

Keyboard Songs II

Although there are similarities between the Keyboard Songs I and Keyboard Songs II albums, they are outweighed by the differences between them. The similarities include the fact that both albums consist of 6 original songs and 6 cover songs, and the fact that both albums include 7 songs with vocal harmonies and 5 songs with solo vocals. Both albums contain guitar tracks on every song, but the guitar music on the Keyboard Songs II album consists entirely of flatpick arrangements, while the guitar music on the Keyboard Songs I album consists entirely of fingerstyle arrangements.

Another important difference between the two albums is the fact that all but two of the songs on the Keyboard Songs II album are played in natural note keys (which are also the most manageable keys for guitar music), whereas all but 4 of the songs on the Keyboard Songs I album are played in more obscure keys based on a sharped or flatted root. On the Keyboard Songs II album, the two exceptions to the rule of natural note keys are e^b minor (“Honky-Tonk Women”), achieved in the guitar arrangement by using a capo at the first fret and playing in d minor, and Db Major (“Only Time”), achieved in the guitar arrangement by using Eb Standard tuning (every string tuned one half-step lower), and playing in D Major.

The two albums also differ with respect to meter and rhythm, and with respect to the sound of the keyboard tracks. Multiple meters are used four times on the Keyboard Songs I album, but not at all on the Keyboard Songs II album. In addition, the rhythms are generally more complicated and more

syncopated on the Keyboard Songs I album. 10 of the 12 songs on the Keyboard Songs I album make use of a keyboard voice that includes a doubling of the keyboard arrangement with synthesized orchestral strings, whereas the recordings for only 2 of the 12 songs on the Keyboard Songs II album include orchestral strings. In addition, the songs on the Keyboard Songs I album are more or less evenly divided between an acoustic piano sound and an electric piano sound, whereas on all but one song on the Keyboard Songs II album (the one being “After The Goldrush”, which I learned to play in the early 1970’s on a piano that sounded a lot like the piano sound on the recording), an electric piano voice was used for the keyboard arrangement.

But the biggest difference between the two albums is the fact that all but one of the songs on the Keyboard Songs I album are songs that I had been playing for many years, whereas all but two of the songs on the Keyboard Songs II album (the other being “Honky-Tonk Women”, also arranged for keyboard by me in the early 1970’s) were arranged and composed during the three weeks or so in which the album was written and recorded. The other 4 cover songs on the Keyboard Songs II album are all songs that I had long admired but had never played before on either the keyboard or the guitar. The 6 original songs on the Keyboard Songs II album are all based on the keyboard arrangements, which were written and recorded first. I added the guitar tracks next, then I composed the vocal melodies, then I wrote the lyrics (the lyrics always come last when I am writing songs, though I sometimes come up with a word or two or a short phrase to work with as I am composing the melody). The recording of the lead vocal tracks, as well as the fashioning of vocal harmonies, obviously came last.