

Mp3 Michael Kent Smith - After The Harvest

After the Harvest



MICHAEL KENT SMITH

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Inspired by medieval musical ideas, played largely on traditional American folk instruments and composed in a style derived from minimalist classical music, these pieces combine to tell a tale of how our lives are inexorably tied to the ever turning cycle 14 MP3 Songs CLASSICAL: Contemporary, CLASSICAL: New Age Details: Composer, multi-instrumentalist, painter and printmaker Michael Kent Smith had a busy fall 2001. In addition to finishing 18 new canvases and delving heavily into the craft of printmaking, he finally completed his first solo album titled "After the Harvest". The music on "After the Harvest" is built on ideas from his studies of medieval and traditional American folk music, but was constructed in a computer environment and electronic devices are frequently a part of the mix. The songs have a very pictorial quality that is no doubt due to the hours spent painting and making prints. On the disc Michael plays several different instruments: 6 12 string guitars, mountain dulcimer, hammer dulcimer, bandurria, bowed psaltery, organ, synthesizer, recorder and percussion. The guitar was Michael's first instrument (if you don't include a year of grade school clarinet studies with a teacher that made out with her boyfriend during his lessons). It is still the instrument that he returns to when he wants to be most expressive. He is equally at home on acoustic or electric guitar - his electric style being formed early on by listening to players like Jeff Beck, Jimi Hendrix, Jimmy Page and Carlos Santana. Later, jazz-rock guitarists like John McLaughlin and Pat Metheny became influential as well as sophisticated rock players Allan Holdsworth, Steve Morse and Robert Fripp. His acoustic style is fingerpicking based and is inspired by European guitarists such as John Renbourn and Pierre Bensusan as well as Americans John Fahey and Leo Kottke. A fascination with traditional American folk music has caused Michael to learn the Appalachian dulcimer, hammer dulcimer, bowed psaltery and banjo. A long time interest in medieval and renaissance music brought the lute and recorder into the arsenal as well. A recent trip to Spain has

added a Badurria to the collection and this newest instrument appears in a number of songs on "After the Harvest". Electronics and computers have long been an interest of Michael's and he integrates them regularly into what might seem, at first listening, to be purely acoustic music. As much as he loves music history, he believes that all tools available to an artist should be used when appropriate. Michael, along with renowned poet Marc Smith, founded the spoken word band Pong Unit. In addition to the two Smiths (no, they're not related) Pong Unit also features Steve Hashimoto on bass, Ted Sirota on drums and Dave Flippo on keyboards. The Pong Unit normally plays the first Sunday of every month at the infamous Uptown Poetry Slam at the Green Mill and during the Spring, Fall and Winter they can be found performing all over the country at concert halls and colleges. Another current project is One Big Soul, a compositional (and sometimes performing) project with bassist/composer Steve Arens. Steve and Michael have been working together for almost 20 years and have developed a type of telepathy in their freewheeling performances. Notes from the Composer about "After the Harvest" I have long been interested in medieval music and the compositional processes of composers Guillaume Machaut, Perotin and Guillaume Dufay. I wanted to explore some ideas I have about those processes and their connection to the music of post-minimalist composers Steve Reich and Arvo Pärt. Another factor impacting this music is the information gathered by my mother's genealogical research. It shows both my deep American roots (since 1610) and the British Isles/Celtic ancestry still farther back. My study of traditional American music, especially the mountain dulcimer and its Appalachian repertoire, has also planted a whole new collection of sounds and ideas into my mind's ear. A number of the works recorded here are built on specific medieval compositions. What we refer to today as Gregorian Chant was a single line musical style, with no harmony or multiple voice parts. During the 12th century, composers began to add a 2nd part to the single line of existing chants. This style was referred to as organum. By the 13th century a 3rd part was being added to existing 2-part organum to create what was called a motet. It is this idea of adding to existing works that inspired my working methods. I selected several medieval pieces and either sequenced them or created audio tracks from an existing recording. To these tracks I added 2 to 10 more tracks of overdubs. Next, the original sequences or audio tracks of the medieval work were removed. I then used the editing environment of the computer to craft the remaining tracks into the form you hear here.

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