



T I L E S

pretending 2 run

Hailing from the fertile Detroit music scene, **T I L E S** features Chris Herin (guitar, keyboards), Jeff Whittle (bass), Paul Rarick (vocals) and Mark Evans (drums). Formed in 1992 on the heels of a production deal with Gene Simmons of KISS, **T I L E S** has developed a *structured-yet-spontaneous* compositional style that blends the adventure of progressive rock with an aggressive hard rock edge. The band has released five studio albums worldwide and recently commemorated their 20th anniversary (with the original line-up intact) by issuing a pair of live recordings, *"Off the Floor 01"* & *"Off the Floor 02"*.

Eight years after their last studio album, **T I L E S** returns with the mesmerizing magnum opus *"Pretending 2 Run"*. Clocking in at over 96-minutes and spanning two discs, *"Pretending 2 Run"* is an ambitious and richly crafted song cycle that spins the tale of a man blindsided and disillusioned by betrayal. Brooding and expressive, **T I L E S** explores the dark subject matter by blending stylistically diverse musical elements. Lyrical string arrangements, haunting choir performances, ambient textures and lush vocals co-exist with thundering drums, weaving bass lines and an army of guitars to create a vivid experience that delivers the story's raw emotional journey from isolation to redemption.

"Pretending 2 Run" (aka *"P2R"*) features a world class production team who deliver an impressive blend of sound and vision. Continuing their partnership with renowned producer **Terry Brown** – and with mastering by Grammy award-winning engineer **Peter Moore**, *"Pretending 2 Run"* boasts a transparent and detailed sonic landscape. Attentive music enthusiasts will be rewarded as each listen unveils new and subtle features. Complementing the dramatic and multi-layered storyline is **Hugh Syme's** striking and surreal imagery. Featuring a lush 28-page full-color booklet, the design and packaging for *"Pretending 2 Run"* is an elaborate and stunning work of art.

"Pretending 2 Run" is a somber pilgrimage through adversity – an escape from the dark corners of seclusion on a faltering and elusive search for redemption. Unlike a literal, linear narrative the story does not reveal how or why things happened, but instead observes events in the wake of personal upheaval. Each song sets a scene in the storyline allowing abstract

symbolism and vague notions to creep into many of the lyrics. This layer of ambiguity creates the opportunity for songs to be considered individually; and more importantly, leaves room for the listener to personalize the story with their observations, experience or imagination.

The album's story begins in the post-traumatic aftermath of tragedy as the central character retreats into self-imposed isolation, numb and disconnected from the world. Time is displaced as his mind alternately travels between the past and the half-speed haze of the present in search of explanations. His recovery is hindered by the fear, anger and confusion that now define his life. Standing at several crossroads, indecision becomes another obstacle as internal battles rage between conflicting 'fight-or-flight' emotions.

The opening strains of the title track with its strident feedback, regimental snare drum cadence and solemn 15th century meditation on Psalm 51 foreshadow a dark and dramatic musical story. But these are also signposts that herald a reimagined **T I L E S** – a band intent on creating a cinematic experience where the music unfolds and evolves in unpredictable ways.

Guitarist and composer **Chris Herin** reveals: *"We needed to do 'something more' if we were going to record another album. We had to think big – to explore and experiment and hope something worthwhile would materialize – and clearly it took a while!"*

What **T I L E S** delivers with "P2R" is an elaborate concept album that follows in the best ambitions of classic progressive rock. The song cycle format allowed the band the freedom to veer into art rock territory as recurring musical themes, reprises, spoken word narrative, field recordings and electronic textures are woven throughout the arrangements, reinforcing and supplementing the storyline.

Bassist **Jeff Whittle** adds: *"We rehearsed and recorded the basic tracks as a band for almost every song. So although the album features elaborate vocal and string arrangements and layered instrumentation – the foundation of the songs is classic 3-piece: bass, guitar and drums."*

And make no mistake..., at the core of "P2R" is the adventurous guitar-driven progressive hard rock for which **T I L E S** is known. The 'studied spontaneity' of drummer **Mark Evans** and the inventive melodic counterpoint of bassist **Jeff Whittle** combine to deliver intense and complex workouts, deep grooves and spacious foundations. Guitarist **Chris Herin** uses an arsenal of electric guitars and effects to create a wide range of distortion, clean tones and textures. And in a first for the band, several songs were written in alternate tunings; while banjo, mandolin, parlor, nylon and 12-string guitars – along with creative ambient recording

techniques – color and contrast the arrangements. Riding atop the musical activity is vocalist **Paul Rarick's** crisp clear tenor as he navigates the emotional spectrum from delicate laments to soaring upper register melodies.

