



By Ken Volpe - GJD

Every once in a while an artist has an opportunity and a privilege to work with many of his peers on a project. Such is the case on the latest release from the Carl Verheyen Band, Trading 8s. One could only imagine the joy and creative fun that Carl must have had in making this CD. Actually in the linear notes Carl states, "I sincerely hope you enjoy this music as much as we did making it."

I've gotten to know Carl over the past couple of years through his audio interviews and columns with GuitarJamDaily.com. I have always been blessed by his music and who he is as a human being. So when Carl told me that he was working on a new project I was really excited about the news.

The CD starts out with a track named, Highway 27. This features Carl and Joe Bonamassa playing intricate melody lines and trading runs with the utmost fury. Both of these guys possess sweet liquid guitar tones. The song kind of reminded me of a Jeff Beck meets Steve Morse type thing. It's kind of funny because Steve Morse happens to appear on this project as well, playing on a tune entitled, On Our Way. This track can best be described as a beautiful bluesy ballad with some rich musical textures. I really dug the Steve Morse signature modal pattern runs.

Another tune that caught my ear is a Carl's version of the old Beatles song TaxMan. The arrangement and production are exceptional on this one. There is an interesting contrast of styles between Carl and Fusion master Scott Henderson. This track contains some of my favorite intense guitar ripping from Carl. A little further along is the cut, New Year's Day. This one has a great groove with tasteful ideas from Mr. Verheyen and Blues tone wizard Robben Ford. There is some serious tone flying out of the speakers from both of these guys. Ford fans will really love this one because it has some hints from his old school playing. Also on the CD is a track named, Country Girl. This song contains great vocals by Carl and a really tight rhythm section. The infamous Albert Lee injects his tone and fast country-style runs in a way that only he could do.

There are a few other tunes on Trading 8s that do not feature any of the guest artists. So, Carl and his band including, Dave Marotta on bass, and Walfredo Reyes Jr. on drums are really showcased. Actually, from a compositional standpoint and for overall production value these tunes were my favorites, especially Eastern Steppes.

Trading 8s is a wonderful CD that will appeal to many different guitar fans. Carl's ability to craft songs and adapt his playing with these many artists is most astounding. Do yourself a favor...if you love great guitar playing go buy this CD.

