

# Mp3 Michael Mauldin - Enchanted Land: Five Orchestral Works Inspired By New Mexico

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Tonal/modal, richly-orchestrated music, inspired by the sights, smells, shadows grandeur of the scenic and spiritual landscape of New Mexico. 11 MP3 Songs CLASSICAL: Orchestral, CLASSICAL: Contemporary Details: Born in Texas in 1947, Michael Mauldin moved to New Mexico in 1971 for the space, the light, and the timelessness, after completing a Bachelor of Music degree at Washburn University of Topeka. He completed a Master of Music degree at the University of New Mexico and served as president of the Albuquerque Music Teachers Association, the New Mexico Music Teachers Association and the New Mexico Composers Guild. He was named the national Composer of the Year in 1980 by the Music Teachers National Association, Teacher of the Year in 1984 by the New Mexico Music Teachers Association, and Private Teacher of the Year in 1996 by the New Mexico Symphony Orchestra. He served for seven years as Musical Director of the Albuquerque Boy Choir (of which his sons, Kendall and Kevin, are alumni), which grew to three choirs, 85 boys between the ages of 7 and 17, who tour, record and proceed through a rigorous musicianship program. His choral compositions have sold thousands of copies in the USA, Europe and Australia. Mauldin has been an outspoken advocate for the rights of children, holding that discipline is more than repression, and that society is repaid when children and young people are treated with respect, participating in important decisions regarding their own minds, bodies and spirits. \* \* \* Five Orchestral Works Inspired by New Mexico Composed and Conducted by Michael Mauldin Performed by the New Mexico Symphony Orchestra Dedicated to James Redfield, author These are five of my most accessible orchestral works, written between 1973 and 1995. They were inspired by the scenic and spiritual landscape of New Mexico. As a child, I came with my family to Abiquiu (Ghost Ranch) for church conferences. I sensed then that someday I would live and compose music in such a place. It opened within me even more sacred space than that which surrounded me. Written for the Albuquerque Youth Symphony in 1981, HIGH PLACES was inspired by a hike up La Luz Trail (on Sandia Mountain) several years earlier. With my infant son, Kendall, in a front pack, I descended and was struck by the dual sensation of exhilaration/serenity. More than oxygen deprivation, the deep

insights lasted. I thought of the vision-quests of wise men through the ages and their penchant toward lofty places for meditation (I didn't know then that I would later meet the Dalai Lama, and that, even later, the story of his exile as a child from his lofty home, and of his mountain-climber man-friend, would help me understand the connection of my dual passions--spiritual places and the spiritual beauty of children). I usually enjoy hiding some kind of musical pun in my pieces. But I happily share them, as I wouldn't want anyone to take them too seriously. In this piece, the "game" is the use of the opening, excited, "ascending" theme--but in augmentation and inversion--as the basis for the quiet B-section, which peacefully (and reverently) observes the world from "the other side"--from the top down. Written in 1973, as little more than an entry in a kind of personal journal, THREE JEMEZ LANDSCAPES (also called "Fantasy on a Huron Carol") reflects remembered visions from a camping trip with my wife in the Jemez Mountains. The melody of a Huron Carol haunted me for days. It reminded me of another spiritual landscape on this continent which had witnessed a fairly harmonious mix of Native American and European ideals. But the three movements reflect the "feel" of the Jemez Mountains: "Calavaras Dawn/Moonset (an old carol)", "Rio de las Vacas (some old jokes)", which begins without pause after the first movement, and "Paliza Sun-Cliffs (some old echoes)". Some of the puns here include the use of "horn-fifths" in the second movement and distant "native" drums in the third. Written in 1995, DAWN AT SAN JUAN MESA was commissioned for the Albuquerque Junior Symphony Orchestra in honor of the 40th anniversary of the Albuquerque Youth Symphony program. The piece was inspired by my many visits to an unexcavated Anasazi city on top of San Juan Mesa in the Jemez Mountains. Within view of Sandia Peak in the distance (where KHFM radio has its broadcasting tower), I brought young Kendall here once when my "Petroglyph for Strings" was on the air. I mused at the irony. Before his birth, that piece had begun in my mind at that very place. But now I heard the music--fleshed out--and the laughter of a child in a plaza that once rang with the laughter of many children. Since then, it seems as if the spirits there welcome me and the children I bring to see the petroglyphs and pot-fragments. Often I go away with a new fragment of insight, usually into the needs of children. So years later, when I was commissioned by the AYS program, the magic of the mesa and its people seemed an appropriate inspiration for a piece to be performed by children. The joke here is that the flashy timpani part was written for my second son, Kevin, who was in the Junior Symphony at that time. The title-piece of the album, ENCHANTED LAND: SUITE FOR NARRATOR AND ORCHESTRA, is based on the book "The House at Otowi Bridge"

