

David Vito Gregoli & Ricky Kej

Wild Monsoon



Wild Monsoon is a newly created collaboration by two gifted musicians ten years in the making. Meeting at an awards show a decade ago, both men knew that they were destined to work together. These men literally live on opposite sides of the globe. The result is **Wild Monsoon**. Many associate the monsoon with driving rains that erode the land, but monsoons are actually winds. Those monsoons are tumultuous, yes, but they also produce the rains that nourishes the earth allowing life to go on.

**David “Vito” Gregoli** is a songwriter, guitar virtuoso, musician, producer, and a much in demand sideman. **Ricky Kej** is a multi-instrumentalist, producer, and a two time Grammy Award Winner in the world music genre. Their concept on Wild Monsoon is a nature based album that reminds of us of our connection to this fragile earth. The ten harmonically-rich world beat tracks are organic, upbeat, sculptural vignettes of those things we hold dear. Seasons, trees, water, and the elements that give us life.

**Greeshm** (Summer) opens the album with a dawn awakening intro. The earth rouses and life begins. Great flute sounds, boomy bass, and ethnic percussion join hands in a circle to welcome the season. Sitar and bass balance nicely to stir the energies that are within.

From summer we go to **Sheeth** (Winter) with a driving bass track and a hint of Indian skat in the mix. Strong tempo lets you know the snow is piling up and you’re in for the duration. The calming flute that takes over the tune suggests a warmth that is to be had. Somebody get that fire going.

**Sharad** (Autumn) has strong percussion and a quirky electronic lead and a background that paints pictures of gold, orange and russet. Each beat is a single leaf falling, spiraling down, cast about on the wind, and finally touching the earth. Recycling at its finest.

On the softer side is a tune called **Mahatma** (Vito Mix). Bass flute by South Africa’s favorite son, **Wouter Kellerman**, soft drumming, sultry sitar by **Paul Livingstone**, and a warm, blissful theme all complement each other on this song. A flowing lyric balances out the integrated bass line that hides under the flute making the tune mesmerizing. It has a lot of little flourishes à la Mr. Kej as well as a few familiar sections he has used in other music. It is like hearing from old friends.

**Vanna (Forest)** features a high energy Asian theme with Vito Gregoli’s wah-wah guitar vying with a zither like instrument for the lead. And yes, the guitar wins out, but not before the song catches your imagination with a scene of traveling through the towering trees and woodlands at an amazing speed.

Bang a gong and begin your journey on the waters in the tune **Nadi** (River). Soft, sensitive guitar and fluid flute and what may be a chikara are blended with female voice into a tender, flowing

ballad. The river is the territory of Mother Ganga, the goddess of forgiveness. We ask her blessing to *“take away all evil, wash it into the sea, and purify all lands”*.

The best track on Wild Monsoon is **Badra** (Rain) with **Kimberly Haynes** on vocals. The tune starts with a gentle guitar, a tender vocal, and a welcomed flute that combines into a grateful prayer for the blessed rain. Sorrowful violin and Haynes’ voice combines in an ending that the Gods will surely hear.

The final tune is called **Baadal** (Clouds) and it has some of the best orchestration on the recording. It has this cinematic feel to it that is as expansive as the sky and as thrilling as flight. Sometime the music glides, at other times it soars. This uplifting tune is a magic carpet ride over strange, exciting places and you’d better hold on.

On Wild Monsoon the shortest song is over five minutes and the longest is just under eight minutes making the album more than one hour of wondrous music. Every song is an adventure that the listener can share in and visit over and over. Everyone that participated on this marvelous mixture of complexity and tranquility touched it deeply with their talent and love. If you truly love this miracle called earth, then this is your anthem. Highly recommended. - R J Lannan, Artisan Music Reviews