



## Peter Hammill/Gary Lucas – Other World

Article by: Roger Trenwith

I will not explain how this pairing came about, and the recording process that ensued, as you can read all about that and much more in TPA's interview with the Peter and Gary, [HERE](#).

From a personal perspective, pairing the venerable Peter Hammill with Gary Lucas, best known for his time served in the musical madhouse that was Captain Beefheart's Magic Band, and more recently with Jeff Buckley seemed to me an enticing prospect. A chance meeting where left-field songwriting meets inventive and experimental guitar. Typically then, and almost as if to catch me off guard, opening track *Spinning Coins* is a straightforward wistful song about choices taken, conventional in structure. *Some Kind Of Fracas* is much more like the experimental outing that one would expect from this pairing, and it would not sound out of place on side two of *In Camera*.

The favourite themes of Hammill's later writing; the passage of time, missed opportunities, mortality, fate, they are all here and the bard of avant songwriting has lost none of his skill with poetic prose over the years, in fact it ages well like a good single malt. Here, the angularity of Hammill's melodies are tempered by Gary Lucas's psychedelically tinged soundscapes, and the combined results are a fascinating listen.

Peter's later more direct style of lyric writing exemplified by the likes of *Nutter Alert* off *Present or All That Before* off *A Grounding In Numbers*, is here represented lyrically by the likes of the self-explanatory *Cash*, and although the lyric structure is very VdGG, the music is much more sparse, almost *akin* to electric acid folk music. Elsewhere we have dissertations on the shifting sands of self-image and the ephemeral nature of fame on the naggingly insistent *Black Ice*, the straight ahead *This Is Showbiz*, and the ephemeral psalm to the wicked lure of the spotlight that is the *The Kid*.

The final part of the jigsaw that is *Other World* is first presented with the woozy psychedelic ambience of the instrumental *Built From Scratch* which as it says in the title sets sail on a simple guitar motif, over which swirls and fogs of murky ambience created by Gary's reverbed, distorted and echoed guitar to the max is cut through by shards of notes, with the interjection of a tweeter-compromising steam valve sound near the end that will

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loosen the wax in your ears, should you be listening to it loud on the headphones, as I was!

Possibly the strangest song on here is *Reboot* where the protagonist attempts to drag himself up from an undefined but enervating ennui, as if emerging from a swamp or a coma, a feeling transmitted through the zeroes and ones by all kinds of odd electronica and a closing Beefheartian riff from Gary. It was dark down there, very dark.

Gary's musical ethos, as explained in the interview, is, he says, based on the good Captain's album title *Lick My Decals Off, Baby*, which Don van Vliet told him meant "get rid of the labels", and this certainly applies where this album is concerned. While *Other World* will undoubtedly appeal to Hammill's fans, the quality of Peter's lyrics married with the song structures all woven into Gary's challenging soundscapes goes way beyond pigeonholing and simply "is".

Just as the first track took my expectations gently by surprise, so we leave *Other World* with the seven-minute spookily ambient instrumental *Slippery Slope*. Where I may have been waiting for a parting coruscating blast of righteous Hammill poetry, in its place is more of the displaced eerie psychedlia that weaves its way through the album like the lingering remnants of an old-time London pea-souper, and there is absolutely nothing wrong with that, at all!

In the interview, Gary hints at the possibility of more live outings for the pair than the so far solitary appearance at the Union Chapel back in February, a gig that other commitments prevented me from attending. I hope this comes about, and I will most certainly be there. As for *Other World*, it will almost certainly feature in my Best of 2014 list. A bold claim to make this early in the year, but one that is entirely justified. Any fan of progressive music making should buy this as soon as possible!

Matt Stevens – Lucid

RPWL – Swords And Guns

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#### TRACK LISTING

01. Spinning Coins (2:54)
02. Some Kind Of Fracas (5:15)
03. Of Kith And Kin (5:30)
04. Cash (2:56)
05. Built From Scratch (4:26)
06. Attar Of Roses (4:19)
07. This Is Showbiz (3:05)
08. Reboot (6:56)
09. Black Ice (4:59)
10. The Kid (4:17)
11. Glass (3:27)
12. Two Views (3:07)
13. Means To An End (1:37)
14. Slippery Slope (7:03)

Total Time – 59:57

#### MUSICIANS

Peter Hammill – Acoustic & Electric Guitars, Vocals, Found Sounds  
Gary Lucas – Acoustic & Electric Guitars and FX

#### ADDITIONAL INFO

Record Label: [Esoteric Antenna](#)  
Catalogue#: EANTCD1026  
Year Of Release: 2014

#### LINKS

[Peter Hammill](#)

[Gary Lucas](#)

[TPA Interview](#) with Peter and Gary