

Sent By: Octopus Enterprises
Album Title: *10 Strings*
Artist: The Panache Orchestra
Reviewers Name: Andrea Guy
Rating: 5 stars(out of 5)
Title of Review: 10 Strings of Infinite Beauty

Review Summary:

The Panache Orchestra is a unique blend of classical and pop styling. *10 Strings* shows the listener that the music of the guitar and the violin can be as beautiful as any played by a full orchestra.

Review:

The Panache Orchestra can best be described as being a band that makes music that is hard to describe. Most music fits into a certain genre, but with The Panache Orchestra, that is not the case. They are neither classical nor pop, but more a bit of both with touches of new age and chamber music added to mix for good measure. After one listen to *10 Strings* genre no longer matters. The elegant simplicity of the acoustic guitar and violin will blow you away.

10 Strings is the band's first commercial release in ten years. The album is aptly titled as it features only the six strings from the guitar and the four strings from the violin. It is truly amazing that most of the twenty tracks featured on this dual disc were recorded in only one take. The way the music of the guitar and violin blend is stunning, and the two instruments share the stage with grace. Neither instrument takes center stage, but rather they melt together to create a sound that is unlike anything else out there.

The two discs that make up *10 Strings* show off the versatility of the two musicians, Brenda K (violin) and Chi Saito (guitar). The two met in a sushi bar in 1998 after both had decided to get out of music. It was love at first sight for them, and the two soon began to work together. This is literally a case of the old cliché of two people making beautiful music together and *10 Strings* is a perfect example of that.

The first of the two discs is more classical in nature. As the first few chords of "Awakening" begin to play, it is easy to just let your eyes close and allow the music to carry you on its soothing journey. Each subsequent track carries on in a similar vein and by the end of the first disc the music has worked its magic.

These songs really allow Brenda's talent as a violinist to shine through, without eclipsing Chi's guitar work. When her bow touches the strings, they seem to sing out a song all their own. "Coronado Bridge" is a particular highlight. At times the tune has an almost Latin feel to it and then midway through, the tone shifts and the mood of the song seems suddenly sad.

It is often difficult to believe that the music presented on *10 Strings* is made by just two instruments. The melodies are so deep and rich that it can easily convince the ear that there is a full orchestra backing them.

The second disc of *10 Strings* shows off the band's pop sensibilities. This disc is almost like a roller coaster ride of moods and musical styles. It starts with the first track, "Pegasus," which is much more spirited than any of the songs on disc one. There is a particular point at the end of this piece where Brenda makes the violin sound like the Pegasus letting out a resounding neigh. It is startling and yet amusing to hear the instrument take on that animal characteristic.

Songs like "T'z Blues" and "Give Me Another Kiss" show off the duo's versatility. These tracks take them into a more country and folksy area. The latter of the two tracks has a melody that will get toes tapping.

The duo easily shifts the mood with "I Will Say I Love You Again." Gone is the upbeat tempo of the last two songs and in its place is a tune that is almost melancholy.

10 Strings is an eye-opening album for music lovers that don't believe classical and pop music can be as one. Brenda K and Chi have created music that will appeal to lovers of both types of music. It may not be easy to pinpoint a genre in which their music fits, but that is what really sets them apart from other artists. The Panache Orchestra truly is something different and special, and in an industry where those two things don't happen that often, they are a welcome change.

Review by Andrea Guy