

Mp3 Celestial Navigations - Chapter Two

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WORLD FAMOUS STORYTELLING GROUP 10 MP3 Songs SPOKEN WORD: With Music, SPOKEN WORD: Poetry Details: What is Celestial Navigations? There is only one way to explain "Celestial Navigations". It is an experience... combination of eloquent, unforgettable narrative accompanied by haunting, stirring music. It is the result of a collaboration between accomplished stage and screen actor Geoffrey Lewis and electronic musicians Geoff Levin. It transcends all known categories. It has no limitations when it comes to age groups or backgrounds. The History Of Celestial Navigations It was 1969, Geoffrey Lewis and Geoff Levin met at Celebrity Centre, a performing art center in Los Angeles run by the Church of Scientology. At that time they were both involved at the center doing stage productions, Lewis acting and Levin producing and playing guitar for various performers there. Lewis was in the first play produced at the centre's theater. One evening during open mic Levin saw Lewis perform one of his original stories. Levin made a decision then and there that he had to perform with Lewis. In early spring of 1970 Levin and Lewis formed a group with singer/songwriter Jack Skinner, (guitar and bass). They used the Celebrity Centre theater as a showcase to form the "Great American Entertainment Show". In that show Lewis sang songs and played drums, did a few comedy skits and more importantly, told a few stories. In effect, they had formed the first version of Celestial Navigations. Up to this point, there was no music accompanying the stories. The group did several performances at Celebrity Centre. They were humorously billed as "Jack Armstrong, Mom and apple pie". By the summer of 1970 Jack decided he wanted to pursue other interests. Around the same time Levin was working with David Campbell a classical violist/violinist. The duo was playing Bluegrass music busking for the movie lines of Westwood. David joined the group replacing Jack. Keyboardist Bud Pomeroy joined the group adding electric piano and accordion to the sound. Now the group consisted of Geoffrey on drums, David on violin/viola, Geoff on guitars, and Bud on keyboards. By this point, Geoffrey Lewis and Geoff Levin had written about 35 or 40 songs. They were performing songs and stories and some instrumentals as well. This was also the period where underscoring the stories was started. One of the earliest stories was called "Tony" about a little lion cub at the zoo. Jack rejoined the group and with five people they played the Ice House (in

Pasadena). Also Around this time the group played a club in Hollywood call the Odyssey and they started to get interest from record companies. They cut there first studio demo for Elektra Records. In late 1970 they turned down a record deal with Elektra as Levin and Campbell got an offer to play on an album with folk artist Jimmy Spheeris on Columbia Records. The two went to New York and helped arrange, record and produce the record. When they returned they continued to perform with Geoffrey Lewis for special events, concerts using any excuse to be seen. The trio's interest in the group was based on love for the art form and love of Lewis' stories. In the meantime, Geoffrey Lewis' acting career took off! (films with Clint Eastwood etc...). Levin was now touring and recording with Jimmy Spheeris and working with another musician, a top banjo player, Larry McNeeley (Glen Campbell show). By 1975 Levin was also busy composing music for film and commercials. At the same time David Campbell started arranging for artists like Carol King and Linda Rondstadt and working with Peter Asher (of Peter and Gordon fame). Geoffrey Lewis now had several hit movies under his belt. Everyone became more entrenched in their vocations. But the three still enjoyed performing and Geoffrey Lewis continued to write stories. In 1983 synthesizers were introduced into the group. Levin and Campbell were able to add a new dimension to the performances. In 1984, Lewis decided to get more serious about making a go of it and he secured an angel (patron of the arts) to fund a six week run at the Matrix Theater in Los Angeles. The group took much of their existing material, wrote new material and created a complete theater piece. At this point it was mostly stories underscored by synthesizers, guitar, violin, and viola with a few songs interspersed within the show. The name Celestial Navigations came from their producer Lauren Stevens. The group did a successful six week run and as a result, Geoffrey Lewis was presented with a Drama Logue Award for his performance.. The group had new material, a new direction and a new name. In 1985, Levin wanted a writing partner so he brought keyboardist Chris Many into his composing company to write instrumentals for a record he was producing. They hit it off creatively. David Campbell was getting extremely busy with his arranging. As a result Chris agreed to take over the keyboard duties for the group, replacing David. In 1985 with the help of Geoffrey Lewis' business managers, Kevin Burke and Bruce Weisman, Celestial Navigation's first album was recorded and manufactured. They signed with Joel Stevens Management (manager of Juliette Lewis, and Priscilla Presley). They also started to perform regularly at the club "At My Place" in Santa Monica run by Matt Kramer. Together with the self produced album and with Omar Simeon David Campbells connections they signed with K-Tel International

Records. Within the next year Joel Stevens was able to persuade Ken Kragen (manager for Travis Tritt, Trisha Yearwood and Kenny Rogers) to come down to the club and see the group. Ken at that time was producing the Smothers Brothers and had previously worked on their CBS television show. When he saw them at the club he was knocked out by the group and immediately brought Tommy Smothers down to the show and the group was signed to be on the new Smothers Brothers Variety show on CBS. This was a big break for the group. At the same time, circa 1986, their first album "Celestial Navigations" was being released. "New Age Music" was getting very popular. And a new radio station format had been created, called "The Wave" These radio stations were actually willing to play the group's stories. The group got excellent reviews and were on their way to establishing the new art of story telling. One story called "The Valley" epitomized the core philosophy of New Age music and thus got quite a bit of airplay. Meanwhile there was a new chart forming in Billboard magazine to track the activity of this new genre of record sales and airplay. Celestial's album reached #13 on the New Age charts. Celestial Navigations TM was getting exposure. The group continued to record and released Chapter II which included "The Train", now a Christmas favorite with radio stations. With the release of the third album, Ice, the group produced a television infomercial which was aired to sell all three albums and a video. Celestial continued to do more performances and college touring. In 1994 Geoffrey decided to rethink his overall career plan and decided he wanted to focus more on his acting career. His idea was, "the more well known I am, the more well known Celestial Navigations will be." At that point the group stopped performing. In 1995 they released their fourth album "Road Train". Geoffrey landed more feature film work and then was cast on the syndicated TV series "Land's End" (with Fred Dryer). With the on going series on hiatus Lewis and Levin regrouped and found a new keyboardist, Bettie Ross. Starting in January '96 the new trio performed four successful concerts. And that brings us up to the present with future plans that include a new album, more live performances, a series, a theater run and Celestial Navigations books.

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