

# celestial harmonies

abundance  
michael atherton &  
james ashley franklin  
celestial harmonies 13192-2  
cd - 0 1371 13192 2 4  
file classification:  
world fusion/instrumental



## the artists

Multi-instrumentalist Michael Atherton was born in the U.K. in 1950 and grew up in Australia. He composes in a variety of genres and styles including chamber music, screen, radio and theatre.

He is founding Professor of Music and Head of Contemporary Arts at the University of Western Sydney, Nepean.

Also active in the field of higher education is composer and shakuhachi Master (*shihan*), James Ashley Franklin, with whom Atherton collaborates on this recording. Since 1994, Franklin has been a lecturer and subsequently senior lecturer in Music Technology at the University of Western Sydney.

James Ashley Franklin was born in Australia in 1959 and started playing piano at the age of nine. Later, he studied Western art music together with ethnomusicology at the University of Sydney, and trained as a composer.

He has developed a musical career bridging a wide range of styles, from classical Western music to electronic, and to traditional and modern music for the shakuhachi winning numerous awards in Australia and overseas.

## the project

Recorded in the studio at the University of Western Sydney where both Michael Atherton and James Ashley Franklin teach, **ABUNDANCE** is an acoustic collaboration between two talented multi-instrumentalists in which they attempt to blend influences of all the cultures whose music they have encountered and studied during the course of their careers.

Franklin, as a Western-trained composer and Japanese-trained shakuhachi master (*shihan*), carries a responsibility to his teachers to bear the shakuhachi tradition forward into the future. Unlike his other CDs, this project contains no traditional pieces; in fact, with the exception of *Salz*, all are structured improvisations which were created for this album. Improvisation is in itself foreign to the Japanese tradition in which Franklin has trained, although it is integral to his western heritage. Nevertheless, the technical and aesthetic roots of the Japanese instrument shine through: the use of space, the significance of silence as a positive sonic element, the fluidity of pitch, dynamics and tone colour.

Atherton has similarly brought the range of his skills on diverse musical instruments to bear on this album, including Egyptian harp, didjeridu, frame drum, bass drum, changgo, ching, kulintang, orchestral chimes, tam-tam and vibraphone.

The result of this collaboration is a CD of great diversity, a reflection of many landscapes of the earth in their abundance, offered by Atherton and Franklin as a gesture of their gratitude to the cultures, both new and old, in which they have been nurtured.

