

Mp3 Mark Dunn - Return To Peace



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Piano based new age music with celtic flair, embellished with violin, pennywhistle, acoustic bass and percussion. 11 MP3 Songs NEW AGE: Celtic New Age, WORLD: World Fusion Details: REVIEW: MARK DUNN/Return to Piece: A wonderful sonic excursion that takes a Celtic Journey through Central America. A delightfully creative breath of fresh air, this work is built on things Dunn carried in his head for years looking for the right outlet to give them the proper voice. Filled with the passion that kind of responsibility brings, the mix of modes and feelings will keep you engaged for the whole ride. A fun diversion that worldbeaters will love. BIO: Seven years ago American pianist/composer Mark Dunn strapped on a backpack containing his second favorite instrument, the Irish pennywhistle, and went on an extended tour of Central America that included visiting Mayan ruins, rainforests, breathtaking beaches, cloud-shrouded mountain peaks, volcano craters and Indian villages. His Latin American-journey inspired the tunes on his new instrumental album, RETURN TO PEACE, but his family's Irish heritage (and the practicality of composing on pennywhistle while traveling) gives the recording a Celtic sound. Dunn's adventurous meanderings took him to Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama as well as many of the islands throughout the Caribbean. His first two trips each lasted six months and then he decided to make Costa Rica his second home. He bought a house there and splits his time between Florida, Costa Rica and Brazil. He performs regularly in all three countries. Subtitled "A Celtic Journey through Central America," RETURN TO PEACE was recorded in Costa Rica with Dunn on piano and pennywhistle alongside some of the best local musicians - violinist Peter Nitsche (a member of the Costa Rican Symphony), acoustic bassist Randall Najera (who also plays with Peregrino Gris, a Costa Rican Celtic band with an album out), and percussionist Carlos "Tapao" Vargas (a member of the Latino new age group Editus which has toured with Ruben Blades). RETURN TO PEACE offers the softer side of

Dunn's contemporary instrumental music (a cross between new age and Celtic with hints of Renaissance/Olde English, jazz and world music gently mixed in). But the pianist also performs jazz in concert regularly (originals and traditional standards) and has a previous album, simply titled MARK DUNN, that is strictly jazz. He is currently recording a Brazilian-jazz album in Rio de Janeiro with musicians there. Dunn has Irish music in his blood. His Dunn grandparents were born in Ireland and his grandfather was a musician. Mark's uncle also was a Celtic musician (with his own radio show in Philadelphia) who played fiddle, bagpipes and pennywhistle. But Mark's love of Celtic music began in earnest when he was in his early-twenties, just out of college, and he heard two syndicated radio shows featuring Irish music, "Thistle and Shamrock" and "The Unicorn." Already a pianist, Mark immediately bought and learned to play a pennywhistle, which is a simple Irish flute or fife that has a mouthpiece like a recorder or whistle and only plays a single major scale using six fingerholes. "The sound of it just connected with my soul." The title tune on RETURN TO PEACE is built on a melody Dunn has had in his head for many years. "When I first started playing music, I loved soft, melodic, acoustic sounds - the type that became known as new age music. But then I went on to deeply explore jazz and I got away from this simpler, but still very emotional music. My travels throughout Central America were a soul-searching, spiritual journey for me both personally and musically. This new recording is the music that came out of those experiences and it felt like I had come full circle to where I was when I first began writing music. This CD represents me returning to peaceful music and also becoming at peace with myself knowing that I can do this type of music as well as jazz. It's a reconciliation of conflicts." One of the compositions most inspired by his Central America journey is "Tegucigalpa," named after the capital of Honduras where it was written. Dunn was there a couple of weeks before the hurricanes and mud-slides wrecked havoc a few years ago, and when he returned afterwards, many of the friends he had made were gone. While he was there he also wrote "Don't Cry Paola" for a former girlfriend whose life was in terrible turmoil. "Cahuita" was written at a small town with that name on the Caribbean coast of Costa Rica where you wake each morning to the sound of howler monkeys (listen closely at the beginning of the tune). Most of the inhabitants are descendants of slaves brought from Africa to work the banana plantations. "The music there is oldtime Caribbean rhythms, but as I listened I could hear in my head how that music would sound with a Celtic melody running through it." Several songs pay tribute to Mark's heritage - "An Irish Wedding," "Dunn's Dream" ("A tribute to my father who taught me that as a member of the Dunn clan I

