

Ketil Strand, Axe-Files (2011)

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A long-awaited album, displaying this experienced guitarist's diversity and skills, both as a musician and composer, incorporating elements from rock, jazz/fusion, classical and folk music. All electric guitars played through Fractal Audio Axe-Fx Ultra.

Recommended if You Like

Eric Johnson, Paul Gilbert, Steve Morse

Progressive rock, jazz fusion instrumental guitar

Album Notes

I've been playing guitar for over 30 years, and for more than 20 of them, I've been dreaming about making a solo album with my own music, but for various reasons it has never been realized, until now (thanks to CDbaby).

This is literally a solo project where I've done everything myself: I wrote all the music (with a few exceptions), played all the instruments (guitars, bass and banjo), did the drum programming, recording, mixing and production.

The only thing I didn't do entirely on my own, was the cover photo, which was taken by my wife..

I've played in many different bands and various musical projects over the years, in addition to my regular job as a guitar teacher, and I've played many different musical styles: rock, pop, jazz, fusion, metal, traditional music, gospel, classical etc. The self-written material on this album is inspired by all those genres, but I guess you can say rock is the main ingredient.

A few years ago I started making my own guitar videos on youtube just for fun, but the overwhelming response (over 1.1 million views total so far), made me realize that there actually were quite a few people out there who appreciated my music. Thanks to my youtube videos I also got in touch with G66, the European distributor of Fractal Audio's amazing guitar pre-amp/effects processor; Axe-Fx Ultra. I made several demo videos of this unit (which can be seen on my youtube channel, see link below), and inspired by the great response, I eventually decided to make a solo album using the Ultra exclusively for all electric guitars.

Enjoy!

Ketil Strand

A little bit about the different tracks:

1 Nok Om Det («Enough Said») is a groovy, pretty straight-forward riff-based blues-rock tune which seemed to be a good opening track..

2 Fuzz is actually one of the oldest compositions on the album, inspired by my youth guitar idols Eddie Van Halen and Yngwie Malmsteen, among others. I performed this on «Talentiaden», a well-known talent show on Norwegian Television back in 1991, and a video of that performance is also available on my channel on Youtube.

3 Synnes Serenade («Serenade for Synne»): I wrote this ballad for my daughter when she was born in 1990. I guess it was my first «jazz» composition.

4 Så Takk («Thanks») is a jazz-blues piece with a rock feel (?) It has gone through many transformations over the years, and this is the latest version.

5 Gullslåtten («The Golden Tune») is a solo piece written for my parents' Golden Wedding Anniversary in 2008. It's inspired by Norwegian Hardanger Fiddle music, and the guitar is strung and tuned in a special way called «Troll tuning», as frequently used by Norwegian guitar master Knud Reiersrud. I'm using one of the acoustic guitar models on my Line6 Variax 300, recorded direct.

6 Canon Rock With A Twist.. is based on Johann Pachelbel's «Canon in D» written over 300 years ago in baroque style, but I added quite a few twists to it, based on more modern musical styles.. It is also inspired by Jerry C's rendition «Canon Rock», which, thanks to youtube, perhaps has become one of the most-covered instrumental guitar pieces ever. I decided to make my version a little bit different from the others, and my Youtube video of this has received great response, with around 400000 views on Youtube so far. The album version is a new recording, with a few minor "adjustments" compared to the video.

7 Incubator was written for my son Andreas, who was born prematurely, and spent most of his life's first two months in an incubator, hence the title. (by the way, he's 22 now and is doing fine..)

8 Yee-Haa! provides a little smell of horses and hay on the album, and is a tribute to the many great country-rock guitarists that has inspired me; Albert Lee, Brent Mason, The Hellecasters, Steve Morse, and last, but not least, norwegians Lars Håvard Haugen and Øystein Sunde.

9 Din («Your/Yours») is a solo piece dedicated to my wife Sølvi.

10 Ny Vri («New Twist») is a prog-inspired riff-based piece switching between 7/8 and 6/8.

11 Toccata and Fugue in D minor: Originally for church organ, this is one of my favourite pieces of music regardless of style or genre, written by one of the greatest composers of all time; Johan Sebastian Bach. I have also made a Youtube version of this piece using guitar synth, but this is a pure

guitar version using only the Axe-Fx Ultra. I used mainly one or two guitar tracks throughout the piece, but on some of the chord parts there are as much as eight tracks simultaneously..

All electric guitars were played through my Fractal Audio Axe-Fx Ultra Preamp/Effects Processor with no other amps, effects, DI boxes or anything involved.

All guitars, bass and banjo played by Ketil Strand, drums created and programmed with the help of Toontrack EZ Drummer software. Recorded and produced with Cubase.

Thanks to:

- The many great musicians I've had the privilege of playing with over the years, they're too many to mention by name.
- All the great musicians and composers who have inspired me, they're also too many to mention.
- My Youtube friends, subscribers, viewers and commenters, who have been an important motivating factor for me in the making of this album.
- My guitar students, who have inspired me and «kept me on my toes» through many years of guitar teaching..
- Sussi and Jaques Isler and Jochen from G66.eu for their help and support, and for the Axe-Fx Ultra.
- CDBaby for allowing me to focus on making music, and taking care of everything else..
- And last, but not least; my wife and family, who have supported and inspired me all the way.

Website: www.ketilstrand.com

Youtube channel: www.youtube.com/rednebb

Gear used:

Fractal Audio Axe-Fx Ultra Preamp/Effects Processor (all tracks)

Fractal Audio MFC-101 Foot Controller

Guitars and basses used (all these can be seen on the album cover.):

«Strand-o-caster» Custom (Strat copy) (track 1)

Carvin DC 135C (2,7)

D'Angelico EXL-1DP (3 (lead), 9)

Epiphone '56 Les Paul Goldtop (3 (chords))

Rickenbacker 360 Fireglo (4,10)
Line 6 Variax 300 (5)
Burns Red Special Brian May signature model (6 (rock parts))
Eastwood Savannah (6, jazz part)
Fender Nashville B-bender Telecaster (6 (country part), 8)
Yamaha APX-5NA Acoustic Nylon (6)
Eastone BJ-30 Banjo (6,8)
Ibanez AE350S Acoustic (7)
Roland G505 (strat type) (11)
Fender Jaguar Baritone Custom (used as a bass guitar)
Ibanez mod. 2365B «Jazz Bass»
Ibanez mod. 2365B Fretless Bass

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