

**PETER MAC**

*Tightly Wrapped*

2005 Rokit Records

[www.aboutpetermac.com](http://www.aboutpetermac.com)

Style: Instrumental Guitar Rock

Musicianship: ★★★★★

Composition: ★★★ 1/2

Lyrics/Interpretation: ★★★ 1/2

Production: ★★★ 1/2

Packaging: ★★★

Total: 17 1/2



Milwaukee native Peter Mac has unleashed his sixth CD and it's a killer. For anyone who enjoys the technical masters of guitar like Steve Vai, Joe Satriani, et al, Mac gives them all a pretty good run for their money. *Tightly Wrapped* is very focused for an instrumental guitar showcase and rather than masturbatory pyrotechnics Mac delivers twelve great melodic songs that give him just the right amount of room to display his chops.

In addition to playing the guitars, Mac also plays keys and bass on all but one track. Brian Stemke and Greg Smith provide the drums and it's rather astounding how the performances sound like a tightly-knit quartet. The production here is superb and Milwaukee's Rokit Records have done an impressive job of bringing warmth to the digital aspects of this project, despite some bass sampling. Multimusica's Gary Tanin also deserves special mention for the beautiful mastering.

Stylistically the songs run from progressive to fusion and funk but all remain grounded in the rock idiom. The classy opening track "In Sleep" is testament to the marriage of these styles with a funky beat, jazzy acoustic guitar chording, lush keyboard washes, heavily distorted guitars and a killer single-coil lick.

Mac provides plenty of electric onslaught ("Kelly's Blackbirds" being the best example here) but also shades things nicely with some stunning acoustic and nylon-string guitars. "Pastel Doorway" is a lovely choir of acoustic guitars. On the aptly titled album closer "Sand and Wind," the backdrop is acoustic arpeggios while Mac's blazing electric guitars create apocalyptic waves of melodic fire as they simultaneously trade space with dazzling classical guitar runs. "Andrea" also succeeds in entwining moody minor-key acoustic guitars and keys with soaring electric melody and when the key turns major in the chorus it feels like redemption. Other mid-tempo numbers such as "That Was Then," one of the finest tracks on the CD, emphasize that the space between the notes is just as important as the notes themselves.

When Mac isn't recording and performing in the Milwaukee area he's teaching at the Waukesha Conservatory of Music in the Hartland Music Center and at his studio, Guitar Lab. He is also part of Streetlife, the band that entertains the throngs at Milwaukee Bucks games. Mac came to prominence with his regional touring band the Converters and he has an extensive resume of jingles and commercial recordings. He has shared the stage with some of the biggest names in rock, jazz and funk including Tower of Power, Grover Washington, Jeff Healey, Kansas, Tim Weisberg, Al Jarreau and the O'Jays.

*Tightly Wrapped* is an inspired work that every aspiring guitarist and fan of rock guitar can appreciate; one that will hold up to repeated listening. This is the sound of a master coming into his own.

Rick Tvedt