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Interview with Marc Enfroy

Published August 23, 2008 | By BT Fasmer

BT Fasmer (*) of NewAgeMusic.nu has interviewed Marc Enfroy about his new album Unbounded:

* I read on your homepage that Unbounded was created after you suffered a terrible loss. Please tell us about this, and how composing music helped you in a difficult situation.

Marc: That's very true. My older sister, Suzanne, was diagnosed with melanoma cancer in August of 2005 and passed away in February of 2006. It all happened very quickly and was absolutely devastating. The last few years of her life, Suzanne had taken up painting – acrylics and watercolors – and became quite skilled. She left behind over 200 paintings and the artwork has been a source of comfort to the entire family. Aside from her beauty, courage and selflessness as she battled the illness, her paintings are her lasting legacy. This got me thinking that I should follow in my sister's footsteps and create my own artistic legacy. So, I decided to start composing.

Writing music helped me by providing an outlet for my grief: at times an escape and at other times an expression of my sorrow. It also gave me something positive to pour my emotions into. The first song I wrote was a grieving song titled, Taken Away (track 7 on the album). It's my attempt at a short soundtrack depicting my sister's final hours: the dread of what was to come, the reverence of the experience, the heartbreak, and the sudden finality of it all when she was gone. Over time, as the grief lessened, I was able to write music with more positive feelings, such as the title track, Unbounded or Night on the Seine.

* The process of creating a debut album is long. How do you feel now that it is out? And how has it been to meet your audience for the first time?

Marc: It's been quite an adventure. Early on, I tended to romanticize what it would be like to finally release the album, not thinking about the hard work involved in the initial launch and promotion of a CD. Now that it's out, I'm definitely relieved and also excited about the response so far. It's been really fun making connections with people who are moved by the music. I'm finding many music lovers that enjoy relaxing new age music but aren't fans of most "spa" music that's devoid of emotion. In addition to that, they also want music with a fuller sound and more passion than solo piano. Then there are the people who like themes from film soundtracks but not necessarily the lengthy background filler that doesn't make for good listening when isolated from the film itself. So, these are all gaps I'm trying to fill in the new age music genre – writing music that is relaxing like spa music but at the same time grabs your heart and mind with emotional and visual experiences like film soundtracks.

Being relatively unknown at this point, I try to make new connections with music fans by letting them try out a quarter of the album for free. This gives them a risk-free opportunity to become more familiar with my sound. Most people who become curious about my music end up buying the CD after they've had some time to sample the free music. So that part has been really fun – watching people progress through the phases of not knowing anything about me, then becoming curious, followed by their pleasant surprise when they realize they love the music and then finally becoming true fans.

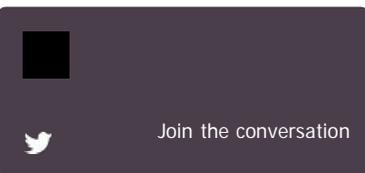
I also enjoy connecting with people on my brand new message board community, Secret Island. My most staunch fans are clamoring



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for a Christmas album which is a definite possibility for my next album in 2009. It might be fun to put a cinematic twist on some of the old favorites.

* You describe your music as "Cinematic Piano". When you compose music, do you use images or movie scenes as inspiration?

Marc: For sure. I chose the term "cinematic piano" because early on, everyone told me the music was visual and sounded like something from a movie scene. That said, the images don't necessarily pop into my head before I write the music. Sometimes they do but other times I'll write a melody first and the imagery comes later. For the track Taken Away, visions of my sister's final day were prominent in my mind and inspired me to write the music. Contrast that with Empire Bluff which is named after a beautiful, panoramic place. It was initially a melody I wrote and liked. As I was completing it, I realized that it took me away to a place full of beauty and awe, so I named it after a cliff that has stunning views of Lake Michigan.

What I love about composing cinematic music is that it takes each listener to a different place in their mind and heart. It's a personal reaction or experience triggered by what they hear in the music. The destinations are all unique but extremely meaningful to each listener.

* Tell us about the instruments and equipment you use. Do you play on a keyboard/synth, or do you compose through a sequencer – or both?

Marc: A bit of both. I use a Yamaha Motif synthesizer for a few of the sounds and computer based samples for the orchestral instruments and piano. It's all sequenced in Cubase. I have an extensive computer background which makes it come fairly naturally; that coupled with a healthy dose of patience to agonize over every note. I tend to make compromises in favor of realism. For example, I might be working on a string section and find that I can't make the strings sound real enough for my taste so I may replace it with another instrument or layer another solo instrument on top of the string section to make the piece sound more authentic.



* There is a close link between movie scores and classical music. Do you listen to classical music?

Marc: I don't as much as I used to. In my twenties I listened to Tchaikovsky, Mozart, Beethoven, Bach, Dvorak, to name a few. Tchaikovsky is still my favorite classical composer because a lot of his work is strongly emotive stuff. More recently, I've been a fan of film composers like James Horner and Alan Silvestri. As I mentioned earlier, the thing I dislike about soundtracks is the long stretches of background filler that you have to listen to until the good part comes. With my music, I strive to write short pieces that are more reminiscent of those "good parts" heard in soundtracks: the main theme that haunts you after the movie is over.

* Will you continue as an independent artist, or would you sign a record deal if it was presented to you?

Marc: I wouldn't turn down a record deal if it was constructed in the right way. It would all depend on the terms.

* Thank you Marc for taking the time to answer these questions!

Posted in Cinematic Piano, Interviews | Tagged Marc Enfroy

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Jayden Thomas says:
June 17, 2010 at 7:22 pm

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Interview with Marc Enfroy

Published May 12, 2009 | By BT Fasmer

Marc Enfroy's new album *Awakening* will be released on June 16, 2009. Below is BT Fasmer's interview with Marc about the upcoming album.

BT Fasmer: First, welcome back! When we did the interview with you in August last year, *Unbounded* was just released and you were an unknown artist. **Now you have won the NAR 2008 Best Neo-Classical Album award, and the album has become a major success.** What is your reaction to all of this?

Marc Enfroy: Thanks BT. It's always fun to be here with you. As far as *Unbounded* and the NAR award goes, I certainly wasn't expecting the kind of response I've experienced. As an artist, you hope that your music will strike a chord with people and that you'll find an audience.

As you know, my music leans more toward classical music or a film score so I wasn't sure how well it would do in the new age market. Plus, there's an over supply of piano music covering every imaginable niche: new age piano, instrumental piano, romantic piano, solo piano, piano for massage, piano for wedding music, piano for stress relief, piano for meditation. People have even written piano music to play for your pet. So I wasn't really sure if my music would stand out enough to get noticed. In the end, I just wrote heartfelt music that I liked and hoped other people would like it too.



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Somehow, the music found an audience and so I'm really grateful for that.

The other thing I hadn't anticipated was how many people would connect with the story behind the music. As you well know, when my sister Suzanne passed away in 2006 from skin cancer, I wanted to follow in her artistic footsteps and started teaching myself to compose music. Countless people have told me that they are either in the throes of battling cancer or lost a loved one to the disease and they say things like, "your music gives me strength" or "there's something indescribable in your music that touches me." I had no idea it would have that sort of impact. It's like we all share a special, almost mystical bond through the music.

So all in all, it's been a very enlightening and uplifting experience.

BT: Your new album, which will be released June 16, 2009, is entitled *Awakening*. Here you are accompanied by three fine artists: vocalist Jillian Goldin, flutist Jack Chen and violinist Janet Sullins. Recording *Awakening* must have been quite a different process from the previous album? Is it also a cinematic piano album?

Marc: Yes it's still cinematic piano music although you'll hear other instruments taking more of a lead role. That made the creative



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process quite different. With Unbounded, it was just me and my keyboard. I'd first write the piano part and then layer on other sounds. When I started working on Awakening, I knew I wanted to take the sound to a new level by incorporating different acoustic instruments. So in many cases, I'd write specifically for that instrument as the lead with piano providing the support. Also, I can't read music so I had to figure out how to write music charts for various instruments that would be recorded in studio. To do that, I wrote the music for each instrument on my keyboard and figured out how to use software to translate the performance into sheet music.

The other aspect that was new to me was selecting which musicians to work with. Thanks to the Internet, I found out about Janet Sullins and was excited to learn that she lived really close by. When I contacted her, Janet was really open to working on the project. Then for the flute, that was an easy decision because I had met Jack Chen through Tim Janis and had also seen him perform last Fall. From the moment I met Jack, I knew he was a really great guy and would be fantastic to work with. I also wanted to try some ethereal voice on the album and discovered Jillian Goldin last Summer on the radio. I immediately fell in love with her voice so she was the first person I thought of for vocals. Did you hear she's getting married soon? She'll be Jillian Aversa.

BT: Tell us about how the album was recorded. Have you had any help with mixing and mastering?

