

## **Songs in Alternate Tunings**

Most of the plan for the 2014 Catalog (which was originally called the Twelvemonth Catalog) was finalized well before recording began in early February 2014. I had long anticipated that I would be making an album consisting entirely of original songs played in alternate tunings, and in so doing revisit my initial concentration on alternate tunings when I began playing the guitar in earnest in the early 1970's (only 2 of the 14 songs on "The Apprentice", recorded in 1974 and the first album in the D.L. Stieg Catalog, are played in standard tuning). I had also resolved well beforehand that every song would employ a different alternate tuning, and therefore used 12 different tunings for the 12 songs on the "Songs in Alternate Tunings" album. Four of the tunings used are based on a C tonality, four are based on a D tonality, and four are based on a G tonality. There were only three tunings that I had never before used: C11 tuning ("Another Season"), presumably invented by Joni Mitchell and used by her for her song "Sisotowbell Lane"; c modal tuning ("Seligia Veritas"), a variation of open c minor tuning that I devised while writing and recording this album; and d modal tuning ("Invisible Forces"), also called DADGAD tuning, cast here in context in a minor modality, hence the use of a lower case letter for the tuning's name.

The guitar arrangements for this album are evenly divided between flatpick styles and fingerstyles of play. I added keyboard tracks on every song, and again (as with the "12-String Songs" album) didn't concern myself with fashioning complete stand-alone keyboard arrangements, rather using the keyboard arrangements to color and hopefully enhance the rhythm guitar music. I decided early on in the process of recording this album that I would use the same vocal scheme for every song, so each song employs alternating solo vocals and vocal duets (two-part harmony). I also decided I wanted to do

some experimenting with unusual meters on this album, so two of the songs (“Seligia Veritas” and “Noble Visions”) employ uncommon irregular meters (7 and 5 respectively).

Having already mentioned “Seligia Veritas” twice, I feel compelled to add a bit more commentary on this unusual song, which is one of my personal favorites on this album. At the risk of seeming cryptic or obtuse, I chose an unusual title for this song, and that choice bears some explanation. Actually the lyrics are the third complete set of lyrics I wrote for this song, the first two of which I discarded almost immediately after writing them. In fact, I conceived the title “Seligia Veritas” before I wrote the third and final set of lyrics. It is a Latin title, but a somewhat elusive one, because while “veritas” is a Latin word (it means “truth”), “seligia” is not. Rather, “seligia” is a mnemonic device (memorization aid) that has been used in the Catholic church since Medieval times. It is an acronym (a word made up of the first letters of a group of words) for the Latin names of the Seven Deadly Sins. I trust that the lyrics for “Seligia Veritas” will make more sense in light of this explanation of the meaning of the song’s title.