



## The Best in Neo-Classical & Shred Guitar!!

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### Interviews:

This section was first created March of 2000. It continues to be the most visited part of **Guitar Mania!!**

◆ **Interviews with some of today's hottest shredder's. New Interviews will be posted each month!!**

#### **Greg Rapaport - [Review](#) / [Web Site](#)**

1) **We don't know much about you - can you give us some details with respect to your personal history?**

I grew up in Northern Westchester County New York. After High School I got into carpentry then the health field. Then I went back to school for the third time and became a multimedia designer/programmer. Since then I have incorporated myself into Splinterhead Productions Inc. and have been rolling with that ever since.

2) **You are a disciplined musician of the highest caliber. Where did you get your musical education? What were the highlights of this phase of your life?**

I am definitely disciplined but I'm not of the highest caliber, at least not yet lol. I first started taking lessons when I was nine, basically learning a lot of reading and pulling the basics together. My father owned a rock club and he found my present instructor, Lou Ubriaco playing in a popular regional band. I started lessons with Lou when I was 11 and continued with him until I was 17. I then took a break...a long break, and found him again in my late 20's. I've been with him ever since. I also had the opportunity to attend the National Guitar Workshop, twice, with Terry Syrek as an instructor. I can't stress enough how important it is to find a good teacher. Since I started getting instruction again my playing has improved very quickly. Participating in showcases that Lou has prepared has been a great experience and allows me to play my original material in a live setting.

As far as highlights of my musical education goes I would have to say that locating Lou again would probably be the most important thing that has happened. After all, he got the ball rolling.

3) **All of the music you have recorded showcases your depth as a musician and your strong technique as a gifted guitar player. Tell us about your technique and how you developed it?**

My technique is still evolving, hopefully for the better. I guess its formation has had a lot to do with my influences and what I've gleaned from them. Though I have been practicing my technique for a long time I try not to be a chops driven player. It kind of bores me when I hear a guitar player improvising using exercises he/she has learned. I try to incorporate my technique into my playing and use it to express a good melody. Also while the soloing is important I feel what's going on behind it is of equal importance. I'm big on groove so I really try to establish a solid rhythm foundation for the tune and make sure that every instrument gets a chance to shine. After all, you can only take so much guitar soloing.

4) **You compose some vary unique songs drawing from a number of musical sources. Who are your main influences? What inspires you to make the type of music you record?**

My range of influences is pretty wide. I think players like Scott Henderson, Frank Gambale, Al DiMeola, Allan Holdsworth and Jimmy Page have really had a big impact on my playing. To a lesser degree I would have to say Greg Howe, Pat Martino and John McLaughlin. As far as bass goes Gary Willis, Jaco Pastorius, John Paul Jones, Victor Wooten and Flea have motivated me to push myself to become a better bass player, I still have a long way to go though.

My inspirations come from a couple of different things. I do a lot of reading so sometimes imagery from books can help shape a song. Also, I do a lot of graphic work, which is another form of inspiration for me.

### 5) What type of music do you enjoy listening to?

I enjoy fusion (Tribal Tech, Gambale Hamm Smith, Vital Tech Tones, Al DiMeola, Pat Martino, UK, Bill Bruford's "One Of A Kind", Spaced Out, Planet X, Tony William's "Lifetime", and many others.)

I'm also into progressive rock/metal (Opeth, Symphony X, Dream Theater, Porcupine Tree, Spiral Architect, Yes, Kansas etc.)

Plus I still really enjoy Led Zeppelin, Deep Purple and George Clinton etc.

### 6) What equipment are you currently using?

I'm using a Carvin DC747c 7 string as my main guitar. For backup I have an Ibanez RG7620 7 string. I use an Ibanez SR 305DX 5 string for all my bass work. I hopefully will be upgrading my bass soon. I also use an Ovation Celebrity for any acoustic guitar stuff. For recording I use a Roland VS1680 with a Line 6 Pod as a preamp for my overdriven sounds. For clean sounds I just go directly into the recorder. For keys I have a Roland controller that I use in conjunction with a Korg X5DR module and I also use a Yamaha RS-7000 sequencer/synth. For any micing I use a Studio Projects C1 condensor mic. My recording rig is fairly simple so I do my best to get as much out of it as possible.

### 7) Can you give us a run down on the music that is included on your latest release "Wyrd"? What can we expect from future releases?

Sure here is a quick track by track synopsis:

1. 11th Portal: This tune is one of my favorites I guess that's why I put it at the number one spot. The concept behind this tune is space travel in the context of the 1950's. You can hear a lot of different influences in this tune such as Rush, Dreamtheater, Symphony X and little bit of Vital Tech Tones.