Marc: Where to record was a big question for me, especially for the violin. A contact at the University of Michigan school of music recommended Solid Sound Studios since they record a lot of classical work in addition to popular music. When I heard that Tori Amos, Norah Jones, Willie Nelson and Art Garfunkel had recorded there, I figured it might be good enough for me (laughing). Seriously though, the process of hearing music you've written performed by a world class musician is incredible. We had a great time in studio with Janet and it was an awesome learning experience for me. A few of the songs have parts written for a violin section so poor Janet had to play the same part over and over in many cases but she was a real pro about it. It took 3 separate recording sessions to get it all done. When we were done recording the final take of the final track, we played a little prank on Janet. We pretended she had to record one more time and then blasted some Evanescence drama rock into her headphones. She was looking at us like, what the heck? The best part was, after her initial surprise, she started improvising on the violin and it sounded fantastic. If I can find the video I'll post it on my website one of these days.



Janet Sullins and Marc Enfroy

Here are some pictures from the recording:



Then for the flute, Jack Chen was a real workhorse and banged out numerous takes of 7 songs in a single 5-hour session at Sound Market studios in his home town of Halifax. That's in Canada for those of you who struggle with geography like me. The next day I was downloading Jack's tracks and adding them to the mixes so it all went really quickly. Jack was really helpful when it came to assessing the mixes and being another set of ears. He'd listen to a song and have one of his engineer pals listen as well and then come back to me with suggestions.

For the vocals, Jillian was really easy to work with because I didn't have to produce any sheet music, just a recording of the notes to sing. She'd record the tracks in her studio and email them back to me to drop into the mix. Jillian is on two tracks, "Before the Dawn" and "Maiden of the Morning Star." Her interpretation and pitch are phenomenal. I'd like to work with her again in the future...well not just her. Jack and Janet too.

So I did all the mixing work but mastering I leave to a pro since it takes a special talent. Hans DeKline mastered Unbounded and I was really happy with the results so I used his services again for Awakening.

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BT: Ok, here is a big one: What are your thoughts on the spiritual significance of music – and how does this affect your creative process?

Marc: Have you been hanging out with Justin St. Vincent lately? I just wrote up a little piece on that very question. You can read it at this link. In short, regardless of who you are or what you believe, I think there's a place in every person that only music can reach and when it grabs you, it's a spiritual event. I don't mean that in a religious sense. It's more like a deep emotional sensation that only music can create within the human spirit. When I'm writing a piece of music, I'm on a search for a combination of notes that creates a deep response within my core. When it does, I run with it.

BT: You are an independent artist. After all this success, will you still stay independent?

Marc: I'm no expert on the business side of things honestly. I might see if an indie label wants to pick me up just to see what would happen. Everything I've heard and read says that there's no real advantage to being on a label these days. I just haven't researched it enough to know if that would be true in my case.

BT: Thank you for the interview, Marc! Best of luck with the release next month.

PS: If you go to Marcenfroy.com you can hear some nice clips from the new album!!!

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Interview with Medwyn Goodall

Published April 23, 2009 | By BT Fasmer

NewAgeMusic.nu has interviewed Medwyn Goodall about his highly popular Medicine Woman series. The fourth album entitled Medicine Woman IV: Prophecy 2012 has just been released. The interview is done by BT Fasmer.



BT Fasmer: The Medicine Woman series contains some of your most popular and beloved songs, like Temple Journey, Invocation (all parts) and Farewell To The Darkness. When you recorded the first Medicine Woman in 1991, it was the beginning of something entirely new in your discography. To quote the cover: Rhythmic, celebratory, nurturing. Today these are the words many fans would use to describe your music. Please tell us what the Medicine Woman series has meant for you as an artist.

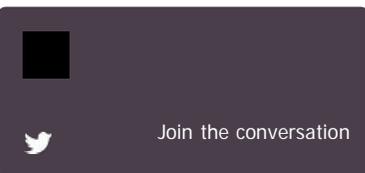
Medwyn Goodall: During my career I've developed some personal favorite themes and styles that I enjoy returning to and Medicine Woman is one of those themes. It is a sound that is very me, very natural to me and is like an old friend. Whilst I might try out different ideas and do different projects, fans know that at some point I will always return for a period of taking these theme another step. It's become a trademark of my career that every 5 years or so Medicine Woman will be re-born.

BT: The Medicine Woman series is inspired by the ancient Mayan culture, and this is even more apparent in the latest installment: Medicine Woman IV: Prophecy 2012. Tell us about your interest for the ancient Mayan culture, and the enigmatic year of 2012.

Medwyn: I can't remember a time that I wasn't interested in myths, legends, mysteries and native cultures, and the Mayans stand out as being one of the most unusual civilizations there have been. The Mayans were amazing astrologers and keepers of time, so much so and so accurate were they that today's scientists are still debating theories on how the Mayans had such knowledge. The ultimate conclusion of the Mayans knowledge of time and astrology was their creation of what is known as the Mayan calendar which tells of periods, eons of time each having its influence on humanity.

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What is immediately noticeable about the calendar is that it stop very precisely on the 21st of December 2012. It does not predict a doom and gloom end of the world scenario, but more mysteriously hints and foretells of much upheaval as we pass from a period of difficulty in to a time of re-birth and enlightenment. What is truly interesting is that many other cultures all have similar predictions for the same time and date. 2012 to many ancient civilizations seems to indicate a massive change and that is what the CD is referring to. To sit up and take notice and look into the details for oneself.

BT: This series is one of the most successful in new age music history. Are you nervous about making a sequel?

Medwyn: I was very nervous when I made Medicine Woman II and a little less so with CLAN II – the Scroll, because they were the first time I had written a definite sequel. I am not nervous these days, I thoroughly enjoyed making Medicine Woman IV and was perfectly relaxed and content whilst making it, which show I think. It sounds as if I was confident and relaxed.

BT: The Medicine Woman series albums have been accompanied by some wonderful cover art by American artist Lisa Iris. I guess it is right to say that she too has given life and identity to the Medicine Woman?

Medwyn: Yes Lisa is a very good friend of mine and she added her own flare giving Medicine Woman a visual style and identity. With Medicine Woman II and Medicine Woman III we very much collaborated on ideas for the cover so that I could echo them in the tracks, making the albums that much more integrated. However Lisa couldn't join me for the 4th new album and so I designed the cover myself.

BT: The Medicine Woman was the first of several magical women in your discography. Like Priestess: Return To Atlantis, Moon Goddess and Earth Goddess. The celebration of the Feminine is central in your music. Do you see yourself making more Medicine Woman albums in the near future, or will the other powerful women mentioned here get their sequels first? A new Earth Goddess album perhaps?

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I thoroughly enjoyed making
Medicine Woman IV and was
perfectly relaxed and content
whilst making it.

Medwyn Goodall

Medwyn: I do plan to sequel The Sorcerers Daughter next year with Rune Caster. The Sorcerer's Daughter was always planned to be a mini series or trilogy and I have settled on it being a trilogy, as it has a linked story. I'll return to Medicine Woman every few years for as long as fans want me to and if I feel I have something fresh to say on the subject. I don't feel as though it's over yet so there could be a 5th in the years to come.

BT: You also run the MG Music label. Still you find the time to be an artist yourself. Can you do both at the same time, or do you take time off from the label to create music?

Medwyn: It's impossible to do both at once. I choose periods where the label doesn't need me personally too much to escape into the studio. It was harder in the earlier years of the label and my music suffered a bit as a result of the clash. Since the Sorcerer's Daughter, 2006, I can find the time to focus on just being an artist and I feel as though I have really found myself again as an artist, having gone through the transition to owning a label.

BT: Thank you Medwyn for the interview, and good luck with your new projects! 2009 is looking out to be a great year for the MG Music label.

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Interview with Paul Heinerman

Published October 27, 2009 | By BT Fasmer

NewAgeMusic.nu is proud to present an interview with one of the finest artists in new age music: Paul Heinerman. He has just released the album Oases, which you can read our review of here. The interview was done by BT Fasmer.

BT Fasmer: Seven years have gone since the release of Private Sun. Please describe the process behind your new album, Oases. Has your approach to music changed over these last seven years?

Paul Heinerman: The similitude in approach in composing the albums Private Sun and Oases, is intuition. For me, composing a song or an album is not a systematical process. Most songs arise by intuition and associations on themes I discover in the process of composing a song.

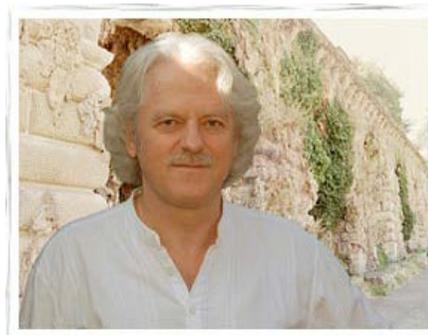
The difference between the two albums is that Private Sun is more or like a compilation of songs I composed over a certain period and Oasis has a special theme. From the album Private Sun, I was touched most by the atmosphere created in African Forest and Spirits of India and decided to compose an album with tracks like these. Intuition is not only inspiration from within, but also a result from external influences and possibilities. In the seven years between Private Sun and Oases I started working with new studio equipment. The new possibilities and high quality samples have inspired me a lot.

BT: You chose to release a single from Oases, Chimengu, long before the release of the album – and it became a massive hit on web radios. This must have been an inspiration when finishing the album? How do you feel about it now?

