

12-String Songs

I purchased my Martin D12-20 12-string guitar in 1970 at the flagship Sam Ash Music Store in Brooklyn, New York. They had about 20 of the same model on hand, most of them slack-tuned and still in shipping boxes. I recall quite well that I sat there for several hours, with their permission of course, tuning up and playing each one of them, before selecting what I thought to be the best one in terms of tonal beauty and resonance. The 12-string I selected is so resonant that a strum over all 12 strings, making harmonic notes at the octave fret, at least if you catch the release of the harmonic notes just right, sounds for a full 30 seconds. Over the years I have played the 12-string far less frequently than I have played my Martin D28 6-string guitar (purchased in 1969), playing almost exclusively in flatpick styles on the 12-string. Regretfully, both guitars have long been in need of major repairs that I have never been able to afford, and as a result neither functions as well as it can or should. Obviously I chose to make the best of it, and to not let that deter me from recording 288 songs over the past five years.

My 12-string guitar in particular has always been monstrously difficult to play, which is rather an ironic twist because it sounds so sweet. Just the same, I did not let that prevent me from venturing into new territory with this album by playing 5 of the 12 songs in fingerstyle. Apart from that departure from custom, my main goal in creating this album was to produce a collection of songs, all based on 12-string guitar, but in as many different musical styles as possible. I decided early on in recording this album that I would follow up on the idea of adding fingerstyle guitar arrangements for each song on the Keyboard Songs I album by adding keyboard arrangements for each song in this album. The keyboard arrangements are in some places sparser and not as self-sufficient as a stand-alone arrangement would be (by comparison, the

fingerstyle arrangements on the Keyboard Songs I album are more like parallel stand-alone arrangements), but they proved to be an effective tool in creating musical diversity on this album, thus serving the main goal quite nicely. Further, at the risk of growing tired of the sound of my own voice (which did in fact occur more than a few times during the recording of the 2014 Catalog), I also added harmony vocals on all but one of the songs on this album. I can no longer recall why I thought so, but a solo vocal performance of “One Constant Thing” seemed more suitable.