

Mp3 Art Sulger - 12string



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Art Sulger, an American guitarist, plays 14 lively instrumentals on the 12-string guitar, hitting all the right notes as he spans styles ranging from Bach Lute transcriptions, through classic American Folk, and on to his own contemporary compositions. 14 MP3 Songs BLUES: Guitar Blues, CLASSICAL: Traditional

Details: "Very nice work. I look forward to listening again and again. These songs make me feel like I had been waiting to exhale... which is to say, your music is a breath of fresh air." This is the raw power of the 12-string guitar...a lap piano...the "Cannon" of the acoustic guitar. On this recording, nothing stands between you and the thunder, no singing, no electronics, just wood and steel in the hands of a fine guitar player. I talked with Art in December, 2005 at his home in Greenville, South Carolina. How did you start out? I played a six-string steel guitar at first. Then I saw a 12-string in a pawn shop on 3rd Street in New York City. For some reason that I can't quite fathom, I bought it. This was in 1963. It was a Gibson B45 12. I also bought Pete Seeger's Folkways record called, I think, 'How to play a 12-string'. I played a lot in the 60's up in the Northeast USA...Boston, Cape Code, Albany, my home town, and New York City, where I was born. I used to hitch-hike with the Gibson. Once I even hopped a freight train from my home town - tried to get to New Orleans but ended up in Chicago. Next freight trip a friend and I almost died of the cold and had to crawl into one of the Ford Vans being shipped on the train. I made it to New Orleans on the third try, though, although I recall it required a lot of hitch-hiking. Later I got into bicycle racing in an intense way. My wife and I would hit any race in the Northeast. We did this for about 10 years. She worked in a bike shop and I worked nights at an answering service. Even there I had a little parlor guitar from the 30's that I would noodle out stuff on. But I didn't play in public for years and years. I took classical guitar lessons from Allan Alexander in the 80's but it wasn't until we moved down South in 2000 that I could crank up the playing and composing intensity. I still have that Gibson 12-string, but it's now

pretty banged up. The local luthier won't touch it, so I'm figuring out how to re-fret it myself. How do you come up with your tunes? I listen to a lot of music, always have. My friends and I got into Dylan, Joan Baez, John Hurt, all the great blues artists - Big Bill Broonzy, Robert Johnson, Lightnin' Hopkins, back in high school, then college. I heard Dylan's first album, *Freewheelin' Bob Dylan* when I was doing a late night folk music radio show in college. It knocked me out immediately and I had to play it for my friends. Dylan seemed like a pretty decent guitar player on that album, and we spent a lot of time copying his licks. You can catch some of 'Down the Highway' on my piece *The Blue Crit*. Music just became a craving for me. I couldn't get enough. I rifled through the local library and found printed music from the Baroque period, I found articles in a Folk music journal - one of the editors worked in Albany, we would prowl around Troy and Albany and Schenectady looking for coffee-houses and other guitarists and singers. The whole 60's and 70's was like a feeding frenzy and I was a starving shark. For a few years I was even into electronic music - Moog had just invented the analog synthesizer, and I built some devices myself from Popular Electronic's articles. I got to use a real Moog while taking a course Joel Chadabe at Albany State and did a short tape piece, razor blading the splices. I guess my music just comes from that background. I can see the interesting things that Bach was trying out as well as the themes that Robert Johnson builds in his tunes. I like that Varese, Chadabe, and Stockhausen make pieces with structure - an exposition, a development, and an ending, even without a diatonic scale and traditional chord structures. This studio is pretty large with a lot of glass. How is it for recording? When we first moved here I thought, wow, this is going to be a dynamite recording space. It's about 35 by 16 feet, has a nice cathedral ceiling, slate floor, lots of brick and glass. I thought the size would give a nice reverb, but that's not what happened. The recorded sound needed a lot of EQ at about 190 herz. I thought it was the guitar. The web came to the rescue: John Sayers web site, Ethan Winer at RealTraps, the Home Recording Forum, lots of others. I found out about nodes, standing waves, all that stuff. I found a sweet spot for the room. That's where the mics are set up near the corner over there. Move them a couple of feet and it messes up the sound. Then all those panels around the mics absorb reflected sound. The difference is amazing. You could buy a guitar for a hundred thousand dollars that would not improve the sound as much as room treatments. What do you think of guitar music today? I really like the what's happening with instrumental music for the steel guitar. We seem to have great guitar builders and great guitarists. Pierre Bensusan, Michael Hedges, John Fahey, Leo Kottke are big names, but there are a ton of real talented

guitarists you can hear on-line. I'm doing a CD "The Fretworks Guitar Project" with some of them right now: David Kilpatrick, an outstanding instrumentalist from Edinburgh, Greg West, a guy who knows his way around guitars who teaches guitar in Virginia, and Nick Roche a fine composer and guitarist from Scotland.

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