Paul: The first result, of these new technical possibilities and inspiration from the 'world songs' on Private sun, was Chimengu. A combination of modern western beat, synths and Chinese (sample) vocals. It is a quite different song, compared to my work up to then. I was curious how this style would be appreciated by listeners and therefore I sent the song to several web stations, as an introduction / teaser for a new album in this style. The great success on the internet radio stations surprised and cheered me. It also convinced me that the musical integrative path I chose was not only the right one for me but listeners approved of it as well.

BT: Oases is like a musical journey to many parts of the world, from the Far East to the West and back again. Please tell us about your inspiration for using so different cultural expressions?

Paul: During the '70 and '80 I made several journeys, to India, Thailand, Turkey, Tunisia etc. I was touched by the atmosphere and local music in these countries. All this has influenced my feelings and thoughts and through that, my music. Music is a way to express yourself as an individual and besides that, musical traditions give expression to culture. I found that music, by itself finds a way and cross borders to touch people. The synths and samples gave me tools to compose musical journeys and bring cultures harmonious together.



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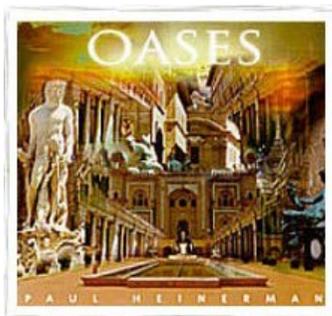
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BT: On Oases there are voice samples on the first eight tracks, while the three last are without samples and more like your "old" style. How have you worked with samples?

Paul: I presume 'my old style' will always be present. It is like my basic musical language. It will be there as a base line in every song even if specific styles are more prominent, like the more up-tempo beats and voice samples in Oases. These samples are from special sampling CD's. I selected these because they pleased me and they were suitable for the ethnic concept and atmosphere of the album. I composed the music around the voices.

BT: One cannot avoid thinking of Enigma when one hears Gregorian chants and synths. Please tell us about your inspirations for Oases. Do you listen to new age music – or other genres as well?

Paul: Associations of my music with Enigma feel like a compliment, I like this music very much.

My first steps on piano keys are the result of deep appreciation of the music of Elton John. As I am told, people regularly recognize his style in my play, especially in my first album Ancient World.

My musical interests are wide. I like various types and styles of music.

Major examples in past and present are: Peter Gabriel, Genesis, Vangelis, Steve Winwood, Deep Forrest, the Beatles, Kate Bush and lots of others. But I do value classical music as well, with Sjostakovitch undoubtedly as my favorite composer. And of course I listen to New Age music and appreciate in this genre Yanni and Suzanne Ciani.

A musician that inspired me specifically in respect to Oases, is Harry Gregson-Williams. Several years ago I heard his 'All hell breaks loose', the soundtrack for the film Spy Games. This and the other songs in the movie affected me. The western synth with world vocals were the combination I was working on as well and he created the atmosphere sphere I was looking for.

Most songs arise by intuition and associations on themes I discover in the process of composing a song.

BT: Your first two albums had much of that analogue synth sound. Will there be more of that in the future?

Paul: I am quite sure this sound will stay present in my work. Personally I am very fond of songs like Across The Ocean. Of course I like to develop as a musician and enter different musical pathways, but I expect this will continue to be alternated and interlaced with basic analogue synth sound.

BT: Your music has been used in many different settings, from boardprograms on airlines, to TV shows. Do you plan to do more of this kind of work – or will there be more albums like Oases? Or both?

Paul: As for me, both kinds of work will continue. For this specific moment I am busy to make library music again (for film, documentaries and commercials). One moment you are engaged in a lounge music song and some time later you compose a pop- or Latin song. This is very fun to do and it guarantees that you will not keep on composing in a fixed style or routine. While composing these library tracks I am concentrating on and exploring specific styles in music. In these pursuits I often find inspiration and possible combinations with my own basic musical style for new songs. So probably in the future a new album can be expected.

BT: Thank you so much, Paul, for giving us this interview. I know I speak on behalf of many new age music fans out there; keep creating great music. We love your work!

Be sure to check out PaulHeinerman.com Oases is available on all major digital music outlets.

Picture copyright Bigstockphoto.com – Himalaya Images

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Interview with Peter Buffett

Published April 23, 2009 | By BT Fasmer

BT Fasmer (*) of NewAgeMusic.nu has interviewed Peter Buffett about his current projects.

* Jazz bassist Dave Holland once said that the whole point in developing your own style is to find your own voice. And you, after many years as an instrumental artist, literally started singing. Please describe this experience. Do you feel that your music became more personal after this?

Peter Buffett: First of all, I couldn't agree more. Finding your voice – or as Joseph Campbell said follow your bliss - is critical whether it's in music or any other pursuit. And, yes, that came about literally for me in recent years. I tried to write songs with lyrics when I was young and in retrospect realized that they were mediocre because I hadn't had enough life experience to really say anything of substance!

Now, many years later, I have a lot more to say and the music has most definitely become more personal as I'm able to put my thoughts and feelings into words. It was an amazing experience for me. While I still write instrumental music when I score to picture, I can't imagine life without putting words to my music now.

* As a New Age music fan, I never imagined you as a singer-songwriter. But after Gold Star (2006), Staring at the Sun (2007) and Imaginary Kingdom (2008), I find myself wanting more. How have your fans responded to this change of style?

Peter: It's been interesting. A few miss the instrumental work – but for the most part, everyone has come along for the ride. And vocal music certainly attracts more interest. That was always a frustration of mine. Some people just couldn't relate to the instrumental work. I knew what emotions I put into that music, but many people need a vocal and a lyric to really relate. Which is certainly understandable. But until I found my voice, I knew I wasn't reaching everyone I was hoping to. I'm glad to hear you want more!!

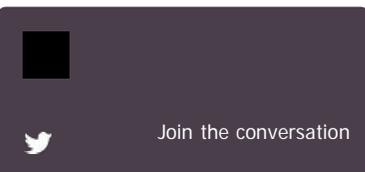
* Is it different to stand on the stage with Pop/Rock material than New Age music? Is there another kind of connection with the audience?

Peter: Yes! And I'm still getting used to that. To actually open your mouth and sing is a VERY different experience. And, honestly, I don't really think of myself as a singer any more than I consider myself a pianist. I realize that may sound strange, but I do the things I do to get what's inside out. So I execute the tasks as needed (sounds a little odd – but what I mean is, I'm not particularly great at playing – but I know what to do to produce the sound I want). So to be in front of an audience and sing something I've crafted in the studio by myself is very different... I'm slowly getting used to it!



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Gold Star,
Staring at the Sun,
Imaginary Kingdom



* Many were surprised when jazz drummer Jack DeJohnette recently won a Grammy for best New Age Album for his release Peace Time (see for instance this article) Is the future of New Age music in the hands of established Jazz, Classical and Pop artists? Or do the thousands of small, Internet-based artists stand a chance in the serious music business?

Peter: I think the future is in the small artists. There is great music being made on a scale unheard of before – because the technology is in the hands of everyone. This makes for a lot of not so great music too! As soon as things like recommendation engines and other tools that help separate the signal from the noise really get refined, we will start to hear some amazing music coming out of the bedroom studios of the world.

* What is your current music project?

Peter: Aside from my most recent release, Imaginary Kingdom, I am collaborating with Akon (now that's a crazy pairing!) on a song about human trafficking that we will perform in the General Assembly of the UN later this month. That track will be released on March 25th.

* Thank you for the interview, Peter! I urge everyone to check out Itheresomethingicando.com, and support your project.



Peter Buffett and Akon

Read Peter Buffett's discography here. Also be sure to take a look at his website.

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Kyle Bailey says:

July 23, 2010 at 9:30 am

i always listen to instrumental music whenever i want to relax.,”

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Interview with Clifford White

Published May 14, 2010 | By BT Fasmer

NewAgeMusic.nu & NewAgeMusicWorld.Com is proud to present an exclusive interview with new age music legend Clifford White. In this interview he talks about everything from Ascension (1985) to the upcoming album Atlantis - and tells a [few secrets too!](#)

John P. Olsen: Take us back to 1985 when you were 17 years old. Ascension began your journey as a leading composer and producer of the primordial UK New Age genre, with Ascension selling tens of thousands of copies worldwide to become the strong foundation to your music career. What is the reason you are so committed to the New Age genre Clifford, and have you ever considered producing music in more popular genres?

Clifford White: Although it was by no means traumatic, I did not have a particularly easy childhood, and by the age of 14 I had developed insecurities and fears which I found I could escape from by creating simple music on the piano, or by using various home keyboards and other musical instruments. Many years later, upon reading Mike Oldfield's biography 'Changeling' I was very moved to hear that he had suffered from similar problems in his youth, and had in fact written Tubular Bells for much the same reason i.e. to escape from a world of fear into a space where the healing power of music could help him in releasing and resolving his feelings - in effect a form of musical catharsis.



My first album Ascension was written in a comparable frame of mind, and it is quite telling that it went on to have such an impact upon people's emotional wellbeing. I am quite positive now that music influences the mind, body and soul in the most profound ways, and that for this reason my commitment to it abides. With Ascension boosting my musical confidence, I went on to produce a further 7 albums over a period of 10 years (1985 to 1995) in a variety of styles and I will continue to be committed to developing and promoting this type of music in the future, within whichever genre it appears.

