

## Perfect Imperfection

By Tom Carleno

Written By

Steve Sheppard

I cannot express how nice it was to get to review a guitar based album, as one who strums the strings of power myself it was good to get to grips with *Perfect Imperfection* from Tom Carleno. This is an album of very clever and adept finger style guitar playing by a man who clearly has a great depth and passion for his music; you can see this on track one called *In Search Of*. A delightful negative refrain at times, then some very inspired notes give us an emotive but delightful way to start an album.

This album has come at a good time for me, I needed to relax and ease back and my life lately as could be yours, has been frantic, to put it mildly. *Perfect Imperfection* was the perfect vehicle for me to do so and this next piece was superb, it's called *Meet me in Maui*. Laid back and chilled and already through this music I can feel the inner peace beginning to flow.

When I first started working in radio, I came across the artist **Al Stewart** and I actually ended up with a show called "*On The Border*" after hearing *Year of the Cat*, I would of course find Al's other well know composition of that very name and Carleno does a literal walk through of this classic Stewart song and does it with reverence to its originality, but with a fresh Latin feel to it as well, excellent rendition, played and performed with style and grace and yes I was singing the lyrics along with it!

Now an interesting title, my dear constant readers, you all know I delight in fresh and new idea's and especially innovative titles, so when *Welcome To The Milky Way* came on I was in rapture. This is played so beautifully and in an almost ancient style that could take the listener back across the eons of time, across that very Milky Way, there are some very pleasant harmonics on this track as well.

It's time to raise the rhythm and take the whole venture up tempo, using the guitar in every aspect on *Working up an Appetite*. There was some great use of the frets, strings and main body of the guitar. On this piece Carleno shows his mastery and shows it well, at around two minutes forty, there is a charming quiet passage that sold this piece for me as one of the best on the album and the powerful chords at the end made it an awesome composition that should take you by the ears and drag you to musical heaven.

But wait dear constant reader, there is much more, this next track is so mood filled you will not want to miss out on another enjoyable piece called *Timberline Tree*, as a guitarist myself I sense this is a arrangement that we call, personal music therapy, this composition just seemed to be so organic and had just about everything you want from a guitar based album, there was something about this piece I felt was so deep, it was so moving and so personal to the artist himself.

I have heard Bob Ardern and others in this genre play like this, but here Carleno seem to flow with the ease of silver, from a mirrored pool of musical delight. A traditional finger picking piece that I know will absolutely delight you and it's called "*Childs Play*"

As Monty Python once said, now for something completely different and to be honest you couldn't get more different than ***Rhapsody in Blood***. Think *Hammer Horror* films; think Christopher Lee and Peter Cushing and Vincent Price and you will have it in one. Let's start my friends with wolves baying in the woods, let us start with the creaking sound of strings, like that old evil door.

You really have to listen to this composition to get the full benefit from it, but let me just say that Tom Carleno has brought you a movie styled piece of music here, that would fit superbly into any horror film you have ever watched, but BEWARE, the scream, it had my wife jump from her seat whilst she was editing another show to say to me, "Did you hear a woman screaming outside?"

Yes ***Rhapsody in Blood*** is really a fun piece to play, but I must say that Tom Carleno has not only done a good job here, but also enjoyed doing it, my only regret is he didn't ask me to add some audio after the wolves, saying that old Dracula classic line "Hark, can you hear them? The children of the night" Wonderful track, you will love this.

Always room for a classic, many have done it recently, but here and rather appropriately, Carleno chooses ***Imagine*** by John Lennon, this is a song that for some reason people seem to play more at Christmas and here it sits at number nine on the album. Its respectfully played and one more song that you will want to sing along to.

A little more time dear reader, to sample some of the perfection which we can now call Carleno's finger picking guitar on the piece ***Brief Encounter***, before we fall into the lap of the last piece off the album called ***What A Difference A Day Makes***. This is a gentle track to end with and in all honesty this is a delicious album and being an unbiased guitarist, I would recommend this to anyone, I would urge all guitarists to buy this, its has everything you might want to learn from, but more importantly everyone can enjoy a well performed album, produced and brought to us with such care and attention.

At times Carleno's style reminded me of Greg Lake's acoustic work on his days with Emerson Lake and Palmer, it has a little light and shade, it has a little night and day, and a little shadow and sunlight about it and this last piece almost confirms that.

Overall ***Perfect Imperfection*** is the type of album that should get a lot of airplay from radio, it will do from ours and it should completely take the listeners imagination to a place that will be a most pleasurable location. Don't miss out on this album; it's a rare gem that glows brightly in a world that seems to have lost its musical soul.