

Simeon Harris  
*Mechanoia*

Simeon Harris currently has three albums available for fans of unconventional guitar music: *Realms of Elements* (2001); *The Assessment* (2003); and the (2003) release under consideration – *Mechanoia*. With this disk Harris says “My intention...was to create something that was both ‘harder’ and ‘darker’ sounding than *The Assessment*, but also include some textures and soundscapes for balance. I had acquired the ‘synthetic drums’ from Native Instruments and these kits had the perfect sound – electronic, effected and contemporary – that I was looking for.” That’s a fair description of the overall vibe of *Mechanoia*: contemporary, effected, and dark. Eschewing the routine approach to guitar – riffs, solos, and crunchy chords – Simeon angles for the rhythmic and textural; liquid vistas drenched in ambient effects, lush foundations, and propelling dance grooves. But, importantly, unlike a lot of music in this genre he never strays far from the melodic path.

*Mechanoia* features Harris on guitars, v-guitars, drum and bass programming, loops, textures and radio. He’s accompanied by Tom Szirtes (Rhodes piano) and Dean McCormack (drums and bass) on track six.

While each track is solid, the eighth stands out for me as an exceptional one. It clocks in at a bit over ten minutes and possesses all the characteristics that make the disk a winner – infectious grooves, good dynamics, samples, loops, atmospherics, vibe, riffs, satisfying harmonic movement, a lot of tonal variations, and memorable melodies.

I like to find something to criticize in every album but I’m hard pressed to find a problem with *Mechanoia*. If anything I’d probably like at least one track to have some blazing, emotionally over the top guitar pyrotechnics. The style of music could support it without it feeling artificial. But that’s a matter of aesthetics. Harris doesn’t have an aversion to good soloing (witness some tasty lines on track four) but I’d really like to hear him cut loose in a savage or outrageously quirky way (I’m thinking of Hendrix collides with Torn or Kaiser). I’ll be looking for that in future releases!

The production quality of *Mechanoia* is top notch. Really, you couldn’t ask for a better sounding record. I really like it, have listened to it repeatedly, and, I think it’s worth noting, I bought this disk. This kind of music would be well suited for a solo gig in the clubs: guitar, laptop, and lots of rack-mounted hijinks. All in all, Simeon Harris offers up a pleasant

and substantial contribution to the genre of postmodern guitar. A terrific outing worthy of an "A"

Pick up your own copy at Simeon's web site.

Kronosonic