I am quite positive now that music influences the mind, body and soul in the most profound ways, and that for this reason my commitment to it abides.

Clifford White

John: I read in your biography at NewWorldMusic.Com, where your solo albums began receiving much press in the U.K. and were described as "Britain's foremost exponent of New Age Rock" and you, (Clifford White) were even listed next to the iconic Rock band, The Who in Collin's book The Best of Rock. What is the story behind this statement and the early events during the time period?

Clifford: Well, the 'Best of Rock' review was actually a bit of a joke. I mean, who actually creates 'New Age Rock' - isn't that a bit of a misnomer? In actual fact, it was a well known pop journalist called Alan Clayson that coined the term when he was asked to compile the 'Best of Rock' book. I knew Alan at the time, although I was very flattered that he wanted to include me. Imagine my surprise when I found myself next to The Who. Nice.

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John: You were the presiding founder of the UK New Age Music Association (NAMA) with 40 top artists including James Asher, Kevin Kendle, Asha Quinn, and Tim Wheeler. What was the mission of NAMA as a whole, and were there some ideas formulated that have evolved into what we find in today's New Age genre?

Clifford: Yes there is, and in many ways, my original desires and intentions for NAMA have been spectacularly resurrected with the resounding success of the New Age Music Network: Newagemusicnetwork.ning.com - an online social network with over 500 members. Both then and now, I continue to believe that artists and companies can work together to nurture and support the new age music genre and that, in perhaps our more technologically refined era, social networks such as these provide excellent environments from within which many useful discussions develop and contacts are made.

It is however unfortunate that, just as in the early days of NAMA, there is still a certain degree of exploitation going on (not mentioning any names) but I suppose this is to be expected in any industry, perhaps especially within music. I just wish people would see the logic in working together in teams to a greater extent. I believe our culture suffers greatly from excessive individualism and self interest, and what seems to have become an instinctive cynicism towards collaboration and group support - almost paranoia in some instances. It is therefore refreshing to meet individuals such as yourselves who, quite obviously, have nothing but positive intentions and goodwill as an agenda.

B. T. Fasmer: Please tell us a little about Sanctuary Studio at St Albans. From the pictures on your page, it looks impressive. Do you use mostly DAWs, or hardware synths - or both?



Clifford: Sanctuary is the current name of my recording studio in St Albans. I set the studio up in 2008 and it is my most ambitious studio to date, certainly in terms of space and creative freedom. Our studio has a dedicated sound booth for musicians and singers to perform, a control room and kitchen plus an office area. It was the realization of a 20 year dream to setup this studio and I am truly grateful and thankful to have achieved it. The only trick is finding enough time to spend in it!

On the music technology side I, like so many other producers in our current electronic era, use computers almost exclusively in the process of creating music. I have, over the past 10 years or so, built up a huge sample library of instruments, sounds and effects, which, combined with the software DAW I use - which is called Muzys - accounts for about 99% of my current music output. I do have a traditional 'vintage' analogue synthesizer - the Novation Supernova II Pro X, which is truly a beast of a machine - probably the greatest synthesizer ever made in terms of power and flexibility. Unfortunately however, it does not

often see the light of day, as it is so much quicker and simpler to layer all of my music directly on the computer. However, when a special timbre or effect is called for, the Novation is there.

I also have a small selection of 'virtual' synthesizers (VST's) which I enjoy using, including Arturia's FM7, the excellent Yamaha DX7 emulation, which I used extensively on Ascension II. The original Ascension album featured the DX7 quite heavily and so it was truly great to revisit those old sounds in the new album. The freeware Synth1 plugin is also great, with a lovely silky sound, and I have a selection of other freeware VST's that I use for other purposes, although like I said, raw instrument samples and effects are my usual elements of choice as they offer more control of the overall sound and dynamic than the virtual instruments. I have little else that I directly use for my own album productions, although I do have a Behringer MX9000 48 channel mixer and a Mackie HDR24/96 hard disk recorder, which tends to be used mostly by visiting musicians and during improvised and 'live' studio sessions. I can directly transfer recordings made on the hard disk recorder to my music PC, importing them into my Muzys DAW as samples which I can then layer into my music, but I have hardly done much of that yet to be honest. I have so much of my own material built up in Muzys now that I suspect I will have enough to keep me going for another 5 or 6 albums at least!

Imagine my surprise when I found myself next to The Who. **Nice.**

Clifford White

John: During the past 25 years of your New Age music career you have used genre influences in Ambient, Epic, Latin, Jazz, Tropical, and even Classical. What determines the varying influence in each album you produce Clifford?

Clifford White: I love all those genres of music and I am always looking for an excuse to create albums that contain elements of those styles mixed together into the general album concept. Also, I like to try and avoid repeating myself and so the aim of making each new album different from the one that has preceded it really appeals to me. The way I see it, the whole concept of an album seems to be an entity in it's own right, with it's own style, mood and flavor, and once it is finished, it should appear to be a completed work, like a book or a film, and one really doesn't want to mess with it, add to it, or detract from it with further musings which might simply repeat ideas present in the original work.

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I tend to approach the production of an album with this in mind, and I try to pour as many relevant ideas into the same pot as possible, never to be used again. As the album gets further underway, the various track ideas tend to link together, much like chapters in a story, and after a while it becomes self-evident what is working and what is not, in context of the whole. Of course, it is usually nowhere near as easy as it sounds and believe me, I have certainly labored long and hard on tracks which are (unfortunately) later thrown out for not meeting the general concept, style or criteria for the album as a whole. In the end, I try to make the final result as complete and as cohesive a work as I possibly can.

John: Do you feel the success of your projects are primarily the result of simple hard work or more from your creative imagination? Or what is the primary reason you have been so successful the past 25 years?

Clifford: You know the old saying that goes 'one percent inspiration and 99 percent perspiration'? Well, for me it's more like 15% inspiration, 85% perspiration, but that is still a lot of work! I find that the initial ideas for a track or a collection of tracks tend to occur quite quickly – in the heat of the moment – and this usually results in a collection of strong core ideas. After repeated listening, these ideas seem to become further refined in my own mind – almost as if the process of hearing a piece of music days or weeks later from it's creation somehow changes it, making it more 'real' and familiar. It's very strange. In any event these ideas, usually in the form of short instrumental loops or arrangements, start to shine through in their own ways, suggesting further developments that could be possible. I tend to wait this process out until I am really 'chomping at the bit' to get into the studio to work on a piece. When the urge gets too great, that's when I unleash myself into the studio and get working. Thus begins the 85% perspiration! A huge amount of effort goes into the process as I am very fussy and critical about my music tracks. They have to stand the test of time, yet sound fresh and new. That's not an easy thing to sustain when you have already heard them 100 times!



John: You have your current 2010 Ascension II – The Healing Touch and plan to release another project later this year. Is this next album going to resemble more of an Ambient influence like Ascension II or more resemblance to your Epic Gods of Olympus?

Clifford: I'll tell you a little secret: I have a 5 year plan to release two albums a year until 2015! Believe it or not, I already have more than enough material to achieve this – it really depends on how much time I will actually get to spend in the studio. With the first in this series – Ascension II – already released, the next album due out later this year will either be Atlantis – which will be another epic production similar to the The Gods Of Olympus – or an album currently entitled The Beach, which will sound a little similar to my past albums The Lifespring or Twilight Paradise with that slightly jazzy, 'sun-drenched' tropical vibe.

I'll tell you a little secret:

I have a 5 year plan to release two albums a year until 2015!

Clifford White

For 2011 I want to tackle two 'Oxygene / Equinoxe' type albums that I already have a great deal of material for. I have always loved the textures and moods Jean-Michel Jarre discovered whilst creating his early albums and have for a long-time wished he would revisit that sound. Unfortunately he did not, not even (to my ears) on his Oxygene sequel. I certainly would like to have a go! Following that I have a 2012 themed album planned (no big surprise there perhaps), and a sequel to The Beach, again for which I already have many track ideas. A couple more albums will follow and then as 2015 opens I will round the whole lot off with Ascension III, which will be the 30th anniversary of the original Ascension and make 20 albums in total. It will be very interesting to read this interview in a few years time to see if anything worked out according to my plan. After that – who knows...?

B. T.: You have already told us a little about the Atlantis project. Is there anything more you would like to add?

Clifford: Atlantis will hopefully be completed by around August/September 2010 and released shortly thereafter. The title is a little misleading as, although the album has watery overtones, it is rather more upbeat and rhythmic than you might expect. Its closest comparison would probably be my 2009 album The Gods Of Olympus, at least in terms of its cinematic style and mood. I am quite pleased with what I have completed so far and like GODS, the album will have plenty of tracks to enjoy – at present around 12 – in a variety of styles and moods.

I am thinking of it as a kind of sequel to GODS, and there are certain



similarities, perhaps not unsurprising as – from a mythological point of view – The Atlanteans and the Olympians are not-too-distantly related to each other.

B. T.: You are also an expert in web design, multimedia and video. As everyone knows, the internet has been a massive challenge for the music business – but don't you agree that it has been mostly positive for

a niche genre like new age music? Or?

