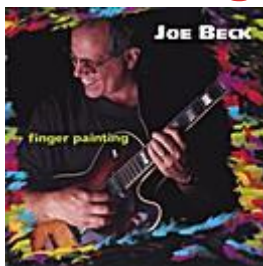


## Mp3 Joe Beck - Finger Painting



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Contemporary jazz guitar at its finest, with melodic and chordal inventiveness supported by all star musicians Bill Evans, Mark Egan and Danny Gottlieb. 10 MP3 Songs JAZZ: Jazz Fusion, JAZZ: Traditional Jazz Combo Details: Anyone who heats with wood will tell you that the fastest burning logs don't generate the most heat. It takes seasoned hardwood to warm the body and soul --wood that has withstood wind and weather, a little adversity and the passage of time. Much the same holds true with great guitarists. Callow flame-throwers come and go, but the musicians who command our attention and consistently warm our souls are those who have experienced life and reflect that experience in their music. Joe Beck is that kind of guitarist -- and on Finger Painting, his new recording and initial release for Wavetone Records, the guitar legend burns with the soul-satisfying intensity of seasoned oak. The full-bodied tone of his custom D'Angelico is the essence of jazz guitar: Welcoming but assertive, Beck's sound invites us to settle in for a sensory survey of the best in contemporary jazz. At various turns funky and swinging, soulful and sly, the music on Finger Painting offers both a fascinating summation of Joe's rich, 33-year career and an exhilarating promise of the music yet to come. As producer Mark Egan, whose supple bass lines form one of Finger Painting's primary colors, says, "I was trying to capture Joe's musical personality. He's a real musical giant, and I wanted to help him make a record that is contemporary and true to his form". "I suggested that he select songs that he really wanted to record with the quartet and, most of all, be himself. Of course, Joe has a richly varied career -- from being the first guitarist Miles Davis ever used, to serving as musical director for Frank Sinatra and Esther Phillips, to recording with such greats as Duke Ellington, Gil Evans, Antonio Carlos Jobim, Stan Getz, James Brown, Paul Simon and countless others. But, when all is said and done, Joe is a master jazz guitar stylist. So the overriding goal was to feature his guitar playing and the wonderful sound of his jazz guitar. He used

the classic D'Angelico throughout the project." Egan had recorded and performed live with Beck in various settings, but he said working with Joe as both the bassist on, and producer of, *Finger Painting* was a singular experience. "He has such harmonic and melodic depth --and an uncanny way of playing through changes. I have the highest respect for him. There aren't many people who have explored music or life the way Joe has." "Explored" is the right word to describe Beck's approach to music and life. Like most adventurers who chart new directions, Joe thought he knew where he was headed when he left his native New Jersey for New York in 1962. He was just 17 -- and he knew that he had to play jazz. But, like Christopher Columbus, who was intent on finding a short sea route to the East Indies when he stumbled upon the New World, Joe learned life is, indeed, full of surprises. Samba was hot in the early '60s, and the young guitarist was immediately attracted to Brazilian music. He eventually found work in the house rhythm section at Chuck's Composite, an East Side night club popular with Brazilian musicians. There, Joe was noticed by Joao Gilberto, and he became a Gilberto favorite. The late Gil Evans, also a samba fan, was impressed enough by Joe to recruit him for his band. And, through Evans, Beck met Miles Davis, who was interested in using a guitarist for the first time. Miles hired Joe on Evans' recommendation. Enriched by both the bossa nova and Miles Davis experiences, Joe turned next to the brave new world of jazz-rock fusion, subbing for the regular guitarist in Jeremy (Steig) & The Satyrs, the seminal fusion band of the late-1960s, and sticking around to help create a new musical hybrid. But by 1970, the drug scene that accompanied that era had taken such a heavy toll on Joe's friends and associates that he decided it was time to regroup and rethink his position on an increasingly wacky world. The result: For three years Joe's guitar sat in its case, as this extraordinary musician immersed himself in the unlikely business of dairy farming, an alternative career and sideline that remains a viable option today. By the mid-1970s, Joe was back on the scene, fronting some crack fusion bands, recording for the CTI label, working as an arranger/conductor for Sinatra and Phillips, and growing increasingly disenchanted with the recording industry. Once again he left "the scene" -- but this time it was for a well-integrated career as a commercial jingle artist/producer and sometime dairy farmer. About a dozen years ago, Joe began recording periodically, producing an attractive mix of mainstream and contemporary jazz releases. Joe also returned to performing in clubs with a trio or quartet as opportunities arose. From the sounds of this new release, it also would seem he was waiting to record *Finger Painting*. Producer Mark Egan, who is releasing *Finger Painting* on his own Wavetone Records label, attributes the "live" feel of the recording to

