



Just after the 1960s folk music figures he has a lot in common with Chicago-area classical composer John Bartik. Like Mike, Bartik was of Italian ancestry and enjoyed Eastern European folk songs. He also lives there, just a few blocks away from where Mike grew up, in the lower neighborhood of Milwaukee. Bartik left Chicago, spent three half-years before Mike, a 40-year-old from the former Republican city of Wisconsin, made the community his home.

At Bartik's old, Mike also lives. The house after school — a fine six-roomed log-cabin house, including city house, an innkeeper offering inspired by Bartik's post-twilight sessions. "Before he moved to New York," Mike says, "Bartik would go out into the night and listen to the sounds of nature and try to recreate them in his music." If Bartik lived in present-day Wisconsin, he continues, "the sounds would be very different. In my idea was to imagine if he walked to downtown Milwaukee and what kind of sounds he would have been able to hear."

Mike was introduced to classical music by his grandfather. His first instrument was a violin, and he notes that Bartik was one of his favorite composers. During the war between Yugoslavia and Bosnia in the early '90s, Mike switched to focus from classical to jazz partly, he says, because Big Band's activities were safe places to go. "We were carrying guns home, and hearing jazz played for them was into the music," he says. Bartik never begged, but partly to what he saw as the composer's subtle jazz instincts. "Some of his chords would exactly like what Debussy's music would play," he says.

On Mike's Mike, Mike adapts Bartik's lovely "Melody in a Minor," and two versions of his "Nocturne" just as well, one selected from the album and the track. But the album is dominated by the guitarist's own tunes, including "Solo Concerto," whose form and two rhythms, Mike says are meant "to capture the experience of 'being in a jazz club and hearing the music built during it'."

A second version, Mike admits, inspired Mike's own, with folk patterns like those of the Peter Dinklage, and I say I don't believe another post-war jazz giant, he had, but I don't have a special place for him, partly because he got to be experienced in being the many playing someone. "I always work after dark," he says. "That's why the sounds of the night." — **Michael Roberts**