Clifford: Overall I would say yes, considering that the Internet is such a fantastic medium for communication between musicians, producers and composers and a superb tool for music promotion and publicity that it has served 'New Age Music' extremely well in this regard. The flip-side however is that there is now so much music out there that it is impossible to find the good stuff!

I myself spend hours and hours listening to new artists, or past artists I had never heard of before, and much of it is not wildly original, not very satisfying. Don't get me wrong, I do occasionally find some great music, such as Australis or David Wahler, but these are often exceptions from the norm. Blogs such as your own at NewAgeMusic.nu are fantastic ways to discover new music, although I must admit really that I find a great deal of New Age/Electronic/Ambient/Chillout music a little dull, although I always live in hope of discovering better works in progress. I certainly feel that the Internet provides for great potential in the promotion of this musical genre, and in fact I myself setup a website to attempt this last year called the New Age Music News which is going from strength to strength. **So the future looks positive!**

Visit CliffordWhite.co.uk!

Photographs by Jon Warren – Picture Copyright Clifford White Posted

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Response to *Interview with Clifford White*

alx says:

August 9, 2010 at 11:08 pm



Thank you for a very interesting and informative interview with Clifford White. New Age music has the power to help people find their way in life and to develop an inner spiritual healing process leading to a more relaxed state of mind.

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Interview with Colin O'Donohoe

Published April 23, 2009 | By John P. Olsen

NewAgeMusic.nu has interviewed Colin O'Donohoe about his past and current music projects. Here you'll also get [exclusive information](#) about his upcoming album Lyrical Sutras. If you are not familiar with Colin's music, please scroll down to the bottom for a short presentation of his work. The interview is done by John P. Olsen, who also reviewed Colin's Songs of the Saints album.

John P. Olsen: Your current project is the **Pangea Ensemble** which includes persons and their musical influences from around the world. Can you tell us a little about the musicians in the Pangea Ensemble, like where they live, and what instruments will be used?

Colin O'Donohoe: We strive to reconnect people from around the planet with our undeniable universal language of music. Our musicians are as diverse as the planet itself and they come from most of our fine continents. They now all live in or near Phoenix. The best way for people to know more about the group is to visit the site, it says far more than I can.

John: On New Age Stars radio we regularly play tracks from The Songs of the Saints album, and I have noticed most song titles describe through song lyrics, stories about historic saints, and have wondered where or how the idea for songs about saints originated?

Colin: First, Thank you very much! I'm really glad that you play my music, you obviously have incredibly great taste! The origins have been swirling in my mind for many years. In 2006 I began seriously digging into the keyboard to create some ideas for the music. I started doing some loose sketches of song and lyric ideas. I began reading much more about the saints. I wanted to do my utmost to deliver a unique look into the lives and stories of these saints.

The result obviously became a collection of songs that are united in theme of content but not in musical style. As I concentrated on each saint I began writing in several different styles. My priority was to make the music reflect the saint and not make each piece dependent on the last.

John: Your music is truly diverse by having so many music genres intertwined that readers might like to know how you conceived such a broad range of musical influences, and where do you first get your inspiration for such a broad expression in your music?

Colin: I have an insatiable curiosity, and I love music! I love performing and learning as many new styles of music as possible. Over the past 18 years I've sought out masters in various genres to help me better understand many styles of music. In addition to this I love reading. I guess that this combination of things lead to my imagination creating different worlds for different saints.

To create the music I would read about the saints and then just jam on a keyboard for a little while. This process took several months. After I felt comfortable with the material I decided to get serious and really do my best to construct the songs.

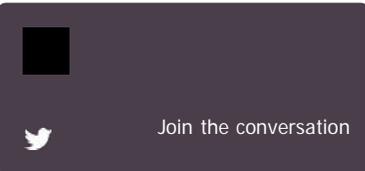
I also like to keep myself excited by doing several different things. So, while writing a classical piece I might shift to the turn table and see what I could add to a completely different song. It kept it all fresh in my mind.

John: Can you tell us a little more about the Chinese book of poetry Shi Jing and how that translates into musical inspiration?



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Colin: I've always been fascinated with Ancient philosophy from around the world. When I saw the Shi Jing mentioned in The Analects by Confucius I knew I had to read it. It is a collection of poems or odes which were songs at one point. I couldn't find any music written down so I thought I do my best to add music to the poetry. I think the thing that absolutely struck me the most about that book Shi Jing is how timeless the poems are. It made me truly feel that people regardless of time or ethnicity are very similar.

John: The big question everyone wants to know, is the time frame of when your next album release is expected to be available for purchase, and will the album be as diverse and be theme oriented material in relation to Songs of the Saints?

Colin: Why thank you for asking! **You can read it here first! My next album Lyrical Sutra's official release date is scheduled for 6/1/2009.**

As for the material. It is my first time delving into the world of electronic music whole heartedly. The songs are broken into three sections:

- I. Meditation
 1. Heart Sutra
 2. Diamond Sutra
 3. Eight Fold Noble Path Sutra
 4. Enlightenment Sutra
- II. Prayer
 5. Lotus Sutra
 6. Pure land Sutra
 7. Taking Refuge
 8. Amitabha Sutra
- III. Awaken
 9. A Bodhisattva's Vows
 10. Triple Gem Sutra
 11. The Sutra in 42 Sections
 12. Golden Light Sutra



Meditation: is four mid tempo pieces
Prayer: four slower new age style pieces
Awaken: four uptempo dance style pieces

The idea of the album is to relax you, allow you to become at peace, and then reinvigorate you and get you feeling better than when you first began to listen to it. The idea of the album comes from a few of the many Buddhist Sutra's which are the teachings of the Buddha.

John: Mr. O'Donohoe, I do thank you for your time, is there anything you wish to tell our readers concerning your commitment to bring people of the world closer together through music?

Colin: I just want to thank you again for the pleasure of the interview process. I hope that your audience loves my work and will be eager to listen to Lyrical Sutra's in June.

Websites:

Donohoemusic.com Colin says: My personal website which features my albums and book. It will also feature my new album when it comes out this June "Lyrical Sutra's" (you're the first to print this, it is a New Age Star exclusive)

Pangeanorchestra.com Colin says: My new orchestra. It is the first of its kind that I know of where it combines instruments from around the world

Myspace.com/donohoe2 Colin says: pretty self explanatory. I try to keep it updated.

On Twitter Colin's user name is PangeanOrch

Here is a list of Colin's past and current positions related to orchestral music:

- 2008-present: Artistic Director for Pangean Orchestra in Phoenix AZ.
- 2006-present: Professional recording artist.
- 2008: Published Author of Odd Meters for Drum Set
- 2004-2006: Executive/Artistic Director for New Moon Orchestra Pittsburgh PA
- 2003-2004: Percussionist with the Phoenix Chinese Orchestra

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Interview with Dan Kennedy

Published April 23, 2009 | By BT Fasmer

NewAgeMusic.nu has had the pleasure of interviewing Dan Kennedy about his album Lantern;

* How was it for an up-and-coming new age artist to work with the master himself, Will Ackerman?

Dan: I was nervous at first entering Will's Imaginary Road Studios and walking past the gold records and all, but Will is such a professional that he allowed me to work and just play my best. Susan had some sandwiches and brownies for us, and things were quite relaxed after that. Will also has an outrageous sense of humor which I appreciated — sessions are long and he — and his engineer Corin Nelsen — both know how to keep things loose and fun, without losing site of the fact that they are creating a product whose audiophile sound compares to any record coming out of New York or L.A.



* Did you compose more than 4 songs to Lantern, some who didn't make the cut?

Dan: Yes, there was a fifth piece I gave Will originally on the demo tape which he passed on, a kind of tempo-shifting, jazzier number. But Will definitely has opinions, and looking back, I was glad I trusted those opinions. Closer to the recording dates Will asked me if I had a ballad, and I chose one on an old demo tape from 1985, and it became the tragic tune Ballad

* Please describe your creative process.

Dan: I start by improvising at the piano, and I am really just playing for fun, playing what I would like to hear. I don't feel I have any control over the original musical ideas, or kernels, as I call them. I remember my favorites of these, then develop them from time to time. I will have the sections of a piece planned out ahead of time, but every performance will contain variation. I like to improvise on concerts, too, so no version of one of these "structured improvisations" is ever the same. On Cycle, there is a long section at the end where I veered off and created this whole new extremely quiet part — and Will just let the tape roll. It is probably my favorite moment of mine on the record.



* Do you plan to be an independent artist, or will you sign a record contract?

Dan: I certainly have enough material saved up to make a full-length, but before anyone will offer me a contract an independent artist such as myself has to "do the footwork:" build up a fan base, and play out. I would like to be signed someday for help with distribution, marketing, concert promotion, etc.

* What now? What is the next big project?

Dan: Probably to get the lawn mowed (laughs)! We live on an acre and three quarters out in the country in Amherst, Massachusetts, USA, and that is a big job! But more to your question, the next big project in music is really ongoing: I am giving concerts locally, getting the word out, because I feel my music is special in that it flows from the new age tradition, but has other elements such as blues and rock, seeping into it. There are so many variables in today's music business; I feel that making good, honest music is all you can do, and that that is true success.

