

Mp3 Michael H. Knepp - Al Ain



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CLASSICAL: Contemporary, ELECTRONIC: Virtual Orchestra Details: Michael Knepp is a classically trained American composer seriously addicted to the full symphonic orchestra sound. Unfortunately, it is difficult to find symphonic orchestras to try out much new music. Moreover, Michael has spend most of his adult life living overseas in places such as Japan, Indonesia, Azerbaijan, and the United Arab Emirates, most of which don't have much in the way of orchestras. Therefore, he has gravitated toward composing on the computer since it is now possible to write, perform, record, and produce music that sounds convincingly like a full symphonic orchestra. Michael's music has evolved stylistically under the influence of an eclectic mixture of styles. The basic ones are from Bach and Mozart, still the top of the musical food chain. Added to that is the lush music of Ravel and Debussy and the sharp, clear lines of Monteverdi and the Renaissance composers before him, such as Josquin Des Prez. On top of that is the energy and drive of modern composers such as Philip Glass and John Adams. Finally, there is a liberal dose of non-Western elements; Japanese, Balinese, and Middle Eastern. The subjects of Michael's pieces are places, real or imagined. In that sense they are impressionistic. Still, there are times when other, more musical, elements are more important than simple sound painting. For instance, the main point of a movement might be about form, meter, counterpoint, etc. However, in the end the overall point of a work is a soundscape. Al Ain is a five movement, 53 minute work centering on a real place. Al Ain is an oasis city in the United Arab Emirates that borders the Empty Quarter and a range of barren mountains. It has been inhabited for several thousand years. Here is a brief description of the movements of Al Ain. Petrified Ocean: Al Ain has magnificent, burnt Sienna sand dunes. With some of the dunes rising to fifty feet or more, it is easy to imagine that you are looking at a very stormy sea frozen in time. It

is in fact a desert, as the shimmering heat and swirling sand attest. Orpheus of the Dunes: This movement is an exploration of Baroque techniques. It features triple counterpoint and fugato passages. Running throughout are quotes from Claudio Monteverdi's opera L'Orfeo and the Vespro della Beatta Vergine. Camels: Somehow, through all the heat and dryness, camels manage to lumber on while everything else is indoors or underground. Here, camels lumber in 7/8 time. However, the time is divided so that the impression of 3/4 or 2/4 meter is given, although the beats are irregular. Dthub Basin: Some distance south of Al Ain is a depression in the desert where there are no dunes. Here lives the Dthub, a three foot long lizard. They crawl out of their holes, look for food, and scamper back underground to escape the searing heat. Land Cruising: In Al Ain everyone drives. This movement follows the flow of traffic. There are powerful Land Cruisers, brightly painted trucks carrying bemused looking camels, and expensive Italian sports cars. All is about motion.

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