(pronounced OH-toh-wee), written by Peggy Pond Church and published by UNM Press, with whose permission portions of the text are used as the work's narration. Before her passing, I wish I had asked Peggy to let me record her reading the excerpts aloud, but I asked Kathleen, her daughter-in-law, to read them for this recording. The book is the story of Edith Warner, the woman who lived in the little house at the bridge, and of Los Alamos--before, during and after the time it was home to the Manhattan Project. Peggy had grown up on the Jemez mesas before her father's boys' school had been chosen by the government as the isolated site for atomic weapon research. Notable in the "Prologue" is the reverence of the Indians for the earth and all nature, and their belief that it is the duty of man, himself a part of the same creation, to maintain the beauty and harmony he finds around him. The second movement, "Where The River Makes a Noise", follows the river as, trapped between canyon walls below Otowi, it turns, darts, plunges, and curls whitely back upon itself, always struggling toward the sea. In the third movement, "Dance to Life", we see colorful costumes and hear drums and moccasined feet on hard earth, until we ourselves are caught up in the dance and are one with the dancers' prayer to the sun, the lifegiver. A more somber, even tragic tone pervades the fourth movement, "If Our Hearts Are Right...", as it tells of adversities--blinding dust, killing frost, ruined crops, floods, and then no rain at all. And on the "hill" men were experimenting with another kind of power, a power so far of death, not life. The musical pun here is an unanswered musical "question" at the end of this movement, which is answered, in retrograde, at the end of the final movement. In that movement, "The Rain Will Come", the work comes full circle, recycling--but adding to--the music and text of the Prologue. The rains came, bringing also the message that if our hearts are right, whatever is needed will come. FAJADA BUTTE: AN EPIPHANY was commissioned by the New Mexico Symphony Orchestra and dedicated to Ellie Scott, a close friend of the orchestra, whose spirited appearance in New Mexico showered the arts with energies that will live indefinitely. The premiere performance by the NMSO, under the direction of Yoshimi Takeda, was in March of 1983. It was later performed by the National Repertory Orchestra, conducted by Carl Topilow, in Kennedy Center for the twentieth anniversary of the National Endowment for the Arts. Fajada Butte is a column of rock at Chaco Canyon. On top is an amazing sun-shrine. More than just an observatory, the butte must have been regarded as a temple, perhaps for the "meeting" of earth and sky. For 300 years, this was the "center" for a people who truly celebrated life and light, and who found themselves in vibrant harmony with their cosmos. The Anasazi vanished. The vibrant harmony remains. I have never denied

the place of adversity and suffering in New Mexico. The new evidence of possible violence, maybe even cannibalism, among some of the Chacoans is not really a shock to me, though the Pueblos--their descendants--are peace-loving people. I "knew" from the beginning that the Chacoans felt deeply--as children feel--experiencing fully the joys and terrors of human existence on this planet. Rather than destroying some kind of "idealistic myth" about the Chacoans' goodness, the new evidence convinces me even more strongly that we can learn much from both their blind spots and their sharp insights into the nature of things--all things, including ourselves and the Cosmos. We will learn--if we remember how to balance our thinking and our feeling. To help us find that balance, we can love children enough to share with them our own childlike wonderments. We will be amazed at the insights they share with us.

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