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Album Review: Deep Projects – Deep Brasil »

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Interview with Harlan Mark Vale

Published April 23, 2009 | By BT Fasmer

NewAgeMusic.nu has interviewed Harlan Mark Vale about his new album Bright Angel.

* You have had a lot of experience with other instruments than the piano. Please describe your "return" to the piano and the creation of Bright Angel.

Harlan: I am a percussionist. I play drums, synthesizer and piano. My formal musical training was in 20th Century Composition, Electronic Music and Audio Engineering at The Evergreen State College. There I immersed myself in the electronic creation of sound fundamentals using the Buchla 200/300 modular synthesizer in their electronic music studios. Studying the techniques of the avant garde textural sonorities I became familiar with these abstract and experimental elements at the boundary of "music". At the same time I was still performing solo improvised piano concerts as I had done since grade school.

After performing at my church last year I was asked if I had a piano CD. It suddenly dawned on me that I hadn't done a piano recording since 1978. At the same time I had started a new job working for the Grand Canyon Railway as a passenger service attendant. During my lunch hour I would go up to the El Tovar hotel and play piano. Over a few months I developed a body of work which is now known as the Bright Angel CD.

My original intention was to create a contemporary interpretation of the Grand Canyon but after capturing the magnitude of grandeur associated with this seventh natural wonder of the world it became something much more than that. So not only were some of these compositions titled after geological features within the Grand Canyon, they were outward representations of the Divine creativity inherent in all of us, that is the connection to the Source. So my task as a performer is to tap into the Source, get out of the way and let the expression of "automatic writing" come forth unincumbered. My joy is to experience it enfolding before me.

I also believe that with the piano, it is a voice with which the public is comfortable. After composing and performing electronic music for decades, with well over a hundred albums in my discography, none of them has ever come close to the positive response that I have had with Bright Angel.

* You have also played improvisational jazz. Do you think this affects the way you work with music?

Harlan: Unquestionably. Working within the free jazz improvisation paradigm is and had been very exhilarating for me. Working with some of the finest musicians in the Pacific Northwest has encouraged that immensely. I performed with The New Art Orchestra from Seattle in the mid 1980s. This was a collection of players of all backgrounds and proficiency levels ranging from street musicians to soloists in the Seattle Symphony. With 17 – 25 performers we would take the stage and completely improvise the entire show. When it didn't work it was a chaotic dog pile of sound, however when it did work, it was truly magical.

The secret was in the "listening" and the "placement" of your sonic contribution to the collective soundscape. I believe that this is ear / heart / spirit / hand training at it's finest. I still utilize this technique in everything I do, whether it's as a soloist or with an ensemble.



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My approach to the piano is one of a percussionist that uses the piano as a polyphonic harmonic cannon. I use the piano keyboard as a controller to sound notes in any way or order, rather than using traditional piano techniques.

* According to your homepage, the album title Bright Angel came about after spending time at the Grand Canyon. How much of your musical inspiration comes from nature?

Harlan: Some of my first meaningful spiritual moments came from natural beauty. Naturalism is a common starting point for people to begin to appreciate the wonders of creation. My music is a documentation of my own personal growth. And each composition is a signpost of that journey up to the present time. Like I said earlier, Bright Angel is not only a peak in the middle of the Grand Canyon, for me it is a metaphor for that Divine spark inside of us that pulls us toward the ineffable; our spiritual evolution, and reminds us where we came from and why we are here.

* Dr. David Hawkins' consciousness scale sounds very interesting. Tell us about Bright Angel's healing qualities.

Harlan: Dr. David R Hawkins, M.D., Ph.D. is an internationally renowned psychiatrist, physician, researcher, and pioneer in the fields of consciousness research and spirituality. He writes and teaches from the unique perspective of an experienced clinician, scientist, and mystic and is devoted to the spiritual evolution of mankind. Over 250,000 kinesiological calibrations spanning 30 years of multiple research studies conducted by The Institute for Spiritual Research, Inc., have defined a range of values corresponding to well-recognized attitudes and emotions. These values can also be obtained from signatures, hand writing, art work and music and the like, that are infused with the vibrational content of the person created it.

Dr. Hawkins' book, Power vs. Force provides a detailed explanation of this consciousness scale. Using this scale, we have calibrated Bright Angel at well over 700, which is the level of enlightenment or pure consciousness. People we have muscle tested using Bright Angel always test stronger, both while the music is playing and afterward for a period of time. I would encourage people to test it for themselves and email me their results to hmv@harlanmarkvale.com.

Another interesting thing is that I test significantly lower when I'm not creating music and I test stronger when I am.

Dr. Hawkins publications can be found at: www.veritaspub.com

* To record piano is not easy, but the sound on Bright Angel is very good. Please tell about the the people and equipment involved.

Harlan: The music that I wanted to capture for the Bright Angel project has a lot of space in it. Most of the "activity" occurs after the notes have been sounded; a sympathetic harmonic interaction within the strings and around the harp. Some of these wave forms have wavelengths that are longer than the length of the piano itself. Instead of making a recording in a traditional way that mics the hammers over the strings that yield a percussive type of sound, I chose to blend a quadraphonic field of two sets of stereo images; one set close to the piano, over the sound holes of the harp for the primary image, and the other away and under the piano for a reflective and distant stereo image. The result is a wide image field with lots of natural movement to it.

For the primary stereo field microphones I chose a Mojave Audio MA-200 large diaphragm tube condenser mic for the bass strings and a Neumann TLM-103 transformerless condenser mic based on the U-87 Capsule for the treble strings. For the distant stereo image microphones I chose the Grundig GDSM 211. It is hand made in Germany and uses a bi-natural stereo X/Y configuration. For auxiliary preamps I used a True Systems P-Solo and a Aphex 107 Tubessence. These were fed directly into the board of a Roland VS-2480 digital workstation.

I interviewed several engineers here in Prescott, Arizona and decided upon Mark Echard of Heavenly Sound Studio (928.899.0243 <http://www.heavenlysoundstudio.com/>) to help me with a remote recording at The Yavapai College Performance Hall. I coordinated with the theater manager to rent the hall the day after the Vienna Christmas Orchestra performed. They had the 1923 Model D Steinway & Sons grand piano freshly tuned and left it in the middle of the stage for us. So we came in the next day and recorded about 2 hours of material in under 4 hours; out of which the Bright Angel CD was born.

* What is your opinion on the music industry today? Will you continue as an unsigned artist, or will you sign a record deal?

Harlan: The music industry has changed and expanded since I began my solo career in 1974, back in the 'analog' days. In one way the mainstream industry, and it's 5 headed record label machine, has compromised the creative artist into a clone of the industry idea of what the public wants. On the other hand there have been quite a few artists over the years that have successfully navigated these waters, establishing new creative ways to do music and business. They have paved the way for others to follow.

For years I produced my music under my own independent label. With the advancement of the internet it is much easier to produce,



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publish and distribute my work using this vehicle. The electronic press kit for marketing, booking gigs and other details of production, is a wonderful thing. I am in direct contact with the people I need to communicate with almost instantaneously, just like you. Instead of cold calls, 'shmoozing' with club owners and wondering for months if my album made it to the desk or the trash can with no response, I have the opportunity to address my intended market directly. This is very efficient and I am very grateful for it.

As far as any record deal goes, I am open if the right offer comes my way.

* Thank you very much for your time. Keep creating great music!

Harlan: It is my great pleasure. I honor you and thank you for this opportunity. Namaste.

Photos of Harlan Mark Vale by Kathreen Drager.

Posted in Interviews | Tagged Harlan Mark Vale

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Interview with Jillian Goldin Aversa

Published April 23, 2009 | By BT Fasmer

BT Fasmer (*) of NewAgeMusic.nu has interviewed Jillian Goldin about her debut album *Origins* and the Christmas EP *Through Sand and Snow*.

* To create a Christmas album is something different from a normal album. Please describe the process. Was it hard to choose which songs to record?

Jillian: Indeed, it was difficult to narrow down the list! I knew that I wanted to try my hand at several traditional carols, but I also thought it would be refreshing to include arrangements of a couple of lesser known pieces – namely *Walking In the Air* from the wonderful animated film *The Snowman*, and the Appalachian spiritual *I Wonder As I Wander*.

Possibly the greatest challenge was figuring out which songs had the potential to work with my original vision: a magical nighttime journey through the wilderness, on Christmas Eve. I was wary of selecting any traditionally happy sounding carols in major keys... But Andrew and I were overjoyed when we started finding inspiration for our arrangement of *Silent Night*. Everything had to have a certain ancient, ethereal quality.

* The album is only 24 minutes long (23:48 to be precise). Would the album, or EP, have been longer if you had more time to work with it?

Jillian: It's funny you should ask, because my answer may surprise you: no. I knew that there would not be time for a full length album before the holiday season... So with that in mind, I tried to think of ways I could pull off an EP as a special and cohesive project, rather than a collection of songs thrown together as an afterthought. It was quite fun watching the album take shape! Every sound and musical idea was meticulously planned in order to serve the greater whole, since I knew it would have to be short and sweet.

Don't be surprised if you see a new holiday album from me in the future, however! There are so many great carols that I would love to get my hands on... and perhaps I'll write a few original wintry pieces as well.

