

JESSIE ALLEN COOPER

SOUND TRAVELS

Hundreds of years ago, "coopers" were the craftsmen who worked with wood and metal, especially making barrels and casks, but also musical instruments, which they learned to play so that they also became the town minstrels over time. Jessie Allen Cooper shares more than just his name with his ancestors. Not only does he enjoy woodworking, but he is also a popular musician who forges carefully crafted instrumental music on his sixth album, *Sound Travels*.

Cooper demonstrates his versatility by performing on saxophone, harmonica, and keyboards. His wide-ranging and eclectic musical interests are displayed on *Sound Travels*. It primarily falls into smooth jazz, but on various tracks, it also features soaring new age, world-beat percussion, techno-dance rhythms, and funky blues-rock. The album is available in stores nationwide and online at sites like Amazon.com and www.CooperSoundWaves.com.

With his music, Jessie is the composer, arranger, engineer, and producer, but he also brings in some of the best players in the industry to complement his sound. On *Sound Travels*, the special guests include percussionist Steve Reid (Miles Davis, The Rippingtons, Supertramp), guitarists Jack Majdecki (Glenn Yarbrough, Tony Morales) and Ira Ingber (Bob Dylan, Bonnie Raitt, The Eagles), keyboardist Steve Katz (Jon Anderson), and bassist Vail Johnson (Stevie Nicks, Kenny G, Warren Hill) among others.

The album includes several melodic smooth jazz tunes ("Full Moon," "Song For You," "Ballad for an Artist," and "Missing You") featuring interplay between Cooper's soprano saxophone and Jim Hale's muted trumpet. "Ever since I heard Miles Davis records in

the late Sixties and early Seventies using muted trumpet and saxophone, I wanted to explore that sound," Jessie says. Sound Travels also spotlights several gentle compositions that could fit into the pop/new age genre ("Watkin In The Park," "Waltz for an Artist" and "Tranquility"). A fast-paced techno-beat propels "Dance On" while the sound turns to funky blues-rock on "Groovin' Out Back," both featuring Jessie on harmonica. Many of the songs are textured with world-beat percussion sounds (especially congas and dumbek) -- the African-sounding "Rain Dance," the Middle Eastern-influenced "Awakening," and the highly-rhythmic "Heavens Dance."

The front and back covers of Sound Travels reflect this diversity, with photos from many countries superimposed to reflect the music's global influences. The album title has several meanings and references how the music takes the listener on a journey to many different places.

Although Jessie grew up playing rock'n'roll, blues, and R&B, his first album, Heaven Sent, was meditative and new age (and featured kalimba player Buddy Kithara). It was recorded as live improvisation in a long hallway with a very high ceiling for natural echo (inspired by playing harmonica in empty boxcars and tunnels as a youngster). Cooper's second album, the strong-selling Soft Wave, was a popular blend of smooth jazz and new age music on the Narada label and the disc received heavy airplay nationwide. The recording featured musicians such as keyboardists Rick Krizman (Deborah Holland, and TV themes for "Inside Edition" and "American Journal"), Mark Cohen (author of "The Mythical Journey of Rathoshemzi"), and Rusty Hamilton (The Jacksons, Barry White, Kool & The Gang); and percussionist Arno Lucas (Al Jarreau, Rickie Lee Jones, Randy Newman).

Cooper made his most complete, smooth jazz album with Moment In Time. Jessie surrounded himself with a team of top players (and recording artists in their own right), including Steve Reid, Russ Freeman (The Rippingtons, Kenny G), Ricardo Silveira (Gilberto Gil, Herbie Mann), Rob Mullins (Branford Marsalis, Kirk VVhalum), Steve Bailey (The Rippingtons, David Benoit), Larry Washington (Elton John, The Jacksons), Mike Smith (Bobby Lyle), Osamu Kitajima (Ottmar Liebert, Dan Siegel), Mike Thompson

(The Eagles, Alanis Morissette, Rod Stewart), Mark Partmann (The Rippingtons, Celine Dion, Dave Koz) and others.

In 2000, Cooper completed *Sound of Feelings*, an ambitious five-CD set (plus a sampler) of varied instrumental music that captures distinctly nine different emotions (anger, love, depression, happiness, etc.). The music was created specifically to go with the book *"Living With Feeling"* by best-selling author Lucia Capacchione (*"Visioning," "Power of the Other Hand"*), who uses the music extensively in her classes and seminars.

Shortly after completing that project, Jessie got the opportunity to explore wide-ranging emotions with his music again. The day after he began a new album, the terrorism tragedy of Sept. 11, 2001, struck the nation. As he watched it unfold on TV along with the grim aftermath, he found himself recording music that reflected the horrific event and the feelings of the country. Recorded in the four days immediately after the terrorist act (and released a year later on the first anniversary), Cooper's album *9-11-01* is a full-length soundtrack documenting the disaster. The music has been played on hundreds of radio stations, especially each year on that date.

Cooper's music has also been included on multi-artist recordings, including Hallmark's *Music To Shut Out The Rush Hour* and *Songs Of The Dolphin*, MCA/Sona Gaia's *Collection One*, and Narada's *Radioactive* and *Nuages Sampler*.

Jessie's love of music began at a young age. "I was always escaping into music. When I was growing up, every cent I could earn I spent buying records." At age 13, growing up in Everett, Washington, Jessie was the singer in his first rock band. But when he was 15, he saw John Mayall play harmonica in concert, which immediately led Jessie to that instrument. "I started studying the blues and especially the harmonica players like Little Walter, Paul Butterfield, Magic Dick with the J. Geils Band, Stevie Wonder, and Toots Thielemans."

When Jessie was 19, the chromatic limitations of the diatonic harmonica compelled him to embrace the saxophone. He deepened his studies of jazz improvisation and composition at Western Washington State University (where he minored in art). From his late teens on, he was in a succession of bands playing different styles of music -- Mosehops (hard blues-rock), Rainbow Blues Band (strictly the blues), Deja vu (funk and R&B) and Aurora (pop-rock). Aurora toured extensively throughout the Pacific Northwest and Canada. When that group broke up, Cooper moved to Los Angeles, where he got gigs playing with The Coasters and Charles Wright before beginning to record his own music. Cooper also maintained his love of working with wood by opening a museum-quality, archival, picture framing company (which he still owns) where each piece is carefully crafted by hand from start to finish. "I believe music is a high art form that adds something special to our lives," says Cooper. "It can take us through many emotions, add-richness to our world and even assist in healing broken spirits. I create music to effect positive change in people's lives."

<https://coopersoundwaves.com>