



THE JULIEN KASPER BAND

Trance Groove

julienkasper.com

Riffs

GP EDITORS' TOP THREE CD PICKS

BARRY CLEVELAND



The Julien Kasper Band
Trance Groove

Exquisite tones, masterful execu-

tion, and innate soulfulness drive this jazzy, funky, bluesy, Sco-and-Beck-meet-Hendrix-for-drinks-at-the-Harvard-Psychedelic-Club instrumental joyride. **Toulcat.**

28 JUNE 2010 GUITARPLAYER.COM

<http://www.guitarplayer.com>

AS SEEN IN:



Exquisite tones, masterful execution, and innate soulfulness drive this jazzy, funky, bluesy, Sco-and-Beck-meet-Hendrix-for-drinks-at-the-Harvard-Psychedelic-Club instrumental joyride.

Guitar Player Magazine

June, 2010



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FUSION



JULIEN KASPER

Trance Groove (Toulcat)

★★★★☆

The opening title track might be the only “trance” tune on this album, but the “groove” on this, the third release from eclectic guitarist and Berklee College

SHRED

of Music professor Julien Kasper, never stops. Kasper’s grasp of dynamics and tone as well as his anything-goes approach is in the best tradition of Jeff Beck, while his affinity for the harmonic fringe calls to mind John Scofield. In the middle of funk rocker “Trash Day,” Kasper cranks up the fuzz and goes all psychedelic on you, channeling an inner Jimi like few others can. Then, just when you’re all toked up, he brings on the mellow with the beautiful acoustic ballad “Abyssinia,” showing yet another facet of his imaginative repertoire.

Highlights: “Trance Groove,” “Chupacabra,” “Abyssinia”

20 **GuitarEDGE** JUNE 2010

AS SEEN IN:



“Kasper’s grasp of dynamics and tone as well as his anything-goes approach is in the best tradition of Jeff Beck, while his affinity for the harmonic fringe calls to mind John Scofield.”

-Michael Mueller
Guitar Edge Magazine

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THE JULIEN KASPER BAND

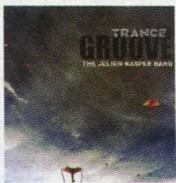
Trance Groove

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REVIEWS Undertones

THE JULIEN KASPER BAND

Trance Groove (Toulcat)



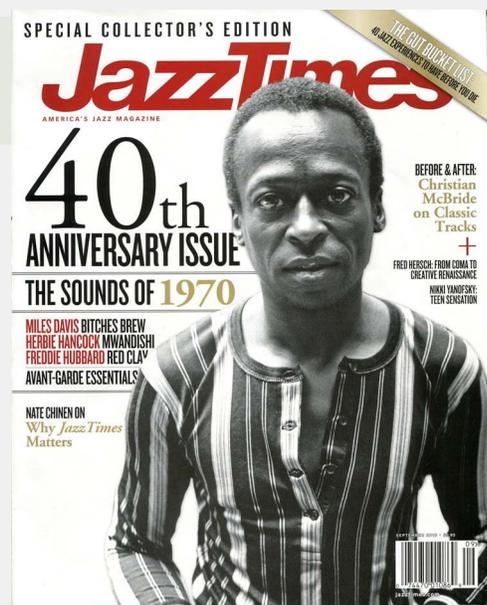
Rock-tinged instrumentals from authoritative electric guitarist (and Berklee instructor) Julien Kasper, who blends aspects of Jeff

Beck, blues and fusion on this adventurous set. Kasper picks with fiery abandon on "Chupacabra," which features a guest turn from T Lavitz on Hammond B3 organ. "The Reverend" is an introspective, soulful number highlighted by some blues-inflected licks, while the exotic "Abyssinia" is Beck-like in its slinky Strat phrasing. The mysterious title track is noirish psychedelia that suggests a meeting of the spirits between Bill Frisell and Jim Campilongo, and on the raunchy "Trash Day," Kasper's group feels like a jazzier version of the James Gang. "Riff 53" is a bracing, chops-laden manifesto that suggests Eric Johnson, and the dramatic rubato closer "Carolina Rosa" is an expressive showcase for Kasper's creative daring.

