

BIOGRAPHY

MICHAEL HEDGES

Windham Hill Records Recording Artist

Latest album: AERIAL BOUNDARIES, WH-1032, WT-1032 (cassette) and CD-1032 (compact disc)

"Hedges is remarkable for the spacious melodicism of his acoustic guitar instrumentals and their unusual tunings. His music is tranquil yet high emotional and story-like, perhaps best described as free-form or improvisational."

—Jas Obrecht, Guitar Player

"A bonanza of artfully tailored music."

—Steve Morse, The Boston Globe

"Hedges' music marries the clean, precise technique of his classical training to the vernacular phrasing and circular forms of the folk music he so loves. The result is quite moving in its stark solitude and self-possession."

—Geoffry Himes, The Baltimore Sun

Guitarist Michael Hedges was born on New Years Eve, 1953. Growing up in Oklahoma, he began piano lessons at age four, and at the age of twelve, had picked up cello and clarinet. In junior high school, Hedges switched to electric guitar and formed a garage rock band in which he played and sang throughout high school. His main musical influences at this time included Elvis Presley, Peter, Paul and Mary and most significantly, the Beatles.

Michael also played flute in the high school concert and marching bands, while learning to read jazz charts in the school stage band. In the eleventh grade, he moved to California for one year, where he heard Joni Mitchell and Neil Young for the first time. It turned his musical life around. After high school, Michael studied flute and composition at Phillips University in Oklahoma and spent summers at the National Music Camp in Interlochen, Michigan, where he began to study classical guitar. "I started learning a little technique there, and I was in the first Interlochen jazz band. I also heard atonal music for the first time and started composing more things in odd time signatures with less of a key center."

Thirsting for a more complete musical course of study, Michael moved to Baltimore and spent four years at Peabody Conservatory studying classical guitar, electronic music and composition. He helped support himself by playing and singing Neil Young songs in local bars. It was then that he began to establish his own style of singing and guitar playing, influenced by the structure and method of some of the Twentieth Century composers he was introduced to at the conservatory. These influences include Bela Bartok, Pierre Boulez, Anton Webern, Martin Feldman and John Cage. While in Baltimore, Michael also began to study jazz guitar with Larry Woolridge, whom he considers one of the "best teachers on the planet."

Michael graduated with a degree in composition and then his interest in synthesizer and electronic music brought him to California, where he spent a summer at the Stanford Computer Music Center. While at Stanford, Hedges played guitar at a local theatre, which is where he met Will Ackerman. A year later, Michael's debut album, Breakfast in the Field, was released on Windham Hill. Breakfast in the Field has received unanimous critical acclaim for its innovation and composition.

Since that release, Hedges has toured extensively throughout the United States, as well as West Germany with Will Ackerman. He has appeared as an opening act for the Jerry Garcia Band, Robin Williams, Doc Watson, Jerry Jeff Walker and David Grisman. He has also toured with other Windham Hill artists including George Winston, Alex deGrassi, Liz Story, Scott Cossu, Darol Anger and Shadowfax.

Michael's second LP, Aerial Boundaries, contains six compositions for solo guitar, one duet with bassist Mike Manring, a trio with Manring and flutist Mindy Rosenfeld and a taped composition using backward guitar sounds and splicing techniques. As in the Breakfast in the Field LP, the guitar is always in an altered tuning, but never the same altered tuning, Hedges states. "The compositions themselves end up dictating the initial tuning and I make changes along the way."

Influences that mark individual compositions on this new LP, Aerial Boundaries, include the Middle-Eastern dumbec drum on the title song, composer Steve Reich on "Spare Change" and Anne Robinson's typewriter on "Hot Type".

Currently, Michael is recording a vocal album, touring, learning to play the harp-guitar and spending time with his wife and first child, Misha Aaron, two months old.

PROMOTION: Windham Hill Records
PO Box 4122
Seattle, WA 98104
206/223-0517
Jeff Heiman