Lending their talents to the impressive production of *"Pretending 2 Run"* is an extraordinary collection of special guests: **Ian Anderson** (Jethro Tull), **Mike Portnoy** (Dream Theater, Winery Dogs), **Adam Holzman** (Steven Wilson Band), **Mike Stern** (Miles Davis), **Kim Mitchell** (Max Webster), **Colin Edwin** (Porcupine Tree), **Kevin Chown** (Tarja Turunen, Chad Smith), **Max Portnoy** (Next to None), **Matthew Parmenter** (Discipline), **Mark Mikel** (Pillbugs), **Joe Deninzon**, and other notable musicians from the Detroit area.

Herin explains: "Throughout our history we've typically stayed within the instrumentation of the band; but we began "P2R" with no such restriction. To present the album's theme and music to their full potential we collaborated with a host of additional musicians. Lucky for us, not only do we have many talented friends, but we also had opportunities to work with some notable and iconic special guests!"

In fact, the album's diversity of sound is due in great part to the guest musicians who contributed their distinctive skills. Topping the list is **Jethro Tull** front man **Ian Anderson** who weaves flute melodies between vocal phrases on the moody *'Midwinter'* before he cuts loose with an energetic improvisation on the song's long ride out.

Especially noteworthy is that **T I L E S** has the distinction of featuring the **Portnoy** father/son recording debut! Prog ambassador and perennial award-winning drummer **Mike Portnoy (Winery Dogs, Dream Theater)** and his son **Max of Next to None** are making their first appearance together on the same recording. **Mike** energizes the alternately heavy and orchestral *'Stonewall,'* offering up complex syncopations and contrasting subtle ostinato patterns. **Max** steps out of his progressive metal comfort zone to groove on the Badfinger-esque *'Fait Accompli'* – which includes both **Portnoys** teaming up for a father/son duet on the song's instrumental bridge sections.

Herin recalls the sessions at Portnoy's studio: "It was genuinely heart-warming to watch the father/son bond at work; not only Mike producing Max' performance, but especially as they worked out their duet parts."

The super-sized cast of luminaries continues with six-time Grammy nominated fusion/jazz guitarist **Mike Stern** threading a blues-on-steroids solo through the lengthy and off-kilter ride out of *'The Disappearing Floor'*. Canadian icon **Kim Mitchell (Max Webster)** returns for his third guest appearance delivering a blistering guitar solo on the album's first single and video *'Shelter in Place'*. **Adam Holzman**, an alumnus of **Miles Davis'** band and currently

the keyboardist in the **Steven Wilson Band** cuts loose on B-3 and Fender Rhodes in the 11-minute *'Taken by Surprise'*. **Holzman** also provided essential ambient and electronic soundscapes to symbolize the emotional ebb and flow between many of the songs. Master sound designer **Colin Edwin** of **Porcupine Tree** contributes his palette of "subtle interventions". Consisting of sliced effects, distorted loops, e-bowed bass, clay pots and found sounds, **Edwin's** imaginative programming was perfect for the dynamic lament of *'Small Fire Burning'* and the slow building crescendo of *'Friend or Foe'*.

However, many of the most crucial guest performances came from **T I L E S'** own backyard.

The contributions of **Matthew Parmenter** of **Discipline** on lead vocals, duets, backing vocals and vocal arrangements heighten the album's tension and drama. **Parmenter's** theatrical timbre is the perfect foil to **Rarick's** clean delivery as both vocalists navigate the contrasting states-of-mind and faltering emotional progress of the central character.

Essential to creating the unpredictable and colorful sonic picture is the involvement of **Mark Mikel**, mastermind of **The Pillbugs**. Toledo's favorite son, **Mikel** orchestrated arrangements for the string quartet and oboe, contributed backing vocals, co-wrote vocal arrangements, recorded overdubs and made his eclectic collection of instruments available. Otherwise sitar, tambura, mellotron, electric harpsichord, analog synthesizers and other unique gadgets may not have found their way into the album.

Rounding out the guest list are crucial performances by long-time **T I L E S** associate Kevin Chown (bass), Joe Deninzon (violin), Keith Kaminski (saxophone), Tim Michling (oboe), Ryan Arini (vocals), Sonya Mastick (percussion), Matt Cross (programming), Kristina Freed (vocals), Kevin Sharpe (B-3) and Renaissance Voices & Con Spirito (choir).

*Predicts **Herin**: "Most of P2R, including the subjective story itself, will likely take time to absorb and blossom. Many of the song structures are non-repetitive and the arrangements are dense and multi-layered..., there is a lot to take in! It will require repeated listens for the album to gradually reveal itself as the listener develops an emotional connection. But these are often the kinds of albums that make lasting impressions – at least we can hope!"*

In the final assessment *'Pretending 2 Run'* is a varied and esoteric musical pilgrimage – a song cycle whose story has only a vague beginning and at best a tenuous conclusion. This is an ironic parallel to the situation **T I L E S** was in nearly eight years ago as the band stood at the crossroads – unsure if there would be another album after *'Fly Paper'*. Thankfully, this crisis of confidence gradually passed as uncertainty gave way to enthusiasm.

