

Mp3 Ross Hill - The Garden



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Original compositions for classical guitar that draw on classical, Spanish, folk and jazz styles to produce music that is uncluttered, atmospheric and emotionally direct. 18 MP3 Songs CLASSICAL: New Age, NEW AGE: Contemporary Instrumental Details: ABOUT ROSS HILL Ross started playing guitar in 1977, at the age 16. During the first ten years of playing he experimented with a wide range of influences and styles. These included school rock bands, classical guitar tuition, a song writing partnership with Auckland songstress Karen Hunter, instrumental composition, and a jazz guitar duo. He then decided to embark on a serious study of classical guitar, studying, arranging and composition with Auckland teacher Barry McLaren and also with Gunter Herbig, then head of classical guitar at Auckland University. During these years Ross enjoyed a range of music, finding he had an affinity with Renaissance, Spanish and Middle Eastern music. Using what he had learned, he started seriously developing his own compositions in 1986. This led to the release of his first CD, Atmospheric, in 1997, an EP-length recording of original material performed on solo guitar. Three years later, in 2000, came Origins, another EP-length CD of original compositions, with Nicole Leonard adding keyboards, percussion and woodwinds. Now, in 2006, comes The Garden, a full-length album that Ross considers contains his best compositions. The strongest pieces of the previous two EPs have been included, as well as a number of new compositions. The selection has been made to display to range of his music skills and interests. Ross currently supports himself and his family by teaching guitar out of his home studio in Auckland. ____ ROSS HILL ON HIS MUSIC Ross's approach to composing for the guitar has had two aspects: first, to develop his own style of playing the guitar; and second to use composition to explore the various genres and types of music that draw him. Underpinning both is a desire to find musical feels, and to create music that evokes different emotional atmospheres. Ross view is that a musicians individual voice and style comes out of

developing an individual approach to rhythm, harmony and melody. So when he writes a genre-based piece, he tries to filter the music through his own approach and his own emotional understanding of what the music is, and where it might take both performer and listener.

COMMENTS ON SELECTED COMPOSITIONS

KONYA Several years ago a friend visited Konya, in Turkey, where he saw a performance by the 'whirling dervistas'. While there he purchased several CDs of the music that accompanies the dancing, two of which he gave to me. I was struck by the service these musicians had carried out done for hundreds of years, supporting the dancers. Today, the Turkish government funds these musicians. This is my tribute to the musicians of Konya. The piece is structured in three sections. It begins with an invocation, then shifts into the whirling movement of the dance, finishing with a soaring melody played in tremolo technique, representing a change in consciousness as the dancers forget their everyday selves and enter into a mystical state.

NORTHERN SKY This is a tribute to English guitarist and songwriter Nick Drake, who died in 1974 at the age of 26. He recorded three albums for Island. The last, *Pink Moon*, recorded in 1972, is a hauntingly spare album consisting of only guitar and voice. He was an enormously talented guitarist and composer who influenced me a great deal in my early days of experimenting with the guitar. Thanks Nick.

FLAMENCO IMPRESSION A composition that grew out of the impact Spanish music has had on me. In essence, it is an ambient reflection of the heart of the Spanish guitar.

NEW BOY Written for my son Leonard (named after another soulful crooner, Leonard Cohen), who was learning to walk and kept falling over. One day he hurt himself and I wrote this to make him feel better. When we recorded this track my keyboard player Nicole said, "I don't get this." I said, "It's a lullaby," and after that it went fine.

MESTO Italian for sad. Written for my friend Greg who passed away young from cancer.

WATERWAYS New Zealand is alive with water, streams, rivers, the sea. This piece was inspired by the flow of living water.

_____ Q + A WITH ROSS HILL Why play classical guitar in an era of electronic and beat drum music? There is something timeless about acoustic instruments. The classical guitar is totally organic, the sound is created with your own fingers and as such each player extracts their own subtle tone variations. This makes the instrument very personal and creates an intimate relationship between the player and listener. It is not a loud instrument; by its nature the classical guitar elicits serenity. With the absence of electronic beats, the music takes on a more informal, laid back quality, perfect for projecting the peace and tranquillity I enjoy in music. So do you think this type of music has a place in the contemporary world? Many of us have busy lives, full of all sorts of stresses and

tensions. At the very least this music offers refuge at the end of a lousy day. More deeply, the music provides a place to slow down and reflect, to absorb or relax. Who are your guitar heroes? In classical guitar Andre Segovia and Julian Bream, because of their total individual approach to tone and music, In jazz Wes Montgomery, because of his beautiful sound and laid back approach. In acoustic folk John Renbourne, because of his open approach to music from Renaissance to blues. In rock guitar Jimi Hendrix, because of his originality and wide ranging influences. Hendrix could play beautiful ballads too. How have they influenced your playing? All these players have had technical influence on my playing. From the octave playing of Wes Montgomery, to the rich, warm tone of Segovia. But more importantly they taught me that you have to be yourself. Hendrix gave me courage to experiment and try any note on the fingerboard its okay to play a wrong note. I feel grateful to have heard and been able to learn from these great players. Do you have any composing heroes? There are so many great composers that I enjoy and inspire me, but perhaps J.S. Bach is the greatest composer we have had. I listen to his music every day, and continue to be awed by it. I enjoy lots of Baroque and Renaissance music because of the peacefulness and sheer beauty of the music, but every period of music has great composers. Has being a teacher had an impact on your composing? The best thing about private teaching is that you get to choose your own material. I have always chosen what I think is some of the best music in the classical guitar repertoire. I get to play, study and discuss this music in detail which helps me as much as it benefits my students. What types of music do you enjoy personally? I tend to like individual composers of all styles and eras. From the lute music of John Dowland to Nick Drake. World music from India (like Gazal) to modern Flamenco (Gino Diauri) and all the great music coming out of NZ. Singer/songwriter Karen Hunter, classical guitarist Bruce Paine and many more. Some of these people Ive been lucky enough to work with. What do you want your music to communicate to listeners? Music for me has been a journey. A journey of discovering what music is and what purpose it has in my life. I would like to share that with others. Most of all I would like the listener to enjoy the music.

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