should always hold my head up and know that I could do anything I wanted with my life") and "Sitting" ("this one is for my mother who was sitting quietly behind me the day I conceived the melody"). Two tunes deal with different ways of looking at freedom - "Freedom's Debt" ("The United States pays a big price for freedom") and "Freedom's Dance" ("We need to celebrate what we have every day"). In explaining the tune "Fool's Dream," Mark simply says "love can make us foolish." The solo piano piece, "The Truth," is Dunn's attempt at making music as sincere, truthful and self-revealing as possible. Dunn, who was born and raised in Philadelphia, climbed up on the piano stool when he was three-years-old and started making up tunes on the family piano. He began formal lessons at age seven. "I played the piano constantly, but practicing lessons was torture." His father took him to concerts (such as Ray Charles). Mark became serious about composing in the sixth grade and that year was chosen by the principal to perform at the graduation ceremonies. When Mark was 12, he won a national talent contest, received free acting lessons, and was cast in the TV mini-series "George Washington" with Barry Bostwick, Patty Duke and Jaqueline Smith. Mark studied classical music at the Bryn Maur Conservatory of Music. At 15 he began studying jazz harmony and improvisation under Jimmy Amadie, who had played with Woody Herman and Mel Torme, and whose unique method of improvisation is taught at universities around the world. In high school Dunn formed a jazz band, Slice of Orange, with guitarist Kurt Rosenwinkel (who went on to play with Gary Burton and Paul Motion) and drummer Steve Wolfe (who later worked with Grover Washington Jr. and Annie Lennox). Dunn also played in a blues band with David Copa (now an internationally-known guitarist), took music courses at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia, played in jazz bands throughout the area, taught piano at a music school, got a license to fly private planes, sold real estate, performed on cruise ships throughout the Caribbean, and taught English at two small Catholic schools in Costa Rica. Two of Mark's earliest musical influences were the groups Yes and Steely Dan, but during his teenage years he began to appreciate contemporary jazz acts ranging from Pat Metheny and Lyle Mays to Spyro Gyra and Jean-Luc Ponty. Soon Dunn began to explore more traditional jazz such as Bill Evans, Sonny Clark, Tommy Flanagan, Charlie Parker, John Coltraine and Sonny Rollins. Dunn began composing new age music at an early age and later turned on to George Winston, William Ackerman, Tangerine Dream and Kitaro. As Mark's interest in Celtic music grew, he became a fan of The Chieftains and pennywhistle player Mary Bergin. Dunn also admires composers such as Antonio Carlos Jobim, John Williams, Burt Bacharach and Michel Legrand. Dunn recorded his first album (self-titled) with

some of the top jazz musicians in Philadelphia. Filled with original compositions, the recording got heavy airplay in Dunn's hometown despite limited distribution at the time. After getting a taste of Central America when the cruise ships he performed on hit various ports, Dunn took off on his own to explore the region. "I tried to submerge myself in the cultures I came across." He learned to speak fluent Spanish and Portuguese. "I was very attracted to people I met with simple lifestyles. The less sophisticated and less modernized a place was, the more I was drawn to it. The people were often extremely poor, but they seemed obviously happy. Often their homes had dirt floors, but they still invited me in to share their dinner with them. It was very peaceful. Sometimes someone would play guitar and I would join in on pennywhistle. I finally realized I wanted to record the music that I had written during these experiences to show another side of my musical personality besides jazz. That's where RETURN TO PEACE came from."

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