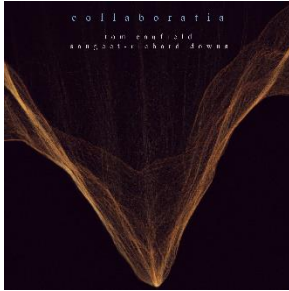


Tom Caufield/Sangeet-Richard Downs

Collaboratia

Caufieldmusic.com



The Advanced English Dictionary states: *Collaboration* as: n. 1. act of working jointly. Simple is the explanation, but with **Collaboratia**, the new album by composer **Tom Caufield** in mind, complex is the delivery. Tom's eight track electro-acoustic excursion is the farthest he has ever journeyed from his original New Age/contemporary solo guitar homestead. It is an aural exploration beyond normal bounds as he incorporates his newly discovered friend, the violin, capably wielded by **Sangeet-Richard Downs**.

Caufield opens his collection with an electronic choral work for a place that has no rough stone walls, nor lofty gray slate roof. It is called **Cathedral in Eclipse** and it has not a single colorful stained glass window, and yet, we can imagine every nook and cranny, every marbled floor tile, every walnut pew in this place. It is created out of our own dreams. As the sonic architect, Caufield builds with boundless grace and beauty. This expansive piece of music suggests that there is no end to what our imagination can build, no fantasy unrealized, and no dream beyond our earthly grasp. A wonderful opening.

The next track **Ache Waves** has the violin sounding almost like an erhu, an exotic introduction to a retrospective memory of the recent past. How long have we been hiding? When will things change? And most importantly, will life ever be the same? Tom's soft, evocative tune suggests that the answers are based on personal experience and spiritual flexibility. It is time to catch your breath, solidify your goals, and take the next steps.

Nothing could be more appropriate than the tune **Apricity** as I write on this frigid December morning. There is something about a winter's sky, that clear, pure, azure ether that defines the very idea of hopefulness. Hope that the warmth from the sun will make all this coldness in our world bearable. Caufield uses meandering electronic chorus and icy piano along with the distant sound of the violin to set this midwinter stage. On any winter's day, the yellow sun is truly the center of our universe.

In this musical context **Penumbra** is taken as "almost" or perhaps half way. Caufield's captivating, restful score along with the ethereal electronic chorus and violin combination is a heavenly respite on our listening journey. The chorus looms in the background like a breathing entity as the violin delves in and out of the melody, an essential part of the search.

First a green shoot, then a stem, and then the split as one becomes two. It is music for growth, for perpetuity. Downs really outdoes himself on the tune **Praxis Orchard Pondered**. One can sense the sinuous growth of leaf and stem and flower and petals that are all wrapped up in an eye

pleasing bloom. The cadence is important in this song, feeling as if a time lapsed video takes place in our minds. Rewind, play again.

The final track, **Manifestation**, has swirling voices, a mournful piano melody, and a complementary violin lead that has the sound of finality to it. Not sounding so much like the end, but more like a completion. Or an achieving of the goal, an arrival at the destination. As each door closes, one after the other, the listener realizes that the journey is real. That the questions do have answers. That the possibilities are endless. Caufield's thought provoking music has given purpose and possible direction. Now you choose.

Other tracks are Tao is Bleeding and Time of the Locusts. Musically, Collaboratia is a search or a spiritual examination if you will, of self and surroundings. Each mesmerizing track is a different path to walk upon, a different door to open and explore. Caufield's compositions are sublime, frictionless soundscapes that lubricate the soul as a healing balm allowing it to turn within sans fear, sans doubt and by very definition, truly allowing one to take an amazing journey. This is one collaboration that works. Excellent.

- R J Lannan, [ArtisanMusicReviews.com](http://ArtisanMusicReviews.com)