

Artist: *Hiss Golden Messenger*
Title: *Country Hai East Cotton*
Label: *Heaven & Earth Magic Recording Co.*
Catalog #: *HEM-001*

Format: *Limited edition compact disk*

Street Date: *August 2009*

Suggested List: *\$14.98*

Suggested Songs: *O Nathaniel, Watch Out For
The Cannonball, John Has Gone To The Light,
Resurrection Blues, Isobel*

Strongest Markets: *San Francisco, New York,
Brooklyn, Austin, Chicago, Chapel Hill,
Birmingham, Denver, Columbus (OH),
Memphis, Nashville, San Diego, Tucson, Seattle,
Portland, Los Angeles, Salt Lake City, London (UK), Manchester (UK)*



Court And Spark frontman MC Taylor, and his musical partner Scott Hirsch, are now *Hiss Golden Messenger* (how great a name is that!), who take the sound of later *Court And Spark*, a sort of psychedelic folk with bits of dub (a la *Souled American*), and incorporate some more jammy improvised sounds, taking inspiration from *Traffic*, and especially the *Grateful Dead*, mixing slow burning twang, with wild sprawling grooves, wah wah guitar and horns (lots of horns!). Fans of the *Court And Spark* will definitely want to check this out, Taylor's voice is as warm and rough and emotional as ever, but a bit more melodic, and there's still plenty of twang, and Hirsch and Taylor can still pen a mean tune, but they definitely let loose a bit, embracing what some in the underground might consider guilty pleasures, and some of the songs and sounds here are definitely surprising and a bit unexpected. Smooth and groovy, laid back and mellow, a definite seventies FM radio vibe, a little *Laurel Canyon*, even a bit of funk here and there, a little jazziness, from country ballad to boogie stomp to jazzy dark pop (a sound that were it a bit more fucked up and acid fired could even be an *Ariel Pink* jam!) to one track that definitely gets a bit dub, but those songs are all wound up in a warm woozy playful sound that manages to be all it's own while proudly flying the flags of all the sounds that came before.
—*Aquarius Records*



Seeking to liberate himself from the confines of formal band dynamics and more fully engage his broad musical palette, Jai Lil Diamond (nee M.C. Taylor)—in collaboration with longtime musical partner Scott Hirsch—conceived *Hiss Golden Messenger* in San Francisco, California, in the summer of 2006.

Prior to *Hiss Golden Messenger*, Diamond and Hirsch spent eight years at the core of *The Court & Spark*, a celebrated San Francisco psychedelic country & western group that released a series of seminal long-play albums—including *Ventura Whites*, *Bless You*, *Witch Season*, and *Hearts*—which garnered widespread critical acclaim and a devoted following. During their tenure as a band, *The Court & Spark* toured consistently, sharing stages with *Wilco*, *Neko Case*, *M. Ward*, *Six Organs of Admittance*, the *Skygreen Leopards*, *The Go-Betweens*, *Magnolia Electric Co.*, *Shearwater*, and many others.

Over time, Diamond and Hirsch tired of the road and the restrictive aspects of being traveling musicians. Seeking an out, Diamond devoted himself to the writings of Meher Baba while working as a janitor at the Northern California Meher Baba Center in El Cerrito, California, while Hirsch began a full-time

leatherwork operation out of his apartment, making handmade sandals, belts, pouches, and guitar straps for musicians such as Bob Weir (of The Grateful Dead), Erykah Badu, and The Allman Brothers.

During this time of recovery, the two musicians—who began playing together at the age of 17—kept in touch; inspired by the Meher Baba’s writings and the solitude and anonymity that his caretaking job afforded him, Diamond composed a suite of songs touching on mortality and reincarnation, space/time travel, and slapstick comedy films from the 1990s. Agreeing that Hiss Golden Messenger would be an aesthetic approach to music making, Diamond and Hirsch reconvened and entered the Different Fur Trading Co.¹ to begin recording the tracks that would eventually become *Country Hai East Cotton*.

Many musicians—including John Hofer and Tim Bluhm (of The Mother Hips), Pink Nasty, Matt Cunitz (of Brightblack Morning Light), Greg Wiz (of Wilco side-group The Autumn Defense), Patrick Main (of Tarnation), and Tom Heyman—contribute to *Country Hai East Cotton*, and in so doing conjure a truly singular album of future blues, country-fried hi-fi, and ropy NEU!-jazz that sounds gloriously contemporary while simultaneously evoking the spectres of *Bare Trees*-era Fleetwood Mac, King Tubby’s crackling console ramblings, and the burned houseboat honky-stomp of Waylon Jennings. As Jambase editor Dennis Cook remarks, “*Country Hai East Cotton* is the sort of album years hence that will be celebrated and held heart-close like recent rediscoveries like Linda Perhacs’ *Parallelograms*, Vashti Bunyan’s *Just Another Diamond Day* and other out-of-time, highly unique jewels. The added bonus is this is a contemporary happening, very much alive and ripe for discovery today instead of tomorrow.”

Country Hai East Cotton is out on Heaven & Earth Magic Recording Co., a record label jointly run by Diamond and Hirsch. With packaging designed by artist Nathaniel Russell, and printed on 100% recycled materials by Stumptown Printers in Portland, OR, *Country Hai East Cotton* is available in a limited, hand-numbered edition of 500.

In their short time as a musical collective, Hiss Golden Messenger has played with Meg Baird (of Espers), P.G. Six (of Tower Recordings), Endless Boogie, Vetiver, Michael Hurley, MV/EE & The Bummer Road, Banana (of The Youngbloods and Raccoon Records fame), Voice of the Seven Woods, and others. Sporadic live dates in support of *Country Hai East Cotton* are scheduled throughout the year (including a festival in Upstate New York curated by Diamond which features many of the aforementioned contemporary artists). Hiss Golden Messenger is currently at work on a live EP recorded at WFMU, as well as the as-yet-untitled follow-up to *Country Hai East Cotton*.

In 2007, Diamond disassociated himself from the Meher Baba Center (although he still loosely follows Meher Baba’s teachings) and moved to Eaglewing Estates in Orange County, North Carolina, where he, his wife, and his newborn son raise kale, pole beans, squash, and sunflowers. He recently completed a graduate program in folklore at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Hirsch currently lives in Brooklyn, NY, where he continues to successfully run his leatherwork business.
—Bob Mrah, Durango, Colorado, 2009

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¹ This legendary Mission District studio, founded by synthesizer wizard Dr. Patrick Gleeson, gave birth to such legendary recordings as Herbie Hancock’s *Sextant* and *Headhunters*. All songs tracked to two-inch tape.