The band forged ahead to explore new creative paths in hopes an album – distinctive in concept, expression and sound – would materialize.

And so..., finally the wait is over! 2016 delivers 96-minutes of much anticipated new **T I L E S** music! Destined to be on the radar of Prog fans everywhere, *'Pretending 2 Run'* is clearly and unmistakably **T I L E S**, but infused with a more expansive sound as the guest artists and the band's renewed spirit of adventure propel the music into new directions sure to please fans old and new.



A Brief History...

Launched with words of encouragement from **Gene Simmons** of **KISS** "*I was totally blown away, amazing...*" the band self-released their debut album "*tiles*" in 1994. Acclaim quickly spread and led to international licensing agreements in 1995. Polydor released "*tiles*" throughout Europe on their Dream Circle label where it earned excellent reviews from Aardschok (91/100), SCREAM (6/6) and Rock Hard (Germany) (8/10) among others. Teichiku Records released the album in Japan with BURRN! Magazine rating "*tiles*" an 88/100 saying "... (*tiles*' is) a wonderful album with a very high level of technique and a great melodic sense." The CD entered the BURRN! chart at #47.

T I L E S returned in 1997 with "*Fence the Clear*" – an album which found the band embracing their progressive rock heritage and experimenting with long-form song structures, bits of jazz and a heavier sound. It also marked the beginning of a long partnership with noted **Rush** producer **Terry Brown**, who mixed the album. "*Fence the Clear*" was again well-received by the band's growing fan base and garnered positive reviews from Aardschok (94/100), SCREAM (5/6) and earned HM Magazine's "*Pick of the Litter*" award. While at home..., the **Detroit Free Press** named **T I L E S** "Detroit's leading progressive rock band."

T I L E S rose from the underground with 1999's "*Presents of Mind*" – once again mixed by **Terry Brown** and featuring artwork by award-winning artist **Hugh Syme**. Lauded by **Ian Anderson** of **Jethro Tull** "*Tiles are undoubtedly one of the brighter hopes for the musical millennium!*" and Prog ambassador **Mike Portnoy** of **Dream Theater** "*I love this CD. The whole disc is full of great musicianship and great songwriting with catchy hooks*" – **T I L E S** was invited by Portnoy to tour Europe with Dream Theater in November 1999.

"Presents of Mind" was nominated for several Detroit Music Awards and occupied a spot on many "best of 1999" lists from fans and journalists alike.

After a lengthy gestation period, the fourth **T I L E S** album, *"Window Dressing"*, materialized in 2004. This time **Terry Brown** helmed the entire project – producing, engineering and mixing. A concept album that investigates situations where 'things aren't always as they appear', *"Window Dressing"* received high marks worldwide for its experimental blend of Prog elements with dark garage rock aesthetics and was nominated for a 2005 Detroit Music Award. With elaborate and intriguing artwork by **Hugh Syme**, the album was issued with a bonus live bootleg disc from the band's 1999 European tour with **Dream Theater**.

Released in 2008, *"Fly Paper"* is the fifth studio recording from **T I L E S**. **Terry Brown's** spacious production draws the listener deep into the music – which finds the band embracing a renewed sense of experimentation as the intricacies of progressive rock co-exist with improvisational freedom. Artist **Hugh Syme** portrays the album's theme of vulnerability with a lone paper airplane drifting at the mercy of air currents swirling over a congested city skyline. *"Fly Paper"* features an impressive roster of special guests including Rock and Roll Hall of Fame member **Alex Lifeson** of **Rush**, Alannah Myles, Kim Mitchell and Hugh Syme. **Ian Anderson** of **Jethro Tull** hailed *"Fly Paper"* as *"Tiles' best CD yet!"*

T I L E S commemorated their 20th anniversary with a pair of live recordings that double as career retrospectives. The first installment, *"Off the Floor 01"* was released in 2012 with the 2-disc *"Off the Floor 02"* following in 2014. **T I L E S** delivers spirited 'live in the studio' performances which offer new perspectives on standout tracks from each of the band's five albums. Complete with several new instrumentals and adventurous extended jams, the "Off the Floor" project gives the listener more than carbon copies of the studio versions with **Terry Brown** handling the mixing chores and **Hugh Syme** providing the cover art. Nominated for a 2015 Detroit Music Award, *"Off the Floor 02"* includes a bonus disc of selected songs from the band's 2005 appearance at the Rites of Spring Festival and two videos from the "Off the Floor" sessions.

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