. My parents are both musicians. They met at Vanderbilt and ran "The Marketplace", the only desegregated coffee shop in Nashville back in the 60's. Nashville being Nashville, there were always musicians coming through and my parents got to know a lot of them (including my hero, John Hartford). A decade later (shortly after I was born), we moved to Arlington, Virginia where I grew up. My parents always had instruments in the house, and most of our house guests have been musicians for as long as I can remember. So I grew up around folk music from around the world, as well as Protestant church music. But the 80's was a bad decade for a suburban adolescent to say he liked folk music of any kind. For years I was a "closet" folk fan. In the 7th grade, I might have said my favorite band was Duran Duran. Secretly, I liked my parents' music more. I started writing pop songs before I could play guitar. My friend Jonathan is (and was) an excellent songwriter and guitarist. He helped me set my

earliest lyrics to music. Summers we would busk the METRO until we made enough change to come home. I took up guitar in the 10th grade to play a character in a play. I continued to play guitar and write songs as a theater major at William Mary. I played duets for a short time with my friend Lem, another fine singer-songwriter. My favorite groups included U2, Sting, Paul Simon, Suzanne Vega and The Indigo Girls. I started working summer stock theater at Lime Kiln (in Lexington, VA) after my sophomore year and saw a lot of live acoustic music. It was there that I "came out", so to speak, as a fan of folk music. After college, I joined the resident company at Lime Kiln and toured with them for three years. We wrote scripts and songs to adapt Appalachian folk tales for stage performance, as well as a short-lived radio show, "A Shennandoah Diary". Some of my mentors during that time included James Leva, Carol Elizabeth Jones, Robin Linda Williams, their bass player Jim Watson and Jack Herrick of the Red Clay Ramblers. I also met a lot of other "folkstars" backstage -- Tony Rice, Seamus Egan, Leo Kottke, and many more. (I'm still kicking myself for missing a pair of pre-stardom shows by Dave Matthews and Alison Krauss.) I had a great time at Lime Kiln, but I was in love with a city girl and there was no career for her in the hills of VA. So we moved to DC where I pursued acting for the next four years. I had some minor success as an actor, but music just kept coming back, my first love. I took a sabbatical from the stage to qualify for home loan. I got another dream job teaching drama in high school. I started my first bluegrass band, "Mississippi Sawyer" as a front-porch jam. After that broke up, I joined a bunch of bands, but nothing felt like the perfect fit. I was in a geek-rock band for awhile (think: Barenaked). I joined a folk rock band for awhile because they were booking some cool venues. I joined a Beach Boys tribute band to sing the harmony parts. I even played in a rock band called "F Minus" -- the teacher band at my high school. That's when my son was born. I could easily devote this entire bio to the fact that his existence enabled me to record this album. (I am home with him and needed an outlet.) But just take my word: it was time to record an album. With years of material to choose from, I began to search for some common bond among them to create an album that made sense. Honing arrangements on the open mic circuit, I started inviting other musicians to sing and play with me. That was when it hit me: my whole approach to music -- to art of any kind! -- has always been in a collaborative role! I love music (and I love the theater) because it brings people together. And so it was that I came to choose the theme for my album. I gathered all my songs that reflect some facet of a relationship where people are coming together or separating. It turns out that those were among my very best songs, anyway! I hope you'll consider purchasing this CD! and if

you're in the DC-area, look for my band, Sugar Grove! ----- Awards and Recognition for Ben Hulan and THE PRESENT PLAYS: "The Thief of Baghdad" (recorded for this album but excluded from the final cut,) won 4th place in the Social/Political category of the Unisong International Songwriting Contest, 2004. "Saturday Time" won Honorable Mention in the Soft Rock category of the Mid-Atlantic Song Contest, 2004. A home recording of "Riptide" was the recipient of an Honor Award in the Folk category of The Great American Song Contest, 2003. A demo of "Orbiting" was chosen from a large pool of submissions to be the first track on the compilation album, "Focus Presents: Capital Acoustics, Vol. 3". That album is a collection of 20 songs from 20 DC-area songwriters, produced by CD Baby artist Steve Key.

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