JAZZTIMES >> SEPTEMBER 2010

JAZZTIMES.COM 77

AS SEEN IN:



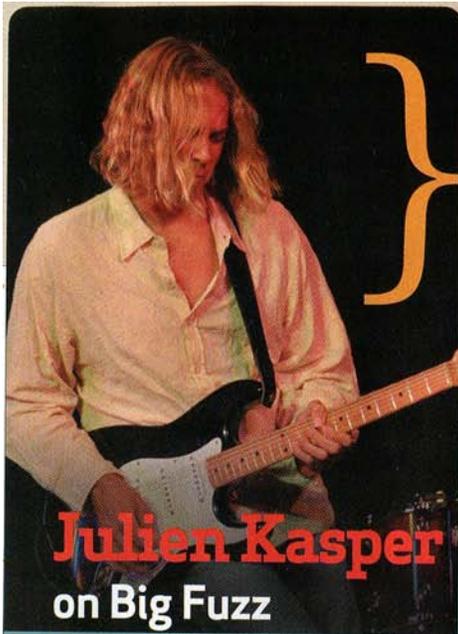
Authoritative...
adventurous...
introspective,
soulful... exotic...
noirish psychedelia...
raunchy... a bracing
chops laden
manifesto...
dramatic... an
expressive showcase
for Kasper's creative
daring.

— Bill Milkowski
Jazz Times Magazine
www.jazztimes.com
September, 2010



THE JULIEN KASPER BAND

julienkasper.com



"PUTTING IT MILDLY, I AM A aficionado of fuzz tones," says multi-genre virtuoso guitarist Julien Kasper. "I'm drawn to the dynamic range—from clean to toxic mayhem—that you can achieve by manipulating the volume on your guitar while using certain fuzz pedals. The best

Fuzz Faces and many of the clones and variations available have this dynamic quality. But, unfortunately, many guitarists go to a music store to purchase their first fuzz, plug it into a clean amp, wonder why it doesn't sound like

Jimi, and walk away discouraged. "A fuzz pedal into a clean amp is a great sound, but it will never sound like the Band of Gypsys, and that



Hendrix Fuzz Face

giant, harmonically rich tone is what many people are seeking. The truth is that to approach that tone, your amp has to be cranked to the breathing point, and this is not typically music store or neighbor friendly. For example, when recording fuzz sounds, I crank vintage '60s and early-'70s Marshalls to between 7 and 10, which is very loud. My favorite fuzz for this purpose is a silicon diode Fuzz Face that George Tripps at Dunlop custom made for me.



JAM Fuzz Phrase

"Of course, almost no venue will tolerate that kind of volume, so my solution is to use a small, low-gain amp—a '64 Vox AC10 run through a 2x12 Vox cab loaded with Celestion Blues—turned up all the way. The Vox prefers a gentler fuzz with smoother highs, so I use a germanium Fuzz Face variant built by JAM pedals called the Fuzz Phrase. I miss pushing air live with the Marshalls, but not searing the faces off of my audience is a great benefit." —Barry Cleveland

Watch the Julien Kasper Band perform "Ten Years Late" live.



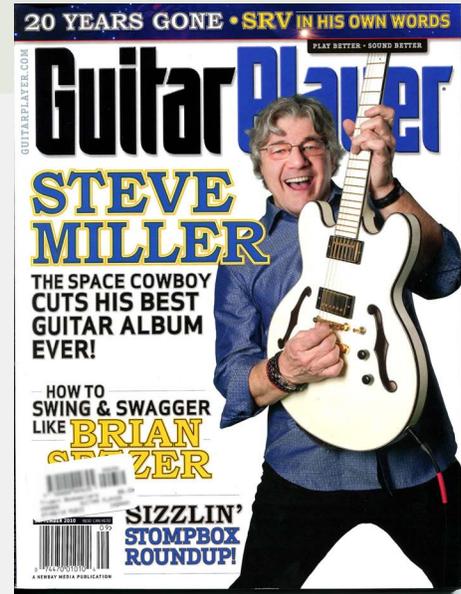
Check out Kasper's latest album, *The New Imperial*, on julienkasper.com.



