

“Impressive Guitar Instrumental Album Without the Fluff”

by Ray Van Horn, Jr. – 9/2009

Guitar instrumental albums at one point were a phenomenon when renowned names such as Tony MacAlpine, Steve Vai, Chris Johnson, Chris Poland and of course Joe Satriani were hip rock and metal couture. Correspondingly, North American audiences hung over on corporate glam metal found disfavor for guitar solos upon the advent of thumb-biting nineties grunge riffs. The generation reared upon those stripped, chunky sounds has only recently re-evaluated its anti-soloing stance. It's taken the jaw-slacking shred of everyone from Marty Friedman to Herman Li of Dragonforce to Shadows Fall's Jon Donais to recapture the desire for scorching tremolo and wailing arpeggio scales, but it *has* come about once again.

Operating in the regional backyard of Jon Donais is the New England-based Scott Motyka. As Shadows Fall has historically found solace in Buddhism as a launch pad for their power-thrash exultations, don't expect Scott Motyka to be snapping his wrists and neck muscles to mega bpm's. However, Motyka, a very accomplished guitarist in his own right (and utterly heavy when he wants to be), turns to spirituality and organized religion as partial platforms for his exploratory work on his seven-song debut *Cut...From Within*.

As good art is bled more than manufactured, Scott Motyka expressively utilizes his sharply-dressed capacities on *Cut...From Within*, so much to the point he trims the fat many guitar instrumental albums even today suffer from. Instead, Motyka finds the soul within his compositions, creates a basic playroom for them to thrive within and *then* sculpts from there. Motyka himself describes his album as a place where he could “explore some of the key turning points” of his life, thus making “a record that captured those experiences – and in this case *without words*.”

Point taken out the chute with the hammering “Betrayers Trust,” a beastly opening number with as much Billy Sheehan and Paul Gilbert guiding its heavy rhythm as the entire King's X trio. Motyka admits to letting some anger flow into this track and if the mad tempo and argumentative bass weren't enough to coax his proposed vehemence, his busy solos inflect his position.

In contrast, Motyka's smooth calypso pulse of “The Romantical” exhibits some of Joe Satriani's dreamy syncopation and random scale-spelunking, yet Scott Motyka keeps a primary groove flowing in a seductive wave while tempering his solos for the most part. Detailed only when necessary, “The Romantical” is a playful love bite to cozy up with.

As many prolific guitarists today have optimistically exploited within their works, Motyka incorporates Eastern world flair on “Rabbiam” with tabla and percussion to assist his slinking rhythm. It serves as a proverbial pause before the rapid-fire

“Seniorita” and the snaggletoothed “Great Wall of Douglas,” the latter of which finds Motyka pulling distorted threads of white noise to accompany his fret whipping and whammy crashing.

Scott Motyka, with his exemplary self-produced album, is to be considered one of the United States’ best-kept guitar secrets. A family man and assumed spirit chaser, his talent resounds from both his lofty whims and his grounded discipline. The man wants to engage his audience on a cerebral level and he certainly meets his goal.

~