

Music

Tony McManus: The Maker's Mark (the Dream Guitar Sessions)

PG doesn't review CDs. It's not our mission; besides, there are plenty of publications out there with staff dedicated to reviews, so we don't feel compelled to add our \$.02. And don't think that because I'm new, I'm a pushover—I'm not. We don't do CD reviews. Unless it's a project so guitar intensive and in such perfect alignment with our mission that we can't help ourselves. Tony McManus' new offering, *The Maker's Mark* is subtitled the Dream Guitar Sessions. Born at Dream Guitars in Asheville, North Carolina, the idea was to take some absolutely killer axes, arrange a piece of music specifically to be played on each instrument and take the whole kit 'n caboodle into the studio. Gorgeously recorded and lovingly played, this project is designed to make us drool while we dream.



McManus' playing is rave-worthy. Loaded with flawless ornamentations, most of which should only be attempted on a very well set-up fiddle, his playing is wild and delicate, passionate and tender. But the thing that really gets me is how un-edited his playing sounds. I mean, come on—we can tell when stuff is punched in or cut-and-pasted from elsewhere, and I can't hear that on this recording. If he played all this stuff simply live, he's not human. If he did cut and paste this together, he should win an award for production.

The guitars themselves are beyond incredible. We joke a lot about “guitar porn,” and the booklet packaged with this disc is all about that. McManus chose some extremely unique and beautiful instruments: baritone guitars from William Kelday and Kathy Wingert, a piccolo guitar from Charles Hoffman, and Linda Manzer's haunting and visually stunning Sitar Guitar. Each musical offering is tuned perfectly to each guitar, and the pieces let the guitars do what they do best, whether it's ringing or barking or singing like a whole mess of angels. A must have for acoustic guitar lovers.—GDP

MSRP \$17.99

tonymcmanus.com