Watch Deke Dickerson jam with Duane Eddy at Deke's Guitar Geek Festival



AS SEEN IN:



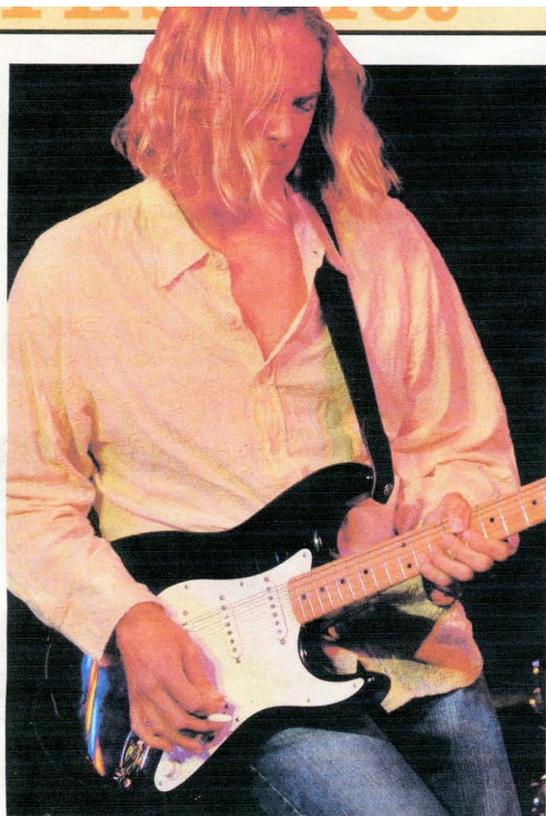
Guitar Player Magazine
www.guitarplayer.com
September, 2010



THE JULIEN KASPER BAND

Trance Groove

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Julien Kasper

Go With the Flow

The Julien Kasper Band's record, *Trance Groove*, shows a guitar player in full command of his instrument. But what really stands out are Kasper's compositional skills and the way his music flows.

"I don't want guitar players who hear this to go, 'Man, did you see how he was sweeping?' I don't want to have any part of that mentality. I just want them to say they really like the music. The content is the approach."

Kasper, an instructor at Berklee School of Music, went into the studio with one thing in mind. "It started as an idea to be uncompromising in the writing and playing. I wanted to follow the muse. That's how some of the more textural and slightly atonal things came about. Plus, I wanted to write a context for my playing."

Kasper started playing one day when he and his mother drove by a guitar

store. She bought him an acoustic and he learned chords and songs from the Beatles' *Abbey Road* and Bob Dylan's *Blonde on Blonde*. After hearing *The History of Eric Clapton*, he got an electric. "I enslaved a friend to play rhythm guitar, and we would play blues after school. I'd take stuff off records, following the thread back to Freddie King, B.B., T-Bone Walker, and anywhere it'd take me."

Kasper's development got a boost when his band hired the late harpist/vocalist Pat Ramsey was a gig. "He was beyond us in ability, but he nurtured my playing – a lot."

An obsession with jazz led Kasper to

the University of Miami. "I wanted to go to an environment where I would get my ass kicked day in and day out. I wanted to learn composition, orchestration – anything I could." After graduating, he ended up in Dallas, where he was "pretty miserable" playing country gigs. He met the guitar chair at the University of North Texas, a renowned jazz school, and was able to get a teaching fellowship at the college. "They paid me to teach while I earned a Master's Degree. My wife at the time was looking to go to Boston for her degree. So I called Berklee, and the assistant chair was a North Texas guy. I sent him a demo I'd done with (Steely Dan drummer) Keith Carlock and a bass player. He heard it and said I was in."

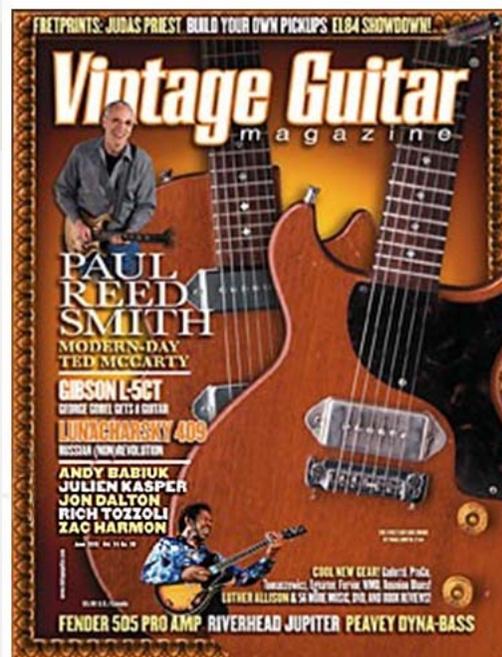
During his time at the school, which is now a little over a decade, Kasper has continued to develop. And while he cites common guitar influences like Beck and Hendrix, his technique is also heavily influenced by jazz horn players like Wayne Shorter, Joe Henderson, John Coltrane, Miles Davis, and others. "I remember a Sonny Rollins solo I was learning years ago that had this liquid, flowing element. Learning that solo, I cultivated my left-hand attack. I try to balance my left and right hand to where if I'm watching myself, I can't tell if I'm picking, slurring, hammering, or pulling off. I can't try to subjugate technique to music."

