



J. S. Tolar does not so much arrive on the progressive heavy metal scene with the album "The Continuum" as return to it from a long and productive detour. This concept album is a highly polished solo work that showcases Tolar's dark and driving musical intellect. "The Continuum" grabs you by the throat and pulls you in.

The album explores the darkness of the soul through the metaphor of a sleeper's nightmarish dream world. Fear and hope wrestle as the sleeper is drawn toward a light that he hopes will awaken him.

Tolar writes, "I wanted to capture a feeling of darkness...mixed with a strong feeling of hope. I wanted the album to have different song styles for all types of listeners, while still sticking to the story and feeling of what was going on in the sleeper's world." One gets a visceral sense of the sleeper's torment in the album's relentlessly clean instrumentation.

Tolar's musical career began in middle school on the violin and quickly migrated from acoustic guitar to electric guitar and keyboard to performing original compositions with various bands. He was inspired by artists such as Dream Theater, The Tea Party, Tool, Steve Vai, Joe Satriani and Porcupine Tree.

While at Northwest Vista College in the late 90s, Tolar became serious about music and wrote his first album, "Space of Time". He frequently played live music as an instrumental guitarist and sold his CDs. At one of these events a producer approached him with a recording contract. After signing, Tolar formed a band and completed another CD, "Circle of Legends".

Despite his affinity for performing, Tolar found the realities of the recording industry to be at odds with his goals and lifestyle. He walked away from the contract.

Music simmered in the background for eight years while Tolar pursued a career in graphic design. As with music, he developed an effortlessly clean style that focused on the essentials. In 2011, he obtained a masters degree in Education Media Design and Technology from Full Sail University.

In 2009, Tolar built a home studio and recorded the solo album "Crystal Shore" which, for the first time, featured his own solid vocals. One of the songs, "Endless War", received positive reviews, but finances were not available to produce or market the CD.

In 2010, he recorded "The Continuum" in twenty-eight days as part of Record Production Month. The album was well received by fellow musicians but remained roughly mixed and unmastered. In 2013, Tolar returned to the project, determined to re-record the songs and fine-tune the mixes.

These efforts have produced the release of "The Continuum" in January 2014 on the label Mondo Tunes. Although technically his fourth album, the "The Continuum" represents Tolar's real debut and a surprising achievement from an artist who has thoroughly perfected his craft.

J. S. Tolar lives in San Antonio, TX with his wife, Naru, and young son, Aiden. "Today," Tolar explains, "my inspirations are completely different from my college years. My love for my wife and son now give me the insight and motivation to continue writing music. For as long as I live and hopefully after, music will be a part of my very being."