



OTTO



little pieces

KIRBY SHELSTAD - VIBES

The vibraphone's utter lack of cheap emotionalism suits it well to the Baroque-style counterpoint of "Two and Two" as well as to the cool chordal colors of "Blue Mailbox"



ROBBIE SHANKLE - FLUTE, CLARINET, SAX

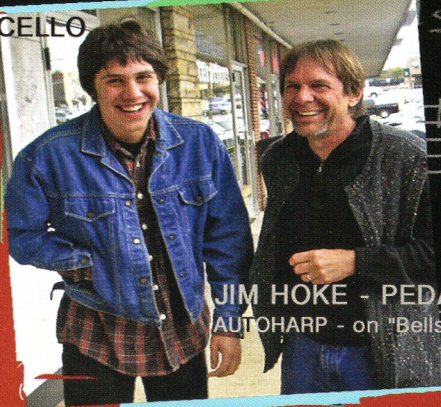


If you're going to pay a lot for an instrument that can't even play a chord, let it be so versatile and colorful that it becomes indispensable, from Fauré to Frank Zappa

(CLARINET) 3

If surf music had been invented in the 1800's the cello would have played the rôle of the rhythm guitar as in the hectic eighth-note pulse of "Friday on My Mind"

AUSTIN HOKE - CELLO



JIM HOKE - PEDAL STEEL
AUTOHARP - on "Bells Of Porlock"

If the pedal steel had been around in Satie's day he no doubt would have exploited its liquid tone and glissando capabilities, as ventured here with his "Trois Gnossiennes"



About five years ago I was playing sax and leading my ten-piece jazz group through our weekly public rehearsal at Bean Central. It wasn't a good night; not all my usual players and low energy - we just weren't "in the zone". After grinding our way through a particularly edgy and dissonant opus, we took a break and the guy behind the counter (who wanted us to PAY HIM to play there) put on a CD. It was vintage George Jones, a slow shuffle, "the jukebox is playin' ... a honky-tonk song..." The direct, pure sweetness of the three chords, the sure-footed, unhurried, loping shuffle of the rhythm and George's exquisite voice got deep into me in a way I realized no other music could. In particular, I was smitten

with the keening tones of the pedal steel, an instrument I'd had a brief affair with in my younger days.

Soon, next to my record player, there was a red GFI single neck to which I became permanently glued. To be able to make even the simplest of gliding, melting chord movements on a pedal steel is intoxicating.

My plan was to keep this a purely recreational activity; I wouldn't "go commercial" and try to bring this to the marketplace like everything else musical I'd ever done. Well that plan soon got screwed up, as I couldn't resist any chance to play with other human beings. The steel became my main outlet in Aqua Velvet, my 60's lounge-exotica group, and the seed for OTTO was planted at Aqua Velvet rehearsals.

I thought how good some of my favorite Satie pieces could sound on steel and soon I'd recruited three fine musicians to gather once a week and play my arrangements and originals. I was, and am, the weakest player by far, but they humored me and hung in anyway. The rest, as they say... is about to go into your CD player. I'm not a great steel player, but good enough to present these realized arrangements. So is this the work of a restless, creative talent defying expectations or the inept fumbblings of a musician who's "lost the plot"? What does it matter - I love this album and hope you do too. - JH



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little pieces

Produced by Jim Hoke
Engineered by Kirby Shelstad
Arrangements by Jim Hoke
Mastered by Jim DeMain at Yes Master
CD Art and Photos by Lisa Haddad

1. Pavane - *Fauré* (5.42)
- 2-4. Blue Mailboxes - *Hoke* (3.13)
5. Mom and Dad - *Zappa* (4.14)
6. Mignon - *Gill* (2.05)
7. Bells of Porlock - *Hoke* (2.49)
8. Accident - *Byrne* (2.42)
- 9-11. Trois Gnossiennes - *Satie* (6.17)
12. Sumare - *Milhaud* (1.59)
13. Don't Talk (Put Your Head on My Shoulder) - *Wilson* (2.33)
14. Fable For Four - *Hoke* (3.39)
15. Two and Two - *Hoke* (2.11)
16. Aybee Sea - *Zappa* (2.25)
17. Friday on My Mind - *Young & Vanda* (4.06)
18. Vaguely French - *Hoke* (1.47)



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