

Marotta/Griesgraber ~ profile

From first listen, Jerry Marotta and Tom Griesgraber's music engenders a sense of freedom and experience; of new adventures led by experienced guides. What unfolds is a series of refreshingly new stories with unusual and memorable characters, all told without words, where narrative and dialogue feel present but are left for the listener to fill in with their own details.

Both Jerry and Tom are multi-instrumentalists, but their specialties combine one of the world's oldest instruments and one of its newest: drums and the Chapman Stick. While it's the sum of the parts that makes for this duo's creative whole, their individual histories give a fascinating background to the stories in their music.

Originally from Ohio, Jerry's professional career began shortly after high school with the band Orleans and their smash hit Still The One. As fate would have it this track got the attention of Peter Gabriel who was embarking upon his solo career after leaving the band Genesis. While working with Peter over the next ten years, Jerry was able to develop his own voice; a sound that would define an entire movement in popular music. In the process he wrote a chapter in the history of modern rock drumming that established him as a player without peer.

Jerry's uncanny time feel and sense of orchestration quickly attracted the notice of top artists the world over. Hall & Oats, Tears for Fears, Stevie Nicks, Paul McCartney, Elvis Costello, David Sylvian and Robert Fripp, Suzanne Vega, The Indigo Girls, Sarah McLachlan, Jewel, Ani DiFranco, 10,000 Maniacs, Tony Levin, John Mayer and countless others have sought him out for their records. What sets this current group apart from most of those credits though is that there are no restrictions or requirements on the music, no producer saying what can and can't be done. One of the most creative and talented drummers the world has ever known is now free to make the music he wants to make.

While perhaps a bit new for Jerry, this self-produced approach to music is very much what Tom Griesgraber is accustomed to. Already an established solo artist (O3E/Spotted Peccary Records), Tom has released several recordings and toured extensively as an opener and guest with the California Guitar Trio, as well as having opened shows for many of the biggest names in the progressive rock and contemporary instrumental genres including Steve Morse and the Dixie Dregs, The Tony Levin Band, Stanley Jordan, Bill Bruford's Earthworks, Al Dimeola, Larry Carlton and Steve Lukather, Tower of Power, Michael Manring and Jazz Mandolin Project.

A native of San Diego, he played piano as a child but majored on electric guitar in college, graduating in 1995 with top honors from the renowned Berklee College of Music. Picking up the Chapman Stick in 1997 he quickly immersed himself in it and was soon writing, performing and recording his own music. Still unknown to most of the world, The Stick is a 12-string guitar/bass/synthesizer hybrid capable of sounding like all three instrument families at once.

Tom's mastery of the Stick's multi-timbral capabilities was a natural fit for Jerry's talent of creating unique drum parts and made it easy for the duo to start writing and performing together not long after they met at a Tony Levin Band show. After an initial series of live dates, work quickly moved to Jerry's studio in Woodstock, NY where over several months they finished work on their debut CD.

What lies ahead for this team is as open as what has come so far. With creativity and quality as their only true guides it's hard to predict what the music may sound like, only that it will be unprecedented.