2. Madah: The name of this song came from my son who combined the words "mom" and "dad" together thus creating the title. This tune lends itself to a more funk/fusion styling. The music deviates from jazzy funk to a dropped tuned metal feel.

3. The Unconscience: This song has some 80's flavor to it mixed with some slap and pop bass. The break down section is kinda flamencoish (I know that's not a real word). I bring the intro back as the outro and add some weird samples at the end.

4. Bugjuice: Remember back in the old days when you were a kid and your mom would make Kool-Aid? Well in our house it was called bugjuice. This song for some reason reminds me of when I was a kid. The tune is essentially a combination of funk/fusion and metal. This was the first tune I recorded for this disk. Definitely some Tribal Tech influences in this tune.

5. Trust: This is probably my favorite tune. The beginning has twisted voice samples, which then breaks into the theme. The samples are representing a radio communication of a person who is in some kind of trouble. After the initial weirdness the music breaks into the main progression. Then it breaks down into a bass run (Aeolian/blues). The guitar solo at this point has a phaser on it to give it a spacey feel which kind of goes well with the synth sweep in the background. The rhythm guitars then come back mirroring the bass and the solo comes in (sans phaser) with a diminished run, (kinda wacky but I like it). Finally the tune closes out with the first two themes.

6. Diminished Returns: This starts out with a 7/8 riff. I also slipped in a swelling synth sound in the background to try to glue things together a bit. The tune then goes into 15/16-scale run that was pure hell to play on bass. Then off to the funky part that I tried to make as old school as possible by using the phaser on the rhythm guitar and doing some slap and pop. I also stuck in a bass/organ run, which quiets things down a bit. Then comes the diminished low C# riff with the Pink Floyd clock sound. Back to the funk. Then to C# again with a solo part. Then it wraps up with the 7/8 theme.

7. Powderburn: This starts out with just guitar and drums which kind of sounds odd but I really wanted the contrast when everything else came in. The song is kind of a tribute to war veterans. The beginning has that choppy march kind of feel and the middle of the tune where it breaks down I put in a spoken word sample, which says, "All of the heroism is in the service that they represent". This part actually turned out pretty nice with the keyboard helping out a bit to give it an ethereal kind of feel. Then off to the aggressive part with the obligatory fast guitar runs. Finally it finishes up with the choppy initial theme except a lot more aggressive.

8. Slik: This song is pretty bare bones instrumentally. It just has drums, bass, one rhythm guitar and the lead guitar. I find the

fewer instruments the easier it is to get a good sound. The bass solo is fairly nonsensical which is why I like it.

9) **Dark Matter:** This song is probably the weirdest conceptually. Dark matter is basically the same as anti-matter, which is everything that matter is not (yeah I know, very trippy). I personified dark matter by giving it a voice. The samples are essentially saying that we, humans, are just trivial thoughts that dark matter thinks of that come and go. The coming and going are parallels to our living and dying. Also a sample says that we are just an anomaly so essentially our existence is a mistake.

As far as future releases go, I'm hoping to have something ready by late spring 2003. I have been working on my latest project quite a bit. I'm going for a more open and airy sound production-wise. Also it's going to be a lot moodier, darker and a lot more twisted. I've also been working out the artwork for the cd and it is coming along really well. (I'm really psyched!!)

8) **What do you think about the new crop of talented Guitar Player's that are currently out there making music?**

I'm not sure that I can be a good judge of what is out there now. Unfortunately I'm not really too much of a radio person. Much of what I listen to is recommended from other musicians and the internet. I guess mainstream music has really kind of turned me off a little bit. It has become a bit too corporate and homogenized. I think there is a very strong progressive movement happening that will surface and influence the radio waves but as of now mainstream rock ain't really happening for me.

9) **What are your thoughts on the state of instrumental guitar music these days?**

Essentially instrumental guitar music is happily living underground. I think there are so many talented guitar players that want to make quality music. I feel that there is an avid audience for instrumentalists overseas but as far as the USA goes, well...it's getting better.

10) **What are your interests outside of music and guitar playing?**

My wife and 3-year-old son pretty much occupy my time outside of music. I also really enjoy my work as a multimedia designer. I love the visual arts and creating cool imagery and I'm into gaming as well.

11) **Is there anything else's you would like to share with our readers that we have not asked or may have overlooked?**

I just want to say thanks for giving me the opportunity to do this interview and also for your support of independent musicians like myself.

