

Review:

Camera Obscura | Steve Adams

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Steve Adams is a Los Angeles-based guitarist songwriter whose "guitar for hire" history demonstrates an impressive track record, having worked for the likes of Pete Dinklage (Camel), Michael Hossack (The Doobie Brothers) and Myron Dore (Santana).

Steve has developed and honed his band of guitar virtuosity that is showcased on this CD. His style and sound are a powerhouse from start to finish; his prog-rock leanings shine through the 11 superbly crafted self-penned compositions in this collection. The one cover version is Steve Hackett's 'Jacuzzi' from his 'Defector' album. Steve Adams' treatment and arrangement are a fitting tribute to a guitar player he greatly admires. Although the CD is mainly instrumental, there are three vocal tracks 'Silent Divide', 'Fragile' and 'Wisteria'. The 'stand-out' for me being 'Silent Divide', a polished song, creatively arranged with a reflective lyric and vocal from Steve. The remaining 9 instrumentals have a very structured direction from the off. The opening cut, 'In A World With No Sky' has a catchy string arpeggio, embellished with Steve's power chords. These progressively lead you into an inventively arranged tune.

Various time signatures are put to good use, a good example being the track 'Seven Four'. I love 'The Door Stays Open', a sleazy slow shuffle in the 'Black Velvet' tradition with first class Hammond organ playing from Steve Mattern. Belgian guitarist Philippe Thibaut joins Steve on the track 'Diminished Capacity'. After a H.M. head section Steve and Philippe swop 4 bar phrases in a potent question and answer session that leads intricately back to the head and a dramatic finale.

If you like your music from the Vai/Satriani matrix, this album will slot into your CD rack perfectly.

Review by Ray Fenwick