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Andrew McKnight

Where This River Runs

FM-1025, CD/tape

Produced by Andrew McKnight
 with Les Thompson

About this Title

Andrew's second CD continues his literate exploration of America's back roads and small towns. Each of the 14 songs is set in a musical style and production that vividly evokes the scenery; the spooky swamp blues of "Chemical Voodoo" set along Cancer Alley on Louisiana's Mississippi Delta, the open Dakota prairies in "A Prairie Wind/Big Sky Town", or the evocative Saturday night dance at the Grange Hall in "Shenandoah Moon". Skillfully produced with original Nitty Gritty Dirt Band member Les Thompson, this album is rich with elegant harmony vocals and exquisite arrangements. Andrew's wry charm, signature acoustic guitar style, and rich warm vocals shine throughout. Guest harmony vocalists include Terri Allard, Laurie Rose Griffith and Tom Prasada-Rao, while regular Falling Mountain friends and family such as Ralph Gordon (bass, cello) and Chas Fowler (pipes, whistles) are also well represented. Other highlights include the *a cappella* title track, the lush "Bargeman", the elegant simplicity of "I Can't Understand the Moon", and the Americana drive of "A Town Called Progress".

The Words of Others

“Pick your favorite poet or balladeer and McKnight will equal them with an Appalachian soul.”
 - *Victory Review*

“Highly listenable and capable of evoking an array of moods.. McKnight’s guitar playing is fabulous as is his vocal delivery -- usually friendly and occasionally spooky.”
 - *Crossroads*

“McKnight brings a distinctive and powerful new voice to the mountains”
 - *Appalachian Voice*

About the Artist

Environmental engineer-turned-songwriter Andrew McKnight is a high energy crowd pleaser for audiences nationwide, from intimate unplugged house concerts to large stages such as the New Artist showcases at the Falcon Ridge, Kerrville and Napa Valley Folk Festivals. Equal parts Shenandoah Valley storyteller and poet blended with ever-present strains of the historian, geographer and naturalist, his rurally-based music reflects an oral history built on the past while firmly musically rooted in the present. Andrew frames his stories and observations in a diverse southern "mountain gumbo" brand of music that mixes folk, blues and bluegrass in one appealing and energetic sound" (*Norwich Bulletin*). His extensive performance resume includes the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games, the Kennedy Center, the Birchmere and Bluebird Cafe, Appalshop Theatre, the Appalachian Arts Festival and Baltimore's blockbuster Artscape "2000 minus 1" Festival as well as listening rooms, festivals, concert halls and coffeehouses across the US. Andrew is also one third of the exciting Appalachian roots music trio Dang Varmints! "His ability to write songs left me with visions of Staines, Mallett, and Gorka, and I found Andrew McKnight to be one of the most exciting new contemporary talents to come along in years." (*Tidewater Friends of Folk Music*).

Discography

FM-1031	<i>Turning Pages</i>	2001, CD only
FM-1025	<i>Where This River Runs</i>	1998, CD/tape
FM-1013	<i>Traveler</i>	1995, CD/tape

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FM-1025, CD/tape, Total Time 53:28

For interviews or other artist relations, please visit the artist page at our website, www.FallingMountain.com, for email links and contact info.

To the DJs: These program notes are designed to make it easier to quickly navigate the track information on this CD. We at Falling Mountain Music appreciate you taking the time to review new material and add it to your library, and we hope you enjoy the music.

PROGRAM NOTES

1/2. A Prairie Wind (0:42)/Big Sky Town (4:17) - uptempo folk/Americana

A song inspired by two lanes, a South Dakota sunset, and lots of room to think. Guitar intro for fun!

