

COSMIC BANJO

ALBUM HIGHLIGHTS

(all songs performed on the Vega long-neck open back banjo
Produced & Arranged by MJ)

★ **BALLAD OF BOJANGLES** a complete rewrite of the iconic Mr Bojangles story, featuring the legendary John McEuen, founding member of the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band on mandolin

IN THE EVENING is a rural ballad written by piano bluesman Leroy Carr. Originally interpreted on the banjo by Pete Seeger, Michael adds the texture of cellist Ben Sollee

MOONFIRE is a “front porch watching the moon rise over the holler” song, played on the open back Vega long neck banjo, a good example of the frailing and picking” style of playing.

HOW CAN I KEEP FROM SINGING performed live in concert with the Niles String Quartet, a beautiful song, delicate and powerful at the same time.

DARLIN’ COREY the Beatle-esque interpretation of the classic folk tale with a 21-piece string section. Recorded in one take, the song includes IBMA Dobro Player of the Year Rob Ickes and mandolin master John McEuen.

THE BAGHDAD BREAKDOWN What would a bluegrass band in the middle east sound like? Sam Bush, Ronnie McCoury, John Cowan and other friends help bring bluegrass to a middle-eastern flavor.

BLUE SKIES written shortly after WWI, after the Spanish flu killed millions, after President Wilson got the virus while in Paris, Irving Berlin’s eternally positive ballad applies even more so today.

★ **BAN-JOKES** is every banjo joke MJ knows stuffed into a single song, performed live onstage

★ **COSMIC BANJO** think “Pete Seeger meets Pink Floyd.” Really.

“Michael Johnathon lets his banjo travel nicely through life like a social projectile that reaches us listeners.”

COSMIC BANJO Reviewer: Micheles Kindh, Stockholm, Sweden



Folk - Americana - Songwriter
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COSMIC BANJO

*Pete Seeger meets Pink Floyd
in a "Classical Gas" mood*

Michael Johnathon takes his banjo seriously.

The unexpected follow up to **THE PAINTER** comes a celebration of the long neck banjo and Michael's unusual picking style ... **"picking and frailing at the same time."**

From symphony halls to coffeehouses, concert stages to the front porch of his Kentucky log cabin, the hollers of Appalachia to inner city clubs ... he has played them all and carried his long neck banjo onstage each time. The banjo has been the foundation instrument for the global "front porch" for generations, especially in rural America.

This CD explores the unique combination method MJ uses. Using a normal thumbpick and metal pick on the first finger, the **SECOND PICK** is upside down. The style was pioneered by folk icon **Pete Seeger**, aggressively adjusted for Michael's unique banjo style.

"I think I put a banjo song on every album I've ever recorded,. After The Painter album, it felt like it was time to celebrate the one instrument I pick up on the front porch, in front of my wood stove in winter, add some high-octane fuel to the music and give it a good kick in the rump."

Indeed, he does just that on several of these songs, most especially the surprising title cut.

"Cosmic Banjo wasn't an accident, I wrote and recorded the instrumental with Classical Gas in mind. The long neck banjo is not used very much these days, so I felt complete freedom to re-invent, re-interpret, re-discover the instrument with my personal way of playing."

Cosmic Banjo is his 18th album release. He is the author of six published books (**WoodSongs 5** released in 2022), the screenwriter for the upcoming **Caney Creek** motion picture, organizer of the national association of front porch musicians called **SongFarmers**, the full symphony performances of **Songs of Rural America** and as the creator and host of the live audience broadcast of the **WoodSongs Old Time Radio Hour** with a radio audience of over two million listeners each week on 500 public radio stations, public television coast-to-coast, American Forces Radio Network in 177 nations and now on RFD-TV across north America.

Visit: MichaelJohnathon.com, WoodSongs.com, SongFarmers.org, CaneyCreekMovie.com



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