



At War With Self - Torn Between Dimensions

8/10

Free Electric Sound, 2005

What we've got here is failure to compromise. At War With Self is a relatively new group of some most skillful musicians already individually known within the Prog-Rock/Metal realm. Glenn Snelwar, on everything but bass and drums, played on the first Gordian Knot album (with the 2 Sean's from Cynic and other notable personnel), and Michael Manring, on fretless bass and e-bow, played in Attention Deficit (with Tim Alexander of Primus and Alex Skolnick of Testament) and many, many other stops along the way, while Mark Zonder drummed in Fates Warning for some 15 years.

These three gentlemen have gotten together to make beautiful music and how! Progressive is definitely the primary vibe from this record, which features some Travis Smith (Death, Fear Factory, James Murphy, etc.) artwork, but that seems to be too limiting of a descriptor. Elements of classical, jazz fusion, rock, Metal, maybe bluegrass (can you say mandolin?), or even country (more cowbell!) are mixed at will and blend seamlessly while pouring through your system's speakers. The tunes are often complex but refrain from the self-aggrandizing wankery that often plagues this genre.

While the guitars fill much of the sound with vitality, vigor, and vim, and the drums are quite intricate, providing a framework of multi-textured sounds that span many genres, it is the bass that really stands out on this record. I am quite familiar with Manring's prowess via Thoth and Attention Deficit and it is his fretless excellence that drives the music. Some may claim his playing is overkill but the bass often goes unheard and this is a welcome respite. My biggest complaint is one of production or mixing. When Snelwar gets heavy, relatively speaking, his guitar seems too thin, but that is a minor point. This album is easily recommended for fans of Liquid Tension Experiment, Gordian Knot, and those who don't think jazz/fusion is dead.

Tony Belcher

Song listing:

1. The God Interface
2. Torn Between Dimensions
3. A Gap In The Stream Of Mind, Part One
4. Grasping At Nothing
5. Coming Home
6. The Event Horizon
7. A Gap In The Stream Of Mind, Part Two
8. Run
9. A Gap In The Stream Of Mind, Part Three
10. At War With Self

Playing time: 50.08

LINKS OF INTEREST

[The Laser's Edge](#)
[Glenn Snelwar](#)
[Michael Manring](#)
[Mark Zonder](#)

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