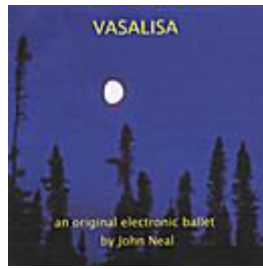


## Mp3 John Neal - Vasalisa



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Original, keyboard-based, contemporary-classical, electronic program music incorporating a variety of styles and acoustical instruments (including piano, trumpet, trombone, electric guitar and jazz flute). 16

MP3 Songs in this album (73:46) ! Related styles: ELECTRONIC: Electronica, CLASSICAL:

Contemporary People who are interested in Mannheim Steamroller Kitaro should consider this download.

Details: John Neal holds a bachelors degree in music education from The Ohio State University and a masters degree in conducting performance from the University of Connecticut, and recently completed his thirtieth year as a high school music educator. A piano student from the age of eight, his teachers include Hildred Curtis Fowler, Natasha Chances, Rosemary Platt and Neal Larrabee. In the early 1990s, John was introduced to electronic music sequencing by his good friend and mentor John Milazzo; he slowly assembled a synthesizer collection and began sequencing at first, projects for his high school music students and local drama productions, and then original compositions. By 1994, John had completed a handful of successful original instrumental compositions, which he combined with recordings and sequences of some of his favorite piano pieces into a compilation entitled Eight Years, Off And On (referring to the fact that it took eight years of recording after school and during summer vacations to complete the project). In 1997, hitting his stride with instrumental electronic compositions, he completed his first full-length CD of original electronic music, Fox Island Afternoon. Then, sometime during the summer of 2002 or thereabouts, sitting in a restaurant listening to really lame pop music over the house intercom system, having just dropped off his daughters at dance class, John thought about creating music of lasting value, which would hopefully mean something to those who would hear it, in a way that would illuminate something important about life. But how to do it? Pop songs were definitely not his vehicle; attempts at film scoring, while musically successful, were not embraced by local film producers, and the

constraints of film scoring chafed at him (fit the music into this timeframe and tell the directors story, not your own); yet friends consistently commented that his music told a story, or went someplace. So, what kind of music can carry a profound message and tell a story, yet still be free enough in form and content to allow complete artistic and compositional license? And then the answer struck him write a ballet! After that, the only remaining hurdle was to find a story worthy of this goal, which Johns other (better!) half Robin immediately provided the Russian legend of Vasalisa, in which a young girl is given a very powerful doll by her dying mother (a doll which represents the awesome and unlimited power of the Self), and then is sent on a hazardous journey of self-discovery in order to bring back a gift to the people who sent her away. John and Robin altered the story to reflect the acquisition of this power during adolescence and the coming of age, and the many obstacles to realizing our fullest Selves which life presents all of us; they created a libretto which reflected the basic elements of the legend while illuminating the journey of Vasalisa through many trials and fears, culminating in her ultimate triumph and success. Thus began a six-year process to create the music which would tell this story and the result is Johns newest CD, 2008s Vasalisa. This CD combines the limitless tonal palette of electronic synthesizers with the power and subtlety of acoustical instruments, in a variety of musical forms from through-composed to jazz to serialism; the sixteen segments are all tied together with leitmotifs representing Vasalisa, the Doll, the witch Baba Yaga, and the three Horsemen who assist and teach Vasalisa along her way. John is especially grateful to the gifted Maine musicians who contributed their artistry to this ballet: friend and colleague Ed Zuis, guitarist and good friend Michael Hughes, tenor saxophonist and former student John Daggett, Jr., flautist Bill Moseley (professor of music at the University of Maine at Augusta), and to Robin and daughters Leslie and Allison for being such an invaluable part of this project.

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