Ralph Gordon - upright bass • Frank Gotwals - dobro • AM - vocals, guitar • Tom Prasada-Rao - harmony vocals • Lisa Taylor - drums, harmony vocals

3. Shenandoah Moon (4:49) - folk/country waltz

Seems like the Shenandoah Valley has always been a place to fall in love, and for some, to stay that way

Terri Allard - harmony vocal • Chas Fowler - whistle • Frank Gotwals - dobro • AM - vocals & guitar • Bruce Molsky - fiddle

4. Gypsies (3:03) - medium tempo folk/old country

Southwest Virginia is home to tobacco country and coalfields. A dear friend grew up in one of these small towns, moved to San Francisco for a decade, and ultimately returned home. I believe that gypsies like her are special people, particularly in small towns where being different is difficult.

Jeff Arey - mandolins • Laurie Rose Griffith - harmony vocals • AM-vocals, guitar

5. A Town Called Progress (3:37) - uptempo folk/Americana

With apologies to obsessive patrons of chain stores, particularly the ones that made a fortune on the graves of small town Main Streets.

Jeff Arey - mandolin • Stephanie DeLage - harmony vocals • Ralph Gordon - bass • AM - vocals, guitar • Lisa Taylor - drums

6. Fiddle Tunes From the Hills of Home (3:05) - old-timey/bluegrass

A realization that homesickness comes on in strange ways, and an homage to a familiar and beloved landscape

Jeff Arey - mandolin • AM - vocals, guitar • Karin McKnight - harmony vocals • Bruce Molsky - fiddle • John Rickard - harmony vocals

7. I Can't Understand The Moon (4:22) - spare slow folk/pop

An epiphany for a lifetime spent wanting after things which were just never meant to be mine.

AM - vocals & guitar • Susan Graham White - piano

8. Chemical Voodoo (3:32) - medium tempo minor blues

The night sky along the stretch of Mississippi Delta between Baton Rouge and New Orleans glows an eerie orange from the factory lights in the dense concentration of chemical manufacturing plants known as "Cancer Alley". An active imagination can invent some interesting notions about those blackwater swamps.

Ralph Gordon - upright bass • AM - vocals, acoustic & electric guitars • John Rickard - harmonica • Lisa Taylor - percussion

9. Bargeman (5:05) - medium tempo folk

An anonymous gift from a waterman on the swollen Ohio River near Cincinnati to a songwriter flying 8,000 feet overhead.

Betsy Dake - harmony vocals • Chas Fowler - whistle • Ralph Gordon - cello • AM - vocals, guitar • Karin McKnight - harmony vocals

10. Where This River Runs (2:26) - slow a cappella folk ballad

Inspired by life at either end of the James River, and how easy it is sometimes to overlook our most obvious connections.

Randy Barrett - lead baritone • Chas Fowler - pipes and whistles • AM - lead and ensemble vocals • John Rickard - lead tenor • Les Thompson - ensemble vocals

11. The Other Way (3:56) - medium tempo Appalachian folk

For Jay & Joan Shults of Cosby, Tennessee

Jeff Arey - mandolin • Randy Barrett - banjo • Laurie Rose Griffith - harmony vocals • AM - vocals, guitar

12. Hoop Dreams (5:03) - slow pop ballad

For my pal Lisa (a fellow childhood basketball addict) and for schoolyard dribblers everywhere - I always dreamed of wearing John Havlicek's number for the Boston Celtics

AM - vocals, harmony vocals, guitar • Lisa Taylor - drums • Susan Graham White - piano

13. This Old Dominion (4:30) - uptempo bluegrass/old-timey/folk

Nothing is quite like the onset of spring in the Blue Ridge foothills, a divine gift for which I am always grateful.

Dedicated to the spirit of John Denver, who certainly understood the inspirations and implications of place.

Jeff Arey - mandolin • Randy Barrett - banjo • Stephanie DeLage - harmony vocals • Ralph Gordon - bass • Frank Gotwals - dobro • AM - vocals, guitar

14. The Last Call Waltz (4:41) - slow folk/pop waltz

A familiar refrain, n'est-ce pas?

Ralph Gordon - cello • AM - vocals, guitar • Karin McKnight - harmony vocals