

# Mp3 Bruce Kaphan - Slider- Ambient Excursions For Pedal Steel Guitar

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Of Slider, David Fricke of Rolling Stone wrote "Zen music... sweet dreams of light and flight in which Kaphan's licks ring like prayer bells across an open Texas plain." 11 MP3 Songs NEW AGE: Ambient, NEW AGE: New Age Details: Peter Buck of R.E.M. sums it up nicely when he wrote "This record is amazing!" Unlike many synthesized, pasteurized washes of sound that pass for ambient music, SLIDER not only delivers on psychic magic, but transports you to aural environments that are hauntingly beautiful - even spiritual at times - as well as completely unique and captivating. How does Kaphan do it? Instead of relying on Nashville stereotypes, Kaphan extensively re-imagines the pedal steel guitar, refracting the instrument's characteristic silvery liquid tone through a dynamic new harmonic vocabulary. His skillful arrangements, languorous soulful expressivity, and wide-ranging stylistic compass is so impressive that SLIDER has been named a CDNow Top 10 Best Album of the Year. BRUCE KAPHAN Bruce Kaphan describes himself as "a professional mover of air," though most in the music industry refer to him as a well-respected composer, producer, multi-instrumentalist (drums, bass, guitar, keyboards, Dobro, lap steel, Appalachian dulcimer and, of course, pedal steel), recording engineer and author. Kaphan notably pioneered new territory for the pedal steel in the '90s as a member, co-producer and engineer of alt-rock cult faves American Music Club (whose EVERCLEAR release Rolling Stone magazine named one of the best 5 albums of 1992, alongside Guns Roses, U2, Nirvana and R.E.M.), as well as contributing to projects by Chris Isaak, REM, John Lee Hooker (the Grammy-winning CHILL OUT, and Grammy-nominated JEALOUS), Jewel, The Black Crowes, Love and Rockets, Francesco de Gregori, Red House Painters, Jellyfish, and others. He spent much of 1997-1998 on the road with David Byrne (formerly of Talking Heads). But it is Kaphan's solo debut recording, SLIDER, that fully realizes his deep love of the pedal steel guitar, that most expressive and complicated stringed instrument. First released in 2001 on Hearts of Space, it was soon lost in space when the label was sold to Valley Entertainment; after a lengthy delay, SLIDER is (finally!) available again and thrilling a whole new generation of listeners who missed it the first time around. In 2002, Kaphan adapted the score to the Spitfire Pictures film, Masked

Anonymous (which stars Bob Dylan, Penelope Cruz, Ed Harris and many other notables). Earlier filmscores include *No Easy Way* (starring CSI Miami's Khandi Alexander), produced by Spectrum Films. Bruce continues to create and produce music for films and recording artists, as well as continue his solo sonic experiments with his favorite instrument - the pedal steel guitar. "SLIDER achieves something rare in popular music: a new face on an old favorite, a creative synthesis of ambient, pop, country, Indian, electronic music - and Bruce Kaphan. Like water under the desert, these pieces were always there. They just had to be tapped." - Stephen Hill, *Music from the Hearts of Space*, syndicated radio. The pedal steel guitar is not so much a guitar as it is a machine, a vast incomprehensible piece of mechanical wizardry. Strings, fretboards, tuners, levers, knobs and, of course, pedals all fit together to make either the most annoying sound imaginable, or - as with SLIDER- music that sets the imagination soaring. At its most basic, the pedal steel guitar is an expanded version of the Hawaiian steel guitar, the most obvious difference being the pedals! Like its precursor, it is played by moving a steel bar up and down the strings. But, on a non-pedal steel the player is limited to simple chords or single notes because of the inflexibility of the steel bar, while the pedal steel guitar allows for movement of one or more strings while you play. Physically, playing the pedal steel requires the use of both hands, both feet and both knees. It requires concentration to ensure your intonation is correct, and - as beginners have often lamented - it practically takes an engineering degree to tune! A completely instrumental pedal steel recording, the tracks on SLIDER sound like soundclips from as yet unmade movies; but they are all virtuosic performances by a truly inspired master craftsman. The unique properties of the steel are fully exploited on tunes like the dreamily flowing "Clouds," the amorphous epic "Outpost," and the electronically manipulated art-noise of "Back to the Light." But Kaphan has the most fun on cleverly-titled tunes like "Big Brain Small Brain" and "Homage (Pour la Grande Fromage [translation from French: 'For the Big Cheese'])," wherein the former is devoted to the instrument's diva-like vocal abilities, and the latter is a driving excursion through the Savannah that enables the soulful song of the steel to emerge unhindered. "You might think that a whole album dedicated to nothing but the pedal steel guitar would get a bit overbearing or monotonous," writes David Middleton of *Blue Coupe*, "but such is not the case. Kaphan branches out into diverse and undiscovered territory, bringing forth such luscious sounds that you forget you are listening to an instrument often played by someone wearing the prerequisite Stetson and matching make kickers." Or, as *All Music Guide* simply and accurately enthuses, "SLIDER is a fantastic recording." So tune in and

prepare for a trip out of this world. "Zen music...sweet dreams of light and flight in which Kaphan's licks ring like prayer bells across an open Texas plain. The wraparound echo is a wonder in itself - so cool, blue and watery you can almost drink it." - David Fricke, Rolling Stone BRUCE KAPHAN AMBIENT EXCURSIONS FOR PEDAL STEEL GUITAR (Wiggling Air Records \* brucekaphan.com)

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