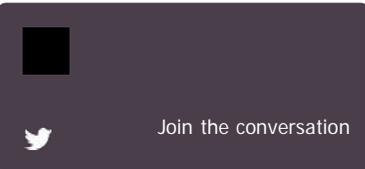
* After listening to the results of your recent *Origins* Remix Contest (samples under *Media* on *Jillianguardin.com*), I must say that it was highly successful. How was it to have other artists working with your material?

Jillian: I was blown away by the quality of work submitted to the contest. Hearing my own songs arranged in such original and interesting ways was more delightful than I could have imagined at the outset. I will definitely, definitely have more remixing competitions in the future!



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* Today music production is all about computers and sequencers. I understand that you do a lot of the production yourself. Do you enjoy the technical aspects of music creation?

Jillian: It's sort of a love-hate relationship. Choosing samples, mixing, and mastering is *incredibly* tedious when you are as picky as me, because part of what makes this kind of music sparkle is the production itself. I always have a very specific vision in mind, but translating that into sound is usually a tiring process of trial and error. That's why I am thankful to have the help of my fiance, Andrew (a.k.a. zircon): he is masterful!

* What can your fans expect from 2009? Do you have a plan for a new album?

Jillian: I hope to release another full length album by the end of 2009, but I haven't arrived on a concept just yet. Anyone interested in following my progress may want to join the mailing list at Jilliangoldin.com, as I send out monthly updates with song previous and other project announcements.

* Thank you, Jillian. Best of luck with the new album, and have a great Christmas!

You can sample and buy Jillian's albums, *Origins* and *Thorough Sand and Snow*, on CDBaby.

Read our *Through Sand and Snow* review here. Artwork by Daniel Kvasznicza.

Posted in Interviews, Vocal | Tagged Jillian Aversa

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Interview with Joel Kanning

Published October 23, 2009 | By BT Fasmer

NewAgeMusic.nu is proud to present an interview with rising new age star Joel Kanning, who recently released the album Ubiquitous Frequency Oscillation (UFO). Read BT Fasmer's review of it here.

BT Fasmer: Welcome Joel Kanning! Nice to have you with us. Please start by telling a bit about yourself, and your musical background. I hear that you have been a drummer?

Joel Kanning: Thank you very much for having me!
Yes, I actually started on the drums when I was nine years old. I come from a musically rich and diverse family. My dad, brothers, cousins, uncles and aunts – everyone plays an instrument of some sort (acoustic guitars, electric guitars, bass, banjo, mandolin, banjo, violin/fiddle, piano, etc). So there was always music happening in our house, or at family gatherings.

When I was nine, I was trying to decide whether I wanted to play the electric violin (because I thought they looked so cool!), or the drums. At that time, one of my brothers was giving guitar lessons down at the local music shop. One day he got an old drum kit as payment for guitar lessons, and he gave them to me. That was it. I would practice every day after school, listening to the radio through headphones, and playing along on the drums. I essentially learned on my own, listening to classic rock and 70's & 80's pop music and trying to work out all the fills and tricky bits. Later on, my cousin (who played guitar) and I spent most of our teenage years jamming, recording, and learning old Van Halen, Led Zeppelin, Deep Purple, Hendrix – you know, all the good stuff 🗣️ It wasn't until after my high school years that I began experimenting more with guitars and keyboards, and recording my own ideas.



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BT: What was your first encounter with the New Age/ Ambient/Electronic genre? According to your web page, your influences are Enigma, Achillea, Jens Gad, Deep Forest, and Delerium. Was it these artists that inspired you to start composing music?

Joel: My oldest brother listened to a lot of Alan Parson's Project, ELO, Genesis, Tangerine Dream, etc, while I was growing up and I believe that music, on a subconscious level, influenced me to some degree – although I was mostly interested in rock music at the time. But the pivotal moment was experiencing Enigma MCMXC a.D. for the first time, because it literally changed my musical direction. Up to that point I had been drumming in various bands and was determined to "make it" as a rock-and-roll drummer. But when I heard this Enigma music, my entire perception of music changed.

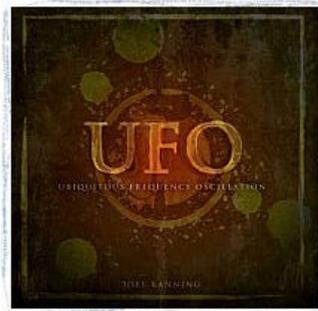
You see as a child, I would perform these fantastical music concerts inside of my mind as I



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cleaned my room or did my chores. There was never any recognizable melody, or anything that I could write down or play back for anyone – it was just this wonderful, imaginary, musical landscape (of course, there were always these huge drum solos at the end!). The thing I remember most about it was this amazing, other-worldly feeling that it gave me. Hearing Enigma for the first time was like rediscovering that same feeling – only it was real music on a cassette tape, and I could rewind it and experience it again, and again. Suddenly there was a much deeper purpose for me in music, and I knew I needed to create something that moved me in that same

way. Around that same time I discovered Deep Forest, and later Jens Gad, Achillea, Delerium, etc, and these all were a huge inspiration to me as well.

BT: Your new album, Ubiquitous Frequency Oscillation (UFO), is out now. It is eight years since your previous release (Nobis). Describe the process behind the new album. Have you done the mastering yourself?

Joel: I started writing material for UFO about 3 years ago. Most songs started out either by messing around with drum samples & loops and creating a rhythmic bed, or by playing with a synth of some sort and creating a musical bed, and then the songs would just evolve from there. I'm a firm believer that all music exists on some sort of ethereal plane, and is accessible to anyone at any time. So when I'm in the studio messing around with synths, and samples, and so on – I think eventually I reach the proper state of mind to connect with it. Then it's really just a matter of having the time and technical ability to capture it before it's gone!

On the technical side of things, I mix (engineer) as I write. So, as I'm adding new parts and trying different arrangements, I'm also adjusting EQ & compression, adding reverb & delay effects, and adjusting levels on everything – constantly. I like everything to sound great from the start. Obviously as new parts are added and the song begins evolving, so does the mix, and many more adjustments have to be made to allow everything to sit in its own space. The good thing is that I can always "undo" if I end up making a huge mess of it all!

I had been drumming in various bands and was determined to "make it" as a rock-and-roll drummer. But when I heard this Enigma music, my entire perception of music changed.

Joel Kanning

As for the mastering, yes, I did it all myself. Mostly out of necessity, because of how the whole thing was put together. With UFO, the songs are all tied together with transitions fading in and out, and sound effects and so on, so the album is really just like one great big song. If a song didn't sound right in the context of the album, I would have to revisit the mix and make further adjustments until it sounded right to me. Some songs I ended up mixing 20 or 30 times – I mixed "One World" a total of 58 times before I was happy with it! The whole process of creating final mixes took about 6 months. By the time I was finished, most of what would be considered the "sweetening" portion of the mastering process, was already done. All that was really needed at that point was some final EQ enhancement and level adjustments.

BT: Your music is very true to the Enigma/Deep Forest "ethnic fusion" style. Was this your original plan – or did it just happen?

Joel: Well, my first album, "Nobis," was primarily an instrumental new age/electronic album, as were most of my previous compositions. I was always afraid of sounding like a copy-cat, you know? I didn't want people to hear my music and say "Oh look, it's another guy copying Enigma," etc, so I was really just trying to discover my own sound back then. At some point I think I just decided that I'd rather create more of the music that I loved listening to, instead of trying to come up with some new sound that no one else was doing. Once I removed that restriction from myself everything really started flowing nicely. The only rule I have now is that it has to be sincere, it has to move me.

When I was first contemplating the UFO project, I really wanted to create something that felt familiar, yet new and exciting. So obviously the sounds I created and samples I chose to use were meant, to some extent, to harken back to the early spirit of Enigma and Deep Forest. It's hard to explain, but I knew that if I could just connect to that original feeling that brought me to create this music in the first place, I would be on the right track. Kind of like taking some old friends on a new adventure – you don't know where you'll end up, but at least you'll be in good company!

BT: You use a lot of samples in your music. How do you work with samples?

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Joel: I am very abusive to my samples – it's a good thing there isn't karma for sampled sounds! Samples are an integral part of this music, as is the technology for manipulating them. I mean, it's nice to find a great ethnic vocal sample with the right feeling or emotion in the recording. But then there's the matter of getting it to fit the key of the song, and adjusting the rhythm to match the tempo of the track. Sometimes I'll just chop it up and make an entirely new performance. It's the same for drum and percussion loops. There are times when I'll just use them straight, but I usually end up chopping several different loops into pieces, creating a completely new rhythmic bed with all the different pieces. It largely depends on what feels right for the track.

BT: You have been remixing the music of both Michael Cretu/Enigma and Eric Mouquet/Deep Forest. Michael Cretu personally even selected your entry as the 2nd place winner in his Downtown Silence remix competition. How was that – and do you plan to do more remix work in the future?

Joel: It was crazy because at some point in the fall of 2008, I was working on remixes of Eric's tracks, and working on my remix for the Enigma contest – at the same time! It was very surreal to be working with their tracks, and since I had never done remixes before, the whole experience was just a lot of fun. As it turned out, Eric contacted me and said that he really liked what I was doing with my tracks, and that he had actually featured one of my remixes, "Africa Brasil Chuva Remix," on his MySpace page.



