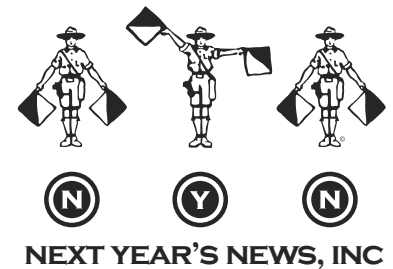


# News Release

**For details, contact:** Paula Ashley / Next Year's News, Inc.  
Direct Phone: 419-241-3698, ext. 203

**For artist's bio/discography:** [www.dwightashley.com](http://www.dwightashley.com)



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C O M M U N I C A T I O N : W H A T E V E R I T T A K E S !®

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **15 years after the original recordings, Dwight Ashley's *Watermelon Sugar* proves the old adage: You can't go home again**

When composer Dwight Ashley first saw the Mark Packo collage entitled *Watermelon Sugar*, which features a haunting, Victorian-era photo of a little girl eating a cherry, he knew instantly he would create a recording based on the work. Ironically, the project itself served to prove the message the image inspired: Time moves on, and takes all things with it.

“The album’s title track is about an ideal that you lost, and that can’t be restored,” says Ashley. “I always related to the little girl in the photo as someone who died. Not just in that the photo was probably nearly a hundred years old — so that little girl would have long ago grown up, and was probably no longer even living — but that even if she were still alive, all the things connected with the moment in which that photo was taken were dead. *Watermelon Sugar*, and the track that follows, *Gossamer Sea*, is written from the perspective of the one who survives, who’s living with the memory of the lost beloved — and perhaps not doing very well with it.”

When Ashley decided to record the album, he envisioned these two tracks as the core around which the rest of the project would be developed. However, circumstances at the third-party studio at which he did his recordings in the early 90’s were not conducive to maintaining a consistent recording schedule, and after the studio’s partners split up, Ashley tabled the project.

But when he decided to finish the recording a decade later, he might as well have set himself to resurrect the dead.

Curiously, changes in recording technology had no bearing on Ashley’s difficulties in creating new tracks for the work 10 years after the original tracks were made. “The entirety of what is now *Watermelon Sugar* was done on two-inch tape — but that was not the issue. I had no trouble matching the sound quality with the digital audio workstation I’m using today.

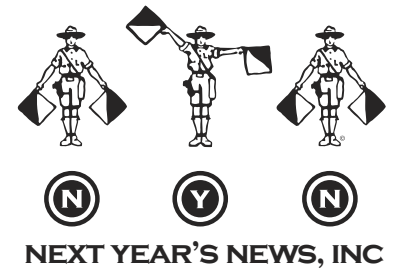
“The whole problem was that no matter how hard I tried, I couldn’t replicate the emotional space I was in when those first tracks for *Watermelon Sugar* were recorded. Every attempt I made at it was a total failure.”

— more —

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— continued from page 1 —

Well, not exactly — because as Ashley confesses in the liner notes to his 2005 release: “What did work, however, was turning those eight ‘failures’ into an entirely new album — *Four*.” A side-by-side listening of these two albums reveals at once the nature of the mismatch: while the key tracks on *Watermelon Sugar* have a deeply intimate character, *Four* is the very antithesis of this. The exotic, oceanic sound-space of *Four*, as Ashley puts it, “just didn’t make sense with the earlier stuff.”

The context in which the two sets of recordings were produced is also telling. When he started *Watermelon Sugar*, Ashley had just finished his first collaboration with Tim Story, *A Desperate Serenity*, and was working with Story on another project, *Drop* (which wasn’t actually released until 1997). While by no means a Tim Story knock-off, *Watermelon Sugar* unmistakably shows Story’s influence. Ten years later, Ashley had just completed his first solo release, *Discrete Carbon*, and was forming the concept for another, 2006’s *Ataxia*. The influence of the territory he explored with these two projects is similarly unmistakable in *Four*.

So how is it that *Watermelon Sugar* was completed and released?

“I almost didn’t do it,” answers Ashley, “but after having put out two albums where I mentioned it in the liner notes, I almost felt I had to. However, instead of filling out the project with new compositions and putting it out as a ‘new release,’ I included several other tracks produced in the same timeframe, and issued it as an ‘archival recording.’ The liner notes make it clear that this album wasn’t crafted as a cohesive whole, as are my other releases — and that the recordings are essentially sketches, which have not been as ‘constructed’ as my other work.”

While Ashley may see *Watermelon Sugar* as more of a scrapbook than an album, it is a very revealing scrapbook indeed, demonstrating to the discerning listener Ashley’s path to his current creative vantage point. Mastered by Robert Rich, this recording has received as much care as any Ashley has produced to date — and yet another incarnation of the title track may be the starting point for a new project, *Either/Or*. But as for making *Watermelon Sugar* into the album he originally conceived it to be? “I’ve moved on,” says Ashley. “*Watermelon Sugar* may not be finished — but it’s done.”

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For artist's bio, release information, and sample tracks:

[www.dwightashley.com](http://www.dwightashley.com)