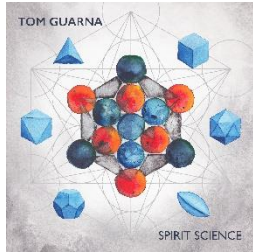


Tom Guarna
Spirit Science



Spirit Science, the eighth release by Grammy nominated guitarist **Tom Guarna**, is an exhibition of physics and faith. Veteran composer Guarna and company crosses over many genres on Spirit Science touching on progressive, contemporary, and cool jazz categories to create a nine track album of thought provoking auditory enjoyment. Tom plays various guitars and he is joined by reed player Ben Wendel, bassist Joe Martin, percussionist Justin Faulkner, and keyboardist Aaron Parks. The tracks are craftily balanced between medium tempos and thoughtfully subdued tunes.

The recording takes on the overall theme of *Sacred Geometry*, that is, the belief that geometry plays a part in spiritual convictions on many levels, seen and unseen. The application extends to other artifacts and constructions in the religious world. From a small child I knew that most Catholic churches are built in the shape of a cross. I am convinced that the creation and design of Stonehenge may be just as applicable. But what you can't see is mostly made up of curves.

The opening number is called **The Trion Re**. It begs the question, "What if the universe was made up of light particles that were almond shaped and, once connected, bloomed like flowers to create the universe?" That glue that holds it all together is called ... you guessed it, Trion Re. Guarna and friends blend smoothly in a cohesive and energetic number that has movement and force. The music has flow and direction and an upbeat theme. A quotation by another guitarist comes to mind.

*"No straight lines make up my life;
And all my roads have bends;
There's no clear-cut beginnings;
And so far no dead-ends". - Harry Chapin*

Keyboard and sax robustly combine on the tune **The Genesis Pattern**. This hidden pattern lies within all and is difficult to discover. Once you find the Genesis Pattern however, you may be able to reprogram your life. Strong percussion on the ending give the tune a bit of punch. The title track **Spirit Science** changes tempo to accommodate an animated acoustic guitar, bracing bass riffs, and an invigorating keyboard inclusion. Like gears meshing in a finely tuned machine, all the players come together to build a song that nudges the thought processes in a positive way. **A Reflection in A Reflection (For Kofi Burbride)** is a homage to the late flautist and is pure, blissful jazz. Not heavenly blissful, but more as in delightful and maybe even peaceful. The track called **Source** is my favorite on Spirit Science. It is a sinuous journey of ideas that are intangible on the surface, but when you get inside, you literally get the drift. The keyword is inside. Guitar and piano echo around each other as bass and cymbals wander about in the tune. There is a sense of pensiveness that is dreamlike hidden in the notes.

Metatron's Cube represents the building blocks of the universe as attended by the Archangel Metatron. Every conceivable shape is here and the diversity of the tune represents a great deal of it. This is a straight up piano driven tune with a sax chaser. While Guarna offers up a bright, upbeat riff right in the very heart of the song, Parks pounds out the sophisticated lead and Wendell's sax follows suit. One track that is off kilter to the rest of the theme, but no less important is the pseudo-waltz called **Lullaby for Lena**. My observation is that many painters occasionally paint pictures of musicians and many musicians often write songs about their pets. Lena is the rescue dog that found Guarna. Everyone should get their due.

You can put all of the science on the shelf and still be engrossed by this complex and dynamic album. Spirit Science may be inexplicable in many ways, but you cannot doubt the value of the music. It draws upon faith in the order of the universe for balance. Guarna and company provides a successful soundscape just so you can ponder it all. Highly recommended. - R J Lannan, Artisan Music Reviews