

*It is by the time of the Autumnal equinox that Thompkins awakes a state of spirit very particular to it, of clemency, of devotion. Like the Autumnal wind his music is blessed by the rain, the leaves changing colour and falling from the trees, the frost, the corn fields and the swans, typical from that Central American State. Musical references we find in dawn, ghost, in the clouds aroma right before they dilute in rain, and it is alike a touch of magic that we feel all this bucolic environment present in **Harvest Rain** music, like in one Winter morning that announces a tremendous storm. Jason Thompkins was born in 1975 in South Carolina, USA. His project Harvest Rain sprang from one "Autumnal calling" which is its central inspiration. His music is originally from the "folk", the common people and their stories, also commonly fitted in the neofolk scene. I prefer to face it as an apparition, in one Nature symbolic concept*



Your music approaches this Autumnal feeling. When did you first felt this Nature "Autumnal calling" that you turn into your music? What does it really says?

When I was a young boy my Father used to take us camping during the cold seasons. I always loved the smell of the old Oak limbs burning over the fire and the feeling of the icy nights. In the woods behind my Father's house there is an old abandoned graveyard and an old abandoned house. We used to play in these woods. I remember being told that it was haunted and we should stay away from there. However, we used to sneak out of our windows at night and all the boys would meet in these woods. There was a legend that an old witch used to live in this house and she had a pack of dogs. We used to actually hear wild dogs late at night howling near the house. It was only recently that me and Chris stumbled upon a grave in the front yard of this old house. I am now 29 years old and I'm still drawn to this place. I have had many out-of-body dreams and I always end up in this area. I like to go camping there in late Autumn. There is something eerie yet tranquil about this untamed wilderness. Near the graveyard are Oak trees that are extremely old. Some of the branches of these Oaks stretch out so far that the limbs are growing back into the soil. Wild Gardenia grows in the middle of the cemetery. During full moons the graveyard literally looks like it is glowing. Especially when there is ice and frost covering everything. I'm now certain my imagination was built as a young boy playing in such places as this. It became my "safe place" and is still my "safe place". The spirits and ghosts that linger in that area are not evil, but are friendly. That is why I am very reluctant as to who I bring out there. What it really

says is not for me to worry about. I can walk outside now and if a cold wind blows through my body I immediately wish to be back in my childhood surroundings.

How do you compare these feelings to a musical experience?

Most musicians write about what they love or what they hate. That is to say, their obsessions. Naturally, when I started **Harvest Rain** it was a way for me to express my devotion to this. The name **Harvest Rain** itself comes from my first song I ever wrote on an acoustic guitar. The song was originally called "Gown". Of course, a gown is a night-robe, a see-through dress a woman wears when she is getting ready for sleep. In the lyrics was the phrase: "In this season of this harvest rain....". I wanted my music to evoke an Autumnal/Ghostly/Rainy feeling and I wanted to preserve my memories within music. Most apparitions are seen wearing gowns. And from my experience most hauntings occur during Autumn or Spring. I do not fully understand why yet nor do I wish to. However, in Autumn there is a certain aspect to the climate that enhances the ability of the dead to show themselves. In Spring it is the aroma of flowers that the dead are drawn to. As far as music I can walk outside and smell the coming thunderstorm and see the swirling clouds overhead and immediately write a song. In Autumn I can write a song influenced by the sound of creaking walls and noises that the winds make.



What is your mainly focus when you compose? Do you feel some kind of Nature transmutation or there is something more concrete that you explore?

I write about simple things, for example, the wind. I write about twilight. I write about lanterns and strange natural phenomena like the Will-o-the-Wisp. Although I do not make a direct statement about these things I see them as symbols. There was one person who said "Dawn" must be an important woman in your life to write such a love song about her. I've never written a love song for another human being. What they did not understand was that "Dawn" was a love song I wrote for morning itself. "A Song for Dawn" is an instrumental version for "A Song for

Morning". Of course there is always a "she" or a "her" in my lyrics, but they are not human.

Explain a little about your creative process.

Whenever I feel the "presence" of whatever it is that I have yet to explain I either pick up a guitar and start singing freely to it. When I get a 'skeleton' formed, I pick up my pen and paper and add 'flesh'. When I am sitting in my room and the wind suddenly blows the curtains and the candles start flickering I'll get inspired to write. Most **Harvest Rain** songs were recorded right on the spot. I'll feel it's "presence" and I'll hit record and lay a guitar or drum track down. From there I'll start adding other things and before I know it a song is done.

It is part of the music essence to have a beginning, midst and one end. Do you consider music a time in a time, a time taken from the daily, "extra-ordinary" time?