A Strat guy, Kasper owns a couple of vintage examples. "One's a '66 I've had since I was 18. I just recently saw an old photo of me where the guitar had finish on it! My main old one is a mutt with a '54 neck and a '57 body. It doesn't have any collectable value, but it's a total player – a remarkable-sounding guitar." He has also become a fan of D'Pergo guitars. "They're remarkable, huge, complex-sounding instruments. They sound like a great old Strat, but have something all their own."

When it comes to amps, Kasper's preference is clear. "My policy is the opposite of a lot of people. I believe only big amps sound big, so I record most of my solos with a '72 100-watt Super Lead into basket-weave 4x12 cabinets. Nothing sounds like that. I use small amps for clean tones – I like to push them to the point where they're not quite breaking up. I also use a brown '62 Fender Princeton and a '57 Deluxe."

Kasper's trio hasn't strayed too far from the East Coast, aside from a couple of trips to Europe. He hopes with the release of *Trance Groove* the band will have a chance to head toward the West Coast. He thinks people will react to his music as he reacts to what he listens to. "I react to music viscerally, just how it makes me feel. To me it's all equal – whether it's Howlin' Wolf, Mahler, or John Coltrane. It's all there." – *John Heidt*

AS SEEN IN:



"The Julien Kasper Band's record, *Trance Groove*, shows a guitar player in full command of his instrument. But what really stands out are Kasper's compositional skills and the way his music flows."

Vintage Guitar Magazine
First Fret feature article
by John Heidt
June, 2010



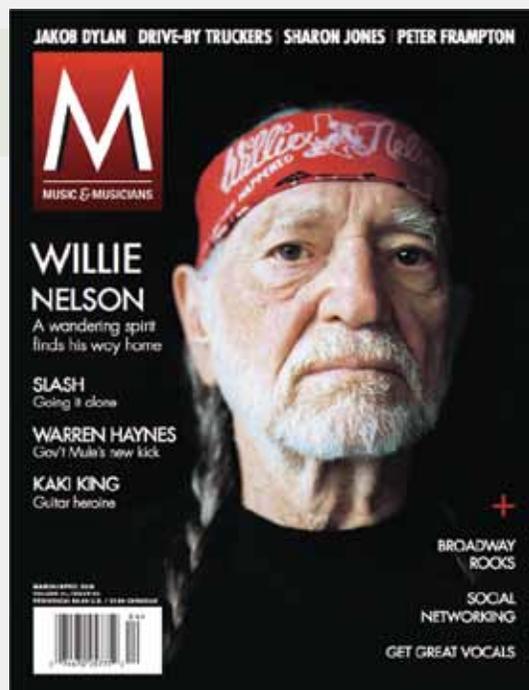
THE JULIEN KASPER BAND

Trance Groove

julienkasper.com

A graduate of the University of Miami jazz program, spawning such notable players as Pat Metheny and Bruce Hornsby, Julien Kasper is a guitar virtuoso whose instrumental excursions find equal footing in both jazz and blues without being bound to either. Kasper's sound is a searing blend of Metheny and Steve Morse, although on tracks like "Trash Day" a hint of Jimi Hendrix enters the mix as well. Kasper wields a master's touch even as he alternates between blazing workouts ("Milk Truck"), sinewy grooves ("Trance Groove") and introspective musings ("Abyssinia"). A solid supporting ensemble helps elevate the energy level, while guest T Lavitz of the Dixie Dregs adds explosive organ flourishes.

AS SEEN IN:



“Kasper is a guitar virtuoso whose instrumental excursions find equal footing in both jazz and blues without being bound to either.”

