



*By Ken Volpe - GJD*

I've been looking forward to this CD for a long time. It's the latest offering from JaR, which is Jay Graydon and Randy Goodrum.

Jay's credits include two Grammy awards and twelve Grammy nominations, among them "Producer of the Year" and "Best Engineered Recording". He is an extremely versatile artist who is a master of many different styles and genres. From the late '60s through the late '70s, he was an "A list" session musician in Los Angeles, where he acquired a reputation as an ace studio guitarist/solo specialist. A partial listing of artists Jay's worked with includes Barbra Streisand, Dolly Parton, Diana Ross, The Jackson Five, Cheap Trick, Christopher Cross, Ray Charles, Cher, Joe Cocker, Marvin Gaye, Hall & Oates, Olivia Newton-John and Albert King. Among rock music fans, he is perhaps best known for his now-legendary guitar solo for Steely Dan's "Peg".

Randy Goodrum has the good fortune of working with many great contemporary guitar players such as Steve Lukather and Tommy Emmanuel. He has also been involved in writing and producing many award-winning projects as well.

The line-up on this CD is Jay covering all the guitars, playing synths and drums, and contributing vocals as well. Randy plays most of the keyboards and synths, handles drums and vocals, too. So this is a pretty unique project for which two people did all the composing, performing and full production chores. (Be sure to check out the three-part interview in GJD archives that I did with Jay, where he talks about many of his production techniques.) Jay also talks about some of the production techniques he used on this project in the CD liner notes.

Okay, let me tell you about the CD, Scene 29. The first track, "Cure Kit," contains great keyboard parts and wonderful vocals. I especially enjoyed Jay and Randy's tight vocal harmonies. Towards the end of the song, Jay busts out a guitar solo with melodic bluesy lines laced with chromatic ideas. His liquid lead tone is smooth and sustaining, a sound which Mr. Graydon is famous for. As a matter of fact, Jay is one of the pioneers of this sound.

The second track, "Call Donovan," will be adored by fans of Steely Dan. It features great chord

changes and slick production. This tune has one of my favorite guitar solos, which is a bit out, but stays with the song at the same time.

Another great tune is “Make Somebody.” This is a syncopated funk-type song with great vocals once again. The next tune, “Your Heartbreak,” has a fantastic hook and probably the most commercial potential on any of the songs on Scene 29.

The title cut is also one of my favorite songs on the CD. The vocal production reminds me of Al Jarreau, which is no surprise since Jay has produced the singer in the past. This tune also has another memorable hook and some humorous dialogue about whether a guitar solo belongs in the song or not.

The last track on the CD is called, “Cabo Cad.” This song has a great groove and an extended jam at the end featuring keys and guitar.

I really love this CD. I have to be honest, I usually consume music for a specific purpose or in a certain setting. In other words for driving, working out, relaxing, or inspiration. This CD fits all those categories for me. As I alluded to earlier, fans of The Dan should buy Scene 29. To my ears it sounds like Jay is using his trusty Vox DI recording system for most of his solos. Jay’s guitar ideas are so unique and tasteful. I believe that he has that rare gift of combining familiar ideas and new ideas to create ones that you have never heard before. The overall sound of Scene 29 has timbres and tones reminiscent of music from past decades blended with modern production. The composition and the production are perfect matches for each other, and to put it simply, the CD will just plain make you feel good.