The only music I am interested in is music that can make me feel it's "presence". I am still listening to the same albums I was listening to when I was a teenager although a few artists I have discovered through the years have earned my respect. I like things that are real. Some of the music I listen to lately are the ghostly-folk music of **'Stone Breath'** and the ghostly-ambient music of **Tor Lundvall** who also happens to be my all-time favourite painter. I also like the brutal music of early **'Swans'**. This music I can actually feel as if the sound is almost identical to a comfortable drug being injected into me. Most artists or musicians I admire unfortunately are people who know what extreme suffering is. Some of my teenage idols ended up hanging themselves. It amazes me how individuals who are truly haunted can create pure beauty.

We know about your Nature inspirations, how about Men? Miguel Serrano is a great and obvious influence. In which way does this Man influence your work?

Miguel Serrano is the only author that inspired me to write an entire album dedicated to him. In most cases it is the symbols of my surrounding landscapes that inspire my music. I get sick to death of people who simply disregard him because of his beliefs in the so-called 'political field'. I have never read such beautiful writings from a human-being as I have from Miguel Serrano. This "man" writes from an area that is occupied by things that we long to know and feel. The fact that he is not well-known just shows that he is not meant to be read by the masses. Miguel Serrano is for the few and the few that know this. One does not cross Miguel Serrano without knowing they were meant to and those that do read him and do not get it were not meant to get it in the first place. I had always been interested in Herman Hesse and Carl Jung. Years ago I was reading "The Gnostic Jung" and it had quotes from Miguel Serrano in the book. My search began and it took years before I was able to get writings by him. All this was in synch with my own obsession with the legends of the lost homelands of Thule/Hyperborea and lost gods like Abraxas/Wotan/Lucifer and so forth.

Also in which way is your music influenced by the country you live in? Will you compose with a different spirit whilst living in another place?

I do not see myself as living in a "Country" any longer. I do not believe that there are Countries anymore. There are only the last little remnants of traditions in certain countries, but the demonic presence that works in shadows behind the scenes has taken over the entire world. Only in rural sections of certain places can I find the "feeling/aura" of a certain location. London is New York is Berlin is Paris. I mean, honestly, what is the difference in these places besides they may speak different languages? In fact, the whole world is being trained to speak "English". If I were in a nice place away from the multi-cultured Americanized cities of Europe then I'm certain it would have an effect of me. I remember the country-side of England really inspired me in 1993-4. It would be refreshing since the area I live in is under extreme spiritual and psychic attack.

*As for Jamey Thompkins and Chris Mehl: do they work with you since the beginnings of **Harvest Rain**? Is it a collective project or yours?*

Jamey and Chris have always worked with me since the beginning. However, lately we do our own recordings. Sometimes we still work collectively, but lately I record my own music and work with new faces. Besides, Jamey, Chris and myself have recorded so many songs that we have enough in our archives to last us for many years to come. Shortly, a Harvest Rain 'Retrospective 1995-2005' full-length album will be released which will document Harvest Rain when we were more of a "group" than just me playing all the instruments. However, my new partners will also be present as well as the direction Harvest Rain has taken with just me keeping it going. That being said, Jamey and Chris are still my best-friends and still play when I have the inspiration to record music. 1998 was the year that Harvest Rain recorded the full-length album "Evening and Devotion" and that was the last album done as a "group". Everything since then was mostly of my own making as Chris disappeared, I moved way out into the country-side away from here and Jamey started a business.



*How does happen the collaborations with other musicians in **Harvest Rain** music? Would you care to comment about whom they were and why?*

Axel Frank of the German group **Werkraum** was the first collaboration I did. Both of our groups had been on the THAGLASZ 10-LP Box-set and I was amazed by his music. I took it upon myself to contact him. From there we became friends and shared a common vision. I consider his music to be pure. Unlike the many people in the so-called "neofolk" scene who simply put on camo-jackets and make a wall of disgusting noise with German samples he struck me as a true artist who played real music. He has contributed vocals for **Harvest Rain** and I did some guitars for his debut album. Matt Howden played violins and mixed Harvest Rain's debut album. Recently I have been working with the Chilean project **Der Arbeiter**. Once again, his music is straight from the soul. Also, **Tor Lundvall** has added some of his ghostly soundscapes to my music. I have always admired Tor's music and paintings. Me and Tor share a deep love of Autumn and it has been very special getting to know him for the past year or so. I have never seen anybody transform the world of Ghost and the "presence" of Autumn such as Tor. His paintings are absolutely amazing and I still can not grasp at how he does it. Anyone interested to see his work should go to <http://www.torlundvall.com>

*In a **Harvest Rain** retrospective, what do you enhance the most? Albums, periods, people? How do you reflect your music's evolution?*

I can go through **Harvest Rain's** archive and travel straight back to the mental state I was in when a certain song is played. Also, there are certain songs I can not listen to for personal reasons.

