

Mp3 Mark Hughey - Running From The Law Of Entropy



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Texas songwriter/performer. Somewhat acoustic, with guitar and piano based melodies. Neo-Folk, lyric oriented, smart lyrics, tinge of alt. country. 15 MP3 Songs COUNTRY: Country Folk, FOLK: Folk Pop

Details: Mark Hughey studied classical piano while his buddies played baseball. He dropped out of high school to tour with a rock band, then picked up a psychology degree from the University of Arizona and an MBA in Marketing from the University of Dallas. He made a decent enough living in the business world, but never gave up songwriting, and never could. Truth - however he can reach it - is a driving force in Hughey's writing. The music growing up - playing parties at age 14 and bars by 17 - included a lot of blues and country as well as rock, but Hughey quit playing out, for the most part, in 1980 when he moved to Dallas from Indianapolis and lost his circle of fellow players. "That forced me into solo work, which turned out to be a good thing because I started writing a lot more," Hughey said. The songs led to one CD, *Running from the Law of Entropy*, in 1999, and to the new *Stone Blind Train*. With a solid background in classical piano education, Hughey turned to popular music, like a lot of kids, when the Beatles came along. He was also influenced as a teenager by instructors Orion Crawford and Mark Grey. Crawford played a lot of country blues stuff on electric guitar and introduced Hughey to music from Jesse Edwin Davis in Taj Mahal's band and Rev. Gary Davis. Grey introduced him to the piano styles of Bill Evans, Keith Jarrett, McCoy Tyner, and Chick Corea, as well as a lot of horn players. "He was also a sax player, so I listened to a lot of single-line improvisation of horn players that made me think more melodic in my own guitar work," Hughey said. "A good guitar solo really is a lot like a good horn solo or even a conversation. If you listen to a good blues player like B.B. King, for instance, the beginning of the solo is almost introductory: 'Hello, how are you?' Short statements establishing rapport or introductions. Then you develop an idea or ideas, leading to a crescendo and the last statements, or resolution." Hughey

learned theory, chord structures, melody, and expressive voicing techniques that helped him turn ideas into music. "A lot of time a writer spends is whittling the words or notes to a closer representation of what is in your head, and many times what's in your head isn't in the form of words or notes," he said. "You are crossing senses, and it makes it more difficult. The feeling of new love - the exuberance, the risk, the fears, the pure joy - take those feelings and translate them into a melody. This is where the tools of theory - embedded so far in the recesses of your head that you hardly have to think about them - help you get a more accurate representation of what you want to say." Hughey grew up in Indianapolis and attended both Carmel and Broad Ripple High Schools, where one of his influences, John Hiatt, also went to school. Like Hiatt, he played the Indy circuit of joints like Crazy Al's, Stable Innfluence, State of Indiana, and The Patio. "I heard John Hiatt a lot through the mid to late '70s at a time when I really started seriously writing," he said. Other influences include Bob Dylan, Jimmy Webb, Tom Waits, Randy Newman, John Prine, Elvis Costello, and Richard Thompson. "What I'm taken with or turned off by is the songwriting. I can listen to a lot of styles of music, if it's well written. Jimmy Webb is probably not mentioned a lot in the same breath with Elvis Costello, but they really are both phenomenal writers." In the past years, Hughey also studied the lyrics of Ira Gershwin, Yip Harburg, Hoagy Carmichael, Sammy Cahn, Johnny Mercer, and Irving Berlin. "It's not so much that there is a dearth of well written lyrics in current songs as much as there is a wealth of material from which to learn, both in print and on record," he said. "I will never write a boot-scooting, flag-waving, hat-wearing song, I guess, only because that's not in my personal frame of reference and interest enough to think I could get any truth squeezed out of it," Hughey said. Hometown boy Hiatt reinforced the solo artist idea. "When I heard how strong a player he was as a solo artist, it knocked me flat on the floor," Hughey said. "Strong writing, a wonderful solo guitar style, and his unique voice made me think it was a path worth taking when I moved to Dallas and didn't know any other players." The young Hughey's six-nights-a-week, five-sets-a-night tour when he should have been a high school senior soured him on the corporate side of music. "I played keyboards and sang for a world-weary corporately owned band namesake that was on the goldie-oldie circuit by then," he said. The original band had a minor hit in the 1960s. "It was really a pathetic circuit, truth be told, but an insight into the seedier side of a used-up second rate has-been life style of a spent band," Hughey said. "But where else would I have learned about the characters I met in that time, heard the stories of all the travelers that I met along the way, and all before I was 19, without joining the circus?" "The seedy side of the music

business I was privy to was pretty wretched stuff and not about music much at all," he said. "I thought I'd rather flip burgers and play what I liked to write, and the rest of what a young guy thinks about things being black or white, commercial or art. Maybe I wanted to get a little better grip on reality before it consumed me back then." Growing up in Indiana and living in Dallas for the past 25 Years shaped Hughey, too. "When you only know one thing about yourself, or one set of things, it is hard to write from any perspective," he said. "One is born in a place, matures in a place, and perhaps thinks nothing of this place until he or she goes to another place. Going on the road with a band, seeing other places, then going to school in Arizona, and living in Dallas have allowed me to realize that the place I write from will forever be grounded in the person I became in a family in a hick town in Indiana. I can change my place -Dallas for a quarter of a century now, and now my 'place' has to include what that has done to me, too - but I will never write like a woman born on Long Island in 1969 who went to Wellesley and married a plastic surgeon. Nor will I ever write from the same place as Billy Joe Shaver." "Once you're comfortable with this concept as a writer, it's very freeing. You can write with your own voice without shame, knowing emulation is a good learning tool, but you would never be the same as Townes Van Zandt anyway. That isn't a bad thing. Original voice is so much more interesting because it rings of truth, which is so important in any art."

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