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For Interviews and Other Press Inquiries:

Michael@fallingmountain.com

Michael DeLalla c/o Falling Mountain Music

7955 Countryside Dr. #117 Niwot CO 80503 303-652-2665

Guitarist/Composer Michael DeLalla

This Is How I Disappear

Falling Mountain Music

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*“i disappear
so as to not bring past
expectations to new work,
to not be chained
to old paradigms;
i disappear
to lose myself
in the compositional moment,
the performance moment,
that single infinite moment
before reappearing...”*

Program

1. **This is How I Disappear 3:07**
2. **13 Strings 5:28**
3. **The Seisiun Set 5:55**
4. **Hamza 7:12**
5. **Camera Obscura 7:38**
6. **Nocturnal Scenes
'Round About Midnight 11:29**
7. **Variations on Sakura 8:37**
8. **Reappearing/
Witchi Tai To 6:44**

About *This is How I Disappear*

Michael’s latest CD explores and celebrates his creative process through compositions rooted in traditions found worldwide. His signature virtuosity eschews the usual “guitarisms”; his playing truly transcends the instrument. Now based in Colorado after a lifetime on the East Coast, Michael welcomes old and new friends from both east and west to round out a powerful program.

To “disappear” is to give oneself over to the act of creating, to immerse oneself in a set of artistic principles that defy style, genre, culture; “reappearing” is the performance, the ownership of the work. Follow this trajectory through traditions from Brazil, North Africa, Japan, Ireland, and American Jazz. *This Is How I Disappear* is a profound, contemplative work.

About Michael DeLalla

“One of the very best acoustic guitarists in the world....music of the most exquisite order.”

Matt Fink, All Music Guide

In a performing and recording career of three decades, **guitarist and composer Michael DeLalla** has forged a distinguished and storied career on stage and studio from his fluency on classical, 12-string, and steel-string acoustic guitar His delicious brew of traditional influences from around the world, steeped with his classical training and seasoned with his jazz, Celtic and folk stylings. showcase gifted improvisation and dazzling technical facility that never sacrifices the richness and poignancy of his compositions.

“Michael DeLalla's finger-style guitar genius is akin to that of Tony McManus ...of a class of what I call the Unholy Triumvirate of the American Acoustic Guitar: David Bromberg, John Fahey, and Leo Kottke...a guitar guru...”

Steve Reel, The Greenman Review

File Under: Acoustic, World, New Age, Contemplative

Program Notes

(all compositions by Michael DeLalla except where noted)

1. This is How I Disappear

3:08

Michael DeLalla: Classical guitar, E-bow guitars, percussion

"Disappearing" is the early creative process of losing oneself in the compositional moment, of how a germ of an idea embeds itself in the brain looking for a growing medium. Sometimes, the early growth happens rhythmically, organically; hence, my use of "found percussion"--everything from fingersnaps to drumbrushes on a stock pot. Other times it develops harmonically, as with the underlying E-bowed guitar lines.

2. 13 strings

5:28

Michael DeLalla: 12-string guitar, Scott Robinson: berimbau

"13 Strings" was written with friend and stellar percussionist N. Scott Robinson. The berimbau, is an instrument with roots in African chordophones. When the Portuguese brought slaves from Angola to colonial Brazil they were not allowed to bring instruments; however, they fashioned the berimbau after instruments remembered, and left behind, in the homeland. It has one string and a million possibilities. A slave revolt sent the Portuguese fleeing, perhaps leaving their own stringed instruments behind. The altered tuning of the 12-string—ED/BA/Gg/Dd/Aa/Ed—is a result of my imagining what an Angolan slave might have done with a coursed-string instrument left behind by a fleeing Portuguese slave owner.

3. The Seisiun Set

(trad., arr. by Michael DeLalla)

5:55

Michael DeLalla: steel string guitar

I've sat in on *seisiuns*--Irish music sessions--all across the country. It's a fascinating musical culture, where different tunes are favored in different regions. Sets are two or three tunes strung together; to the listener they seem to flow seamlessly from one to the next, with no visible signal from the players as to what the next tune will be. I perform variations of this set in concert, where I only know what the first tune is, and have no idea where it will take me. The tunes found in this performance: Belfast Hornpipe/The Blarney Pilgrim/Julia Delaney.

4. Hamza

7:12

Michael DeLalla: classical guitar; Elaine C.Erb: Ululations; Michael DeLalla & Elaine C. Erb: handclaps

The best musicians transcend their instruments. Hamza El-Din, a masterful o'ud player from the Nubian region of North Africa was such a musician--he didn't speak o'ud, he spoke Music. This piece honors him and his artistry. Elaine offers the traditional vocalization found in this music known as ululating--it was she who introduced me to the music of Hamza. The handclaps, originally used by the Beduoin people to keep time as they walked the desert sands are now often part of wedding celebrations, etc. They follow a set pattern:

xxxxxxxx/-xx-x--x/--x---x-/xx-x-xx-/x---x-/x---x-/

In a curious way the o'ud is more responsible for contemporary guitar design than the lute or vihuela. After the Crusades, Spain wanted nothing to do with anything remotely Moorish (though some fabulous buildings still stand representing Moorish artistic principles). So they developed the vihuela to be as antithetical as possible to the o'ud, eschewing the round back for the waisted bouts now found on the guitar. Unfortunately, we guitarists have been paying dearly for its acoustical shortcomings ever since.

5. Camera Obscura

7:38

Michael DeLalla: classical guitar; Dexter Payne: clarinet; Anthony Salvo: violin;
James Baird: Bass; Raoul Rossiter: Drums, percussion

This piece is an acknowledgement of two vital streams that inform my music. In terms of form, this piece celebrates my classical background, with themes introduced, combined, and developed. But the players take it to a whole other place with their improvisations--jazz may well be America's most significant contribution to the worlds of music this CD celebrates.

6. Nocturnal Scenes 'Round About Midnight

11:29

Michael DeLalla: classical guitar

Here I pay homage to two of my favorite, if disparate composers. Variations, a la Benjamin Britten's Nocturnal, work in reverse to the theme 'Round Midnight by Thelonius Monk. Each variation is an expression of nocturnal energy in its many guises.

I. Introduction: Insomnia
II. Night Walk In the City
III. After-Hours Jazz Club

IV. The Carnival
V. Late Night Drive to the Desert
VI. Return to the City
VII. 'Round About Midnight

7. Variations on Sakura

(composed by Yuquijiro Yocoh, arr. by Michael DeLalla)

8:37

Michael DeLalla: classical guitar

My desire was to paint a scenario that has been a fantasy of mine for some time: I travel to Japan, meet up with some wizened koto and shamisen players; the three of us have a moment of sharing that transcends musical hemispheres. I try to evoke each of our three instruments throughout this venerable piece.

8. Reappearing/Witchi-Tai-To (Witchi Tai To composed by Jim Pepper, arr. by Michael DeLalla)

6:44

Michael DeLalla: 12-string guitar, vocals; Craig Matovich: English horn, piano, percussion;
James Baird: bass; Dave Walters: percussion

"Water Spirit feeling springing 'round my head makes me feel glad that I'm not dead". This last piece completes the circle, with the previously heard "Disappear" theme "reappearing", set among Native American vocables. Jim Pepper's life-affirming classic is an appropriate ending, as he actively shared my quest to cross musical boundaries.