*How do you define **Harvest Rain's** "little aura"? Do you consider your music as an "external heart"?*

It can be described as the hidden realm of South Carolina's soul. People are afraid of it. They do not want to see it or feel it. Some find it disturbing. However, some find it comfortable. Legends and folk-tales are a thing of the past. People do not want to hear about the so-called "dark" aspect of Southern history. The masses want their TV-sets and there driveways paved. Whether they like it or not they are going to have to eventually come into contact with it. Although the "aura" of **Harvest Rain** may seem a bit on the "dark" side, it isn't seen that way to us. I wouldn't say my music is an "external heart" as much as it is the collective soul of the dead.

*"Evening and Devotion" is **Harvest Rain's** latest EP and it is dedicated to "Hazel". Your songs also refer a "she" many times. Is "Hazel" all the time? Speak about "Hazel" a little.*

My relationship with Hazel is something I wish not to speak about. However, I will say that Hazel is not a living human being. As for the "her" and "she" that are always in my lyrics, it is hard for me to even understand what or who exactly I am speaking of. Whenever I do try to understand who I am singing to I feel I am

defiling her. I have even gone so far as to tell my 'human' girlfriends of the past that they were the materialization of Autumn and Morning in order that I may touch "Her" and this didn't come off to well with some of them.

***Cain River** is your solo project. Why did you decided to work in a project on your own? Does not **Harvest Rain**, only by itself, regards your particular way of expression?*

The first **Cain River** "episode" was extremely experimental and as such it was my expression of Spring-time. It was entirely recorded in an extreme Opium and Poppy binge I ended up in. I had isolated myself on my Grandfather's farm and was experimenting with different herbs and tinctures. Some nights I was sleeping in a tent and writing things on paper in complete darkness. I purposely did this to see what would "come out of me". In other words I let myself be a puppet to whatever forces that wanted to use my body to communicate. **Harvest Rain** remains devoted to Autumn and Winter. However, the other **Cain River** projects ended up being recorded during the cold seasons, but it was more drum/bass/electric guitar oriented. That is the only difference.

Did you always thought about being a musician? Do you consider it as your true calling in life? What makes you dream, what drives you?

What drives me is my devotion to enhancing my physical/spiritual/mental abilities to a higher level. I've always been a religious person although very secretive about it until recently. However, that word may sound fundamental to many. I am driven by beautiful fair-skinned girls that are able to keep up with me no matter what crazy ideas I may have for a first date like jumping in the river during the middle of Winter or making love in a cemetery while asking the girl to use her body as a medium for the dead, blonde wine for tranquil nights, red wine for religious nights, staying in my house and not communicating with other humans for weeks at the time, spending time with my Grandfather, honouring and communicating with my ancestors and so forth.



Where is your music heard more often? Are you happy with the affluence to it? Do you receive many feed-back from your "audience"?

I receive some letters from time to time. Mostly from Europe. Of course I am pleased that **Harvest Rain** are starting to be heard more. All I do is write music and stories. Although I do not write for human-beings I am glad that humans can relate to it.

Harvest Rain "live" doesn't happen many often, is there a particular reason?

Because I don't care too much about playing for people. I did that when I was 16 until I was 23. I do not mind sitting at the river and playing a song for a few people gathered around a fire. However, playing in a "bar" for Lord knows whom is almost forbidden in my opinion. This is why I formed a project called '**Cold Reading**'. However, after two live shows it was obvious that it was too intense and I learned that extreme anger when performed live is damaging to the mental states of individuals.

Please, confess your projects for 2005.

The **Harvest Rain** full-length CD is to be released, that is all I know for now.

Discography

Seek the Fallen Leaf (Tape/CDR 1995 Haunted Showers Music)
Evening and Devotion (Tape/CDR 1997 Haunted Showers Music)
Ghost Story (CDR 1998 Haunted Showers Music)
Soil (Tape/CDR 1998 Haunted Showers Music)
Dead Horses (CDR 1998 Haunted Showers Music)
A Southern Cross Reflection (CDR 1999 Haunted Showers Music)
Communion with a Morning Star (CDR 2000 Haunted Showers Music)
A Frost comes with the Wind (CD 2002 OPN/ L'Ere des Temps)
Blood Hymns to the Northerly Midnight (Forthcoming 2003 CD)
Evening and Devotion (7"EP 2003 OPN)

Compilations

Order of the White Rose (Haunted Showers Music)
The Ballroom (Haunted Showers Music)
Thaglasz IX "Die Waldganger" (3 LP Set Germany)
Thaglasz X "Security of Ignorance" (10 LP Box-set Part II Germany)
Vaws "Leni 100" Leni Reifenstahl Tribute CD (Germany)