the fact that Finger Painting was made with few overdubs, except for drummer Danny Gottlieb's additional percussion on some cuts. "It all went down in one or two takes," Egan said. "Even when we recorded more takes, we ended up using the first or second one every time." One collective reason for the relaxed, live feel of Finger Painting -- besides Joe Beck's extraordinary musicianship, that is -- are the musicians Egan chose to support the guitarist. Mark Egan, of course, is one of the most highly respected -- and complete -- electric bassists in contemporary music. Gottlieb, his long-time partner, dating back to the original Pat Metheny group, is quite simply one of the finest drummers working today. And the choice of Bill Evans as a muscular foil for Beck's glowing guitar work was inspired. You'll notice that the performances on Finger Painting abound with spontaneous energy and an of-the-moment intensity. The passion in Bill Evans' saxophones has much to do with the compelling feel of Finger Painting. The Miles Davis, Herbie Hancock and new Mahavishnu alumnus definitely came to play. But that's true of each musician on Finger Painting. Finger Painting is an engaging musical dialogue shared by an extraordinary group of instrumental conversationalists. Each has something substantive to say. Equally important, each knows how and when to listen. The grooves are solid, the improvisations are riveting, and the swing sublime. Finger Painting opens with a Beck original (as are all but one of the recording's 10 cuts), and "Blues Doctor" helps to frame the dimensions of this sound portrait of an artist at his peak. The doctor in question definitely is of the feel good kind. With Egan solidly in the pocket, drummer Gottlieb lays down a simmering shuffle, and Joe and Bill Evans heat things up with a controlled burn. Joe's inventive comping and meaty chord solos remind us that Wes Montgomery and the masterful George Van Eps each had a profound influence on Beck during the guitarist's formative years. Among modern jazz guitarists, Joe Beck is a true pioneer in the exploration of chordal improvisation. Another Beck original, "Jaqueline," reflects the Brazilian side of Joe's musical personality. The melody is haunting, and Joe's solo is rich in the harmonic inventiveness producer Egan referred to above. Could "The Kramer" be a funky tribute to comedian Jerry Seinfeld's quirky television neighbor? The tune's infectious, loose-limbed groove gives Beck and Evans plenty of room to develop wonderfully in-character solos. Beck's improvisations are full of sly chords and unexpected harmonic inventions. His lines bristle with intelligent confidence and uninhibited imagination. Evans on this cut demonstrates why Egan was so quick to recommend the saxophonist to Beck. "Joe wanted to record with a horn player; I play with Bill in Elements and other projects, and I knew he'd be perfect for this record," Mark says. "Bill just came in and went for it, playing

with intensity and eloquence." Evans opens "The Answer" with Joe comping behind him. This is another melodic gem -- with a gently swaying groove and a subtle intensity. When Beck and Evans ultimately lift off, the rhythm section shades the dynamics to maximize the moment. With an answer as compelling as this one, wouldn't you love to know the question? "Red Eye" puts it on the good foot with some grown-up blues. Beck sizzles and burns over a simmering and slightly subversive funk. Check out the marvelous interplay between Beck and Egan during Mark's signature fretless solo. Beck, Egan and Gottlieb are a trio that breathes as one. "What Would I Do Without You" is a beautiful Beck ballad dedicated to his wife Marsi. This song highlights the guitarist's melodic gifts, both as player and composer. This is another stunning three-way conversation -- one that unfolds with patient attention to dynamics and detail. The title cut, "Finger Painting", suggests a spirited impressionist's portrait of inspirational jazz guitarist Wes Montgomery. Beck acknowledges his debt of gratitude with fond respect, but also with a mind of his own. Notice how the guitarist and Evans, on soprano sax, blend lines and chords, melodies and counter-melodies into assorted shades of blue while Gottlieb and Egan add shadows and light to the background. "Summertime" is the only non-original on Finger Painting, and the classic serves a tour de force by a master musician. This is Joe Beck and his gifted colleagues luxuriating in the glory of Gershwin. In "Texas Ann", listen to Evans sketch intense southwestern blues lines over Joe's tangy chords before the four-way conversation begins in earnest. This is another impassioned dialogue among peers. With "Tail Lights" blinking a solo guitarist's good-bye, Joe Beck's chordal "see ya later" definitely leaves us wanting more. Until then Finger Painting will reward frequent return visits. This is timeless music with a contemporary edge.

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