Then, a couple months later I was informed that Michael had chosen my remix, "Downtown Silence (Past Lives Mix)," as one of the winners of his contest. It was beyond surreal at that point. To have my own work acknowledged by both of these great artists was a tremendous honor! As a result of some connections I made doing those remixes, I ended up remixing a track for Arman Behdad called "Crimson Skies (Joel Kanning Remix)," which was just released this summer through Bonzai Elemental.

I am quite fond of remixing now, and would welcome any chance to do more of it in the future. For me, remixing provides a wonderful way of understanding song construction from a totally different mindset. This has actually helped me to develop new ways of approaching my own material, including many of the tracks on the new album.

BT: You are an independent artist. Would you consider signing a record deal – or do artists really need a label these days?



Joel: I think it really depends on what your objectives are. It is truly amazing what can be done these days with a laptop and a few hundred dollars-worth of software. The Internet has now become an extremely viable outlet for selling your own music. There really is no better time to be an independent artist than right now.

That being said, if I were approached by a record company that actually believed in my music as much as I do, then yes, I would definitely consider it. I think the chances of successfully reaching the intended audience would be much greater. However, thanks to the wonderful efforts of people like you here at NewAgeMusic.nu, and all the internet radio stations and websites around the world that are introducing people to new music and really getting it out there, I think independent music might just stand a chance .

BT: Thanks for the chat, Joel! We are great fans of you here at .nu, and we recommend all our readers to check out your music. If you are one of the many New Age Stars listeners, you probably already have heard some of his material. Just follow the link in the player to buy his songs on iTunes/Amazon.

And don't forget to check out Joekanning.com – where you can sample the album.

Posted in Interviews |  Tagged Joel Kanning

2 Responses to *Interview with Joel Kanning*

Oceano says:
October 26, 2009 at 1:23 pm



Great Interview 

Reply

Nathalie says:

October 26, 2009 at 2:41 pm



A lot of care, deeply emotional...it's a terrific album !

As a French (!), I'm glad to get the chance to share and enjoy such good music that radio stations (unfortunately) don't play anymore...

Joel Kanning deserves more recognition...He deserves it !

Bravo !

Reply

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Interview with Ken Elkinson

Published April 23, 2009 | By BT Fasmer

BT Fasmer (*) of NewAgeMusic.nu has interviewed Ken Elkinson about his solo piano albums. Read his discography [here](#).

* I have noticed that your music, from *Midnight Conversation* (1997) to the *Cue* (2006), tend to be very positive and uplifting. There almost no melancholy and even the sadness is beautiful (like the song *Beautiful Sadness* on *Cue*). Is it your goal to create music with a positive vibe, or is this something that comes naturally to you?



Ken: I am not sure if I can take credit for that being intentional! I think by nature I am more of a pessimist, which is something I am always trying to change about myself. I think of my four current releases *Revelry* and *Cue* are lighter, and *Opal* and *Midnight Conversation* are more serious – though even there I try not to get that dark. It is funny because right now I am putting the finishing touches on my next original piano CD – and there is one tracks I am wrestling with taking off the CD because it is too heavy. I sent a copy to my first piano teacher when I was five, to have her help make the decision.

*What inspires you? Describe your creative process. Do you write notes, use a computer, etc.?

Ken: I know this may sound hard to believe, but I am not usually inspired directly by anything when I compose. It is not like I write a happy song because my kids were born, or I write a depressing song because I got into a fight with a relative. I usually sit down and come up with a riff or an idea. Sometimes I am able to expand on the idea immediately, sometimes I agonize for months. I record all my "writing" sessions with a mini-disc player, yet I rarely go back and try to revive anything I have not turned into a complete song. I don't use my computer at all in terms of my piano writing, but I do play around with creating some electronic music using loops. That stuff has not seen the light of day, as I am so busy with my piano music, I never have time to finish anything else. However after I release my next original CD I am planning on a break from piano to do other types of music.

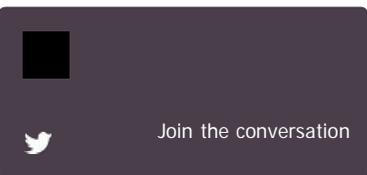
* This year you have released two albums with music composed by others, *Borrowed Tracks* and *Generations of Yuletide*. Still you have a personal touch on each track. How do you make a classical song, like *Eleanor Rigby* or *Send in the Clowns*, "yours"?

Ken: That is a good question, I am not sure. I listen to music pretty much around the clock, and I am always looking for songs to interpret on the piano. I have a pretty good ear, and that combined with all the free chord charts you can find on the internet – gives me a good start. I try to pick songs that have not been done a hundred times – but even then sometimes that is not avoidable if I love the song. What I try to do with the arrangements in general on a cover song is to make the song as different as possible, while still

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being recognizable. I really respect people like Sting who can take a song, change it almost to the point of not knowing what it is, and still have the song come out awesome.

* Your new Christmas album is quite different from most other releases, with a historical selection of songs: it is like a travel in time and geography. Tell us why you choose to do it this way.

Ken: I was a little wary going into recording a Christmas piano CD – as there are about a million of them out there, and a large number of them are pretty boring and repetitive. I am not claiming my CD is like the Beatle's White Album of Christmas music, but I don't think you can call it boring or a re-hash of everything else out there. I got some ideas from friends who are really familiar with the genre of Christmas music, and then I found some sheet music books with a wide range of songs. I tried to find some songs that were fairly obscure. I scoured over the internet and iTunes to see how many versions I could find of some of the lesser known songs I did. I think I succeeded at least partially, as one reviewer who claimed to be the foremost authority on Christmas music in the world said he had never heard of one or two of the songs I picked. In terms of the order, I just decided to put them in chronological order. However, I gave my father-in-law a copy, and he said that he was much more familiar with the newer stuff at the end. In hindsight, perhaps I should have gone in reverse order. Maybe when I sell out of this printing, I will go back and change it up!



* To record piano is not easy. What kind of equipment do you use? Have you received any help in the studio?

Ken: I recorded my first CD *Midnight Conversation* on a Steinway. I remember sending a copy to one of my solo piano contemporaries, someone who I really liked their music. He wrote back and asked my CD was recorded on a keyboard, because he thought the sound was not that good. I said from that day forward, there would never be that question again. I discovered Bösendorfer pianos and it was love at first play. The two affordable studios in North America that had Bösendorfers were in Saskatchewan and West Palm Beach. I hate cold weather (sorry Norway!), and I have a grandmother who lives in Florida, so I chose that. I did my next 4 CDs on that Bösendorfer with Neumann mics and very little effects. That piano does not really need much. It is a mother/son team who ran the studio, and both are amazing musicians and freaks for good sound. In the middle of recording my upcoming CD, the mother and son went their separate ways, and the mom moved the piano to New York City. I was a little nervous because the piano went from being in this immaculate studio to a living room that was not even sound proofed. The newer songs turned out fine, though you may faintly be able to hear a dog barking in the background. Just kidding! However, I did my Christmas CD on a Yamaha out here in LA, as with 1 year old twins, it was hard to find the time to get to NYC for a few sessions. The Yamaha also had a good natural sound, which was helped along by Trevor Saddler's mastering. He did a lot of the Narada stuff, and really knows how to get the most out of a piano record.

* You have one track with vocal, *Beautiful Sadness* with Tom Freund. Will there be more vocal on your coming albums?

Ken: I definitely hope so at some point – not on my next piano CD, but maybe after that. I have been plugging away at some vocal tracks for years, but can't seem to finish them. My two biggest challenges have been that I have a terrible voice, and that I am really bad at writing lyrics. Since my first CD, I always want to do a vocal track. I was a big fan of Tom's work, and never thought he would agree to it. He plays with Ben Harper, Jackson Brown, Victoria Williams – all these great people and has amazing albums himself. *Beautiful Sadness* is actually his song, originally done with just guitar and vocals. I re-worked the song for piano, and he just breezed into the studio, did two or three takes and we were done. His timing is so great, he is like the Sinatra of folk/pop/rock. A few other somewhat well known artists have expressed an interest in doing some vocal tracks, so hopefully I can pull that together at some point.

* What kind of music do you like? Do you enjoy new age music in general, or only solo piano?

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Ken: I don't actually listen to that much solo piano, or new age music in general. My kids have a radio in their bedroom, and they listen to the Spa (Relaxation) Channel on Sirius Satellite Radio round the clock. So that is mostly where I am exposed to that type of music. In terms of piano and/or new age artists, I love Keith Jarrett, George Winston, Ludovico Einaudi – maybe a few others. The rest of the time I listen to a huge variety of music – from rock to alternative to bluegrass to rap to Hawaiian to Brazilian samba. Some of my favorite artists are Steely Dan, Bruce Springsteen, Jose Gonzalez, Tori Amos and Sting. I can't stand being without music for even one music, so if I go into a parking garage and my satellite radio goes out, I switch to CDs immediately!

* Thank you for the interview, Ken. Keep creating great music!

Don't forget to visit [Kenelkinson.com](http://kenelkinson.com).

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