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REVIEW

AT WAR WITH SELF / Torn Between Dimensions / Free Electric Sound

 by: [FRODE LEIRVIK_a.k.a._frodeo](#)

Initiated by guitarist Glenn Snelwar, At War With Self is a new trio on the Instrumental Progressive scene. Completing the trio are Michael Manring on bass and Mark Zonder (Fates Warning) on drums. *Torn Between Dimensions* is their debut album, made to open doors to Progressive Rock, Classical guitar and Metal for those unfamiliar to the genres. A bold intention, one may say, but can it be met?



The title *Torn Between Dimensions* points out a path from one corner of Progressive Rock to the other, via short stops at a number of other stylistic homes, such as Folk Rock, Latino, Jazz, Fusion, and Classical music. The word *Torn* clearly indicates that there is no home to be found in either corner or stop, but rather this one belongs in all the aforementioned ... kind of like "a rolling stone, where I lay my head is home," one could say. This slightly schizophrenic philosophy is perhaps not loaded with massive commercial impact; nevertheless it's an honest philosophy that might apply to many out there.

At War With Self is a trio only on paper, as the album reveals a band in a more quintet like format. This is because Snelwar handles more than just electric guitars, and because the other two contribute with omnipresent performances. A signature for the band is Snelwar's use of mandolin and various keyboards (including string arrangements). Also, the extensive (and creative!) use of e-bow adds a particular dimension to certain compositions. Finally, Zonder's melodic drum work and colourful percussion makes the band sound bigger and much more vivid than you'd expect from a trio.

At War With Self's strength lies in those moments where they manage to create a hypnotizing state or mood, with the best example being "A Gap in the Stream of Mind Part Two." They have also done a fine job in making transitions both within and between compositions apparently seamless. Listen to the end of the title track, "Torn Between Dimensions," which is simply great. All compositions have been subject to clever arrangements, leaving the listener with a "total" experience. And lastly, the tension or energy created in the often present contrast between static and dynamic expressions helps fuel this album along its path.

Their weaker side is when playing Metal-orientated material, much due to less innovative riffs and Manring's fretless bass work turning a little soggy. Luckily, this is only a major feature on the 3-minute short "Run," since too much of the kind would have been a real killjoy.

Torn Between Dimensions is an album that might suit more than those gathering under a Progressive umbrella. There is a variety of styles represented, without the album being confusing or disorientated. Still, it's under reasonable doubt if their intention to open doors is actually met. The album requires a solid dose of attention to "click" with most people outside the aforementioned umbrella. Nevertheless, it's worthwhile checking out the various dimensions of Snelwar, Manring, and Zonder.

At War With Self has no dedicated Web page. Instead, you might want to visit Snelwar's homepage www.GlennSnelwar.com, Manring's homepage www.ManThing.com or Zonder's homepage www.MarkZonder.com.

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