

## THE DANCING COLORS OF NIGHTTIME FIRESKY

Late one night, in the spring of 1999, two friends and myself had been camping in the Badlands of North Dakota when we were fortunate enough to share in a beautiful display of the Aurora Borealis (Northern Lights). The Aurora Borealis is a phenomenon in which particles in the Earth's atmosphere are electrically charged such that they emit colors of light in different frequencies, presenting a series of spectacular lightshows – almost like fireworks in slow motion. We were soon amazed to find that the sky had gradually become enveloped in these vivid, explosive colors. For hours it lasted – often shifting dramatically in form, hues, intensity, and motion. It was a beautiful, exciting experience to share with friends and a memory to hold for a lifetime. In “The Dancing Colors of Nighttime Firesky”, it is my aim to reflect the vivid, dynamic, constantly shifting nature of the Aurora Borealis.

Steelpan orchestras are so rich in sound and texture that it seems only fitting to use this instrumentation to share the experience. This piece is written as another example of what I consider to be chamber steelpan music. I strongly believe that the art form of pan needn't be limited to Panorama rip-offs and Jimmy Buffet tunes. The sounds of Andy Narrell's “Songlines”, The Yellowjackets' “Wildlife”, and Sting, Pat Metheny, Gonzalo Rubalcaba, and John McLaughlin have influenced this particular piece, to name a few.

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