

California Guitar Trio with Tony Levin and Pat Mastelotto (2002)

Written by bluesever

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1. *Melrose Avenue* - 2:16 2. *Skyline* - 4:41 3. *Dancing Anne* - 3:38 4. *Heart of the Sunrise* - 7:16 5. *Hanagasa* - 3:32 6. *Zundoko-Bushi* - 3:37 7. *Blockhead* - 3:47 8. *Dance of Maya* - 7:12 9. *Swampy Space* - 3:40 10. *Swampy Return* - 2:10 11. *Train to Lamy* - 5:11 12. *Eve* - 4:11 13. *What I Am* - 6:29 14. *The Chase* - 7:36
Tony Levin - Bass, Chapman Stick Pat Mastelotto - Trap Kit, Buttons Paul Richards - Guitar, Slide Guitar, Mixing Bert Lams - Guitar, Mixing, Guitar (Tenor) Hideyo Moriya - Guitar, Mandocello

Since 1998, the California Guitar Trio has regularly toured with expanded versions of the band. The fan favorite is no doubt the quintet form with King Crimson members Tony Levin and Pat Mastelotto. A live album, *Live at the Key Club*, was made available in 2001 through the CGT Direct Collectors' Series. CG3+2 takes the quintet in the studio to record their repertoire. The track list includes a couple new CGT compositions, jams and studio constructions credited to the whole group, a few more of those incredible covers the band is known for, and a few old favorites revisited. Granted, "Melrose Avenue," "Blockhead," and "Train to Lamy," all dating back to the trio's first two albums (*Yamanashi Blues* in 1994; *Invitation* in 1995), suffer a bit from overexposure, but having a rhythm section to back them up is a whole new thing -- "Melrose Avenue" turns into a splendidly driving album opener. The group compositions, in which engineer Bill Munyon also had a word, are not as satisfying as the trio's own songs. Somewhat looser, they don't pack as much energy or beauty as "Skyline" and "Eve," the two new pieces co-written by the team of Bert Lams, Paul Richards, and Hideyo Moriya. The highlights are provided by the covers: Yes' "Heart of the Sunrise," the Mahavishnu Orchestra's "Dance of Maya" (did someone mention virtuosity?), and two delightful Japanese traditional tunes rearranged by Moriya -- "Zundoko-Bushi" even includes bits of King Crimson's "21st Century Schizoid Man" and "Vrooom." CG3+2 is only half new to the fans and constitutes a meager offering composition-wise. But if the idea of the guitar trio being backed by such a skilled rhythm section makes you salivate, then by all means grab it. You won't be disappointed! ---François Couture, Rovi

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