

Maneki Neko

Al Mikula

"*Wanderings* is about the in-between spaces"

Maneki Nekos' first new album in three years, *Wanderings*, sees the Austin, TX-based soundscape artist once again exploring the world of slow, ambient music. The songs developed organically from the spare outline of demos developed in the studio. The result is fluid movement of sound and textures.

Maneki Neko is an ambient music project of composer and recording artist Al Mikula. Born in Hawaii, raised in Iceland, California, New England, and now based in Austin, TX, Maneki Neko crafts drifting, ambient soundscapes for yoga, relaxation, meditation, and massage therapy. Al's musical tendencies arose as a teen playing with his father's Teac 4 channel reel-to-reel system. There were countless hours spent manipulating tape echo, feedback, layering, and everything else that could be done with sound. Still, Al's pathway to music began as a software developer in interactive audio/digital video. He left the world of high technology to pursue his lifetime love of music as a recording engineer in Austin's vibrant music and arts scene. The music stems from an enjoyment of manipulating sound to create complex pads, and an interest in Asian culture and philosophy.

In 2005, Maneki Neko released his debut album, *Auracle*. The album contains five tracks of cinematic, sonic, and ambient soundscapes that are relatively drift-less and free-form. The breathy shakuhachi flute sounds and atmospheric embellishments create a spacey, yet relaxing response that is purely beautiful. The sophomore release, *muichi motsu*, was released in mid-2014. The album contains eight songs that continue in the same traditions as the debut release, but the result is much more majestic and creative. The album title means to "hold nothing". In this case, the album is aptly-titled, due to its free-flowing nature and meditative qualities.

Summing up the philosophy of Maneki Neko's music, "Sound is a core element in almost all meditative traditions. Sound can really change the way we feel - our heart rate, brain waves, and muscle tension. With my music I try to blend the musical traditions I experienced around the world with ambient sounds that let listeners relax or explore through meditation."

Maneki Neko takes a chilled out vibe, layers it with gently rolling hints of melody, and grounds it in deep, satisfying, resonant beds. The result is music with depth and purpose, music that invites the mind and body to slow down and relax in its ambient textures. Mixing influences from his travels, Maneki Neko combines traditional instruments and melodic structures from cultures with long-standing meditative traditions to build soundscapes for a relaxing inner journey. Quite simply, the music is all about slowing down, reflecting, and relaxing.

Links:

Official Website: manekinekomusic.com

Soundcloud: soundcloud.com/manekinekomusic

Facebook: facebook.com/manekinekomusic