- M Music & Musicians

March/April 2010



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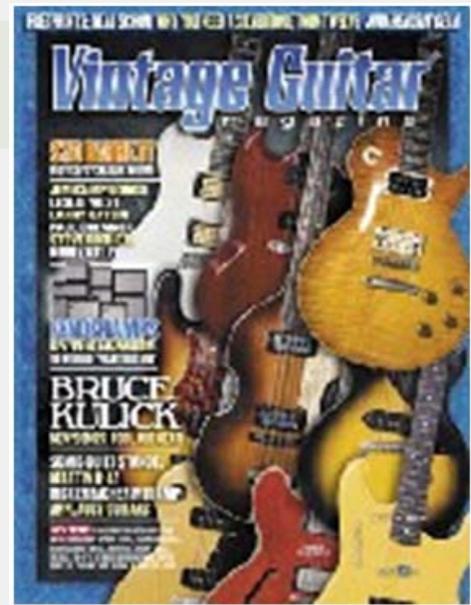
Berklee College of Music instructor Julien Kasper's new instrumental album is as indescribable as it is listenable. The songs are fresh and memorable, while his playing (along with that of bassist Jesse Williams and drummer Zac Casher) is a treat. Calling him a rock, jazz, or fusion guitarist would be unfair, and not fully describe all he can do.

Songs like *Trash Day* and *Milk Truck* make it obvious Kasper has listened to as many horn players as guitarists. In fact, the former sounds like a mashup of Jimi Hendrix and Sonny Rollins, and it works incredibly well, breaking from a tight funk into a stomping rocker. Meanwhile, cuts like *Riff 53* show the versatility of his playing and composing; it starts as fusion before turning into "pop-jazz." The changes are imaginative, the soloing surprising.

The title cut is just what the name of the song says - a slow, hypnotic groove sets the stage and the solo is a mix of slow gliding notes and wang bar flips. By its end, you also get dazzling runs and guitar harmonies running together perfectly. On other cuts, like the gospel-esque *The Reverend* and funky *Chupacabra* Kasper proves he can fill a song with grooves and atmosphere.

While it's hard to categorize what Kasper does, he's certainly one of the most imaginative composers and players working with the guitar today.

AS SEEN IN:



“While it’s hard to categorize what Kasper does, he’s certainly one of the most imaginative composers and players working with the guitar today.”

-John Heidt
Vintage Guitar Magazine

April, 2010

124 VINTAGE GUITAR | April 2010

<http://www.vintageguitar.com>



THE JULIEN KASPER BAND

Trance Groove

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Trance Groove is an unexpectedly enthralling album from Berklee professor, and University of Miami and North Texas alum, Julien Kasper. I use the term unexpected in the best sense of the word. In researching Kasper for the album I came across pics of the guitarist with his white Strat, playing through Marshal and Vox amps, providing a mental picture of what I expected his music to sound like. I expected Kasper to either be ripping Texas Blues or shredding jazz fusion licks over funky vamps. When I sat down to check out *Trance Groove* my preconceived notions and expectations of Kasper's playing were shattered, in a very good way. Goes to show, never judge a book by its cover or a guitarist by his gear.

Immediately the album's opening, and title, track sets the mood for what's to come. "Trance Groove" is a slow, deep in the pocket track that grows out of the nurturing hands of these three fine musicians. Instead of diving in and tearing his fretboard up, like he obviously can, Kasper layers texture upon texture, leading the listener down a long and winding road that culminates in a climactic finish. By choosing to lead off the album with a slow and mature tune, Kasper shows us that he's not just releasing an album for its own sake. He's carefully thought about how each song will represent him musically and what each song says to the audience. He could have easily started the album with the more up tempo "Chupacabra" or the blues-rock soaked "Trash Day," but he didn't. It takes experience, musical maturity and a bit of good ole' fashioned guts to start an album with a slow-cooker, but Kasper pulls it off without reservation.

As a player, Kasper floats between jazz, blues, fusion, rock and funk, with a tip of the hat to the classic country-pickers for good measure. His playing is always creative, check out his improvised solo on "Chupacabra" as a textbook example of how to create interest and energy within the context of a one-chord vamp. While he takes his opportunities to showcase his chops and high-energy soloing, it's moments like the acoustic intro to "Abyssinia" where Kasper shows his mettle. Possessing the chops to overplay at any moment, Kasper always puts the music first. He has a knack at finding the right texture, timbre and tone to extract the maximum amount of emotion out of each line, phrase, lick and voicing. Here is a guitarist who gets it, plain and simple.

Trance Groove is a solid outing by Kasper and his trio, consisting of bassist Jesse Williams and drummer Zac Casher. There are also several noteworthy guest appearances by the likes of Rob Avsharian, James Driscoll, Matt Jenson and T Lavitz, to spice things up. Regardless of who he's surrounded with, Kasper's playing is world class. His command of the instrument is clearly evident and his maturity as a musician emanates from every note.

<http://modernguitarist.guitarinternational.com/wpmu/2010/06/26/trancegroove/>

AS SEEN IN:



"Possessing the chops to overplay at any moment, Kasper always puts the music first. He has a knack at finding the right texture, timbre and tone to extract the maximum amount of emotion out of each line, phrase, lick and voicing. Here is a guitarist who gets it, plain and simple"

— Dr. Matt Warnock
June 26, 2010

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AS SEEN IN:



“...*Trance Groove* is a soulful trip that even the squares might be willing to take. Packed with massive riffs and jams for Dead Heads and Phish Phans alike...”

JAZZ Reviewed 04-26-10

Julien Kasper Band *Trance Groove*

From the vaults of the best jam bands in history comes the latest star in the genre, Julien Kasper. His band, and their latest album, "Trance Groove", is a soulful trip that even the squares might be willing to take.

Packed with massive riffs and jams for Dead Heads and Phish Phans alike, this band is both radio friendly and ideal for your next multi state excursion. A guaranteed winner for anyone wondering if Widespread Panic will ever get back together.

All nine of the album's offerings are choice on many levels. These are both perfect for winding down after a hard day's work or helping a fussy baby find an extra hour or two of sleep. I'd highly recommend this album to anyone who hasn't relaxed and enjoyed a sunset in a while.

All things considered, The Julien Kasper Band is a musical gift that won't likely be returned. Give your favorite open minded pal a taste of "Trance Groove" soon. They will be sure to have a nice day.

Christopher Llewellyn Adams



Christopher Llewellyn Adams
May, 2010

Cashbox Magazine
P.O. Box 10
Ridgeway, S.C. 29130



THE JULIEN KASPER BAND

Trance Groove

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AS SEEN IN:

Midwest Record

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Reviews, news, and views

TOULCAT

JULIEN KASPER BAND/*Trance Groove*: Rising guitar hero turns the tables on his third outing with an atmospheric, almost soundscape, that takes your ears into a sort of subterranean place. Stripped down and a little spooky, this is some hard core stuff that the hard core guitar fan will take to as a wild diversion that could turn into the standard bearer of pot smoking sounds for the near term. A sure thing for hipsters and those who want to be them. But it's for real hipsters, not manqué that wear old man clothes for the irony of it.

“Stripped down and a little spooky, this is some hard core stuff that the hard core guitar fan will take to as a wild diversion”

Volume 33/Number 163

April 13, 2010

MIDWEST RECORD

830 W. Route 22 #144

Lake Zurich, IL., 60047

CHRIS SPECTOR, Editor and Publisher

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THE JULIEN KASPER BAND

Trance Groove

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AS SEEN IN:

The Post and Courier
—postandcourier.com—

Trance Groove (Toulcat)

One of the great things about jazz music is that the genre doesn't have parameters as strict as those of rock or country.

That means that musicians who play jazz are much freer to explore what their instruments can do, which at times can either be a very good thing or a very bad thing.

Julien Kasper is an example of what happens when the experimentation goes in the right direction.

On "Trance Groove," the latest release by The Julien Kasper Band, the music goes from jazz-funk to psychedelic to blues.

Guitarist Kasper, bassist Jesse Williams and drummer Zac Casher meld their sounds together on tunes such as "Chupacabra," "Trash Day" and "Milk Truck."

Keyboardist T Lavitz, who has played with the likes of Widespread Panic and The Dixie Dregs, also sits in on a couple of tunes.

Kasper, who is also a professor at Boston's Berklee College of Music, definitely knows his way around his guitar, and listening to him shred on this album gives the listener the impression that "Trance Groove" must have been a blast to record.

For those into a more contemporary jazz sound, "Trance Groove" is definitely worth checking out, especially if guitar jazz is up your alley.

Key Tracks: "Chupacabra," "Trash Day" and "Abyssinia."

“Kasper definitely knows his way around his guitar and listening to him shred on this album gives the listener the impression that *Trance Groove* must have been a blast to record.”

Devin Grant
Special to The Post & Courier

The Post & Courier newspaper
Charleston, SC
Page 18F, April 8, 2010



THE JULIEN KASPER BAND

Trance Groove

julienkasper.com

I guess I can agree with the title here, though I'd call the CD 'mellifluously cool-jazzed fusion music' more than 'trance groove', the latter having roots in Ibiza, bpm (beats per minute), and other electronica forms rendering few compliments in comparison to the righteously abstract meld of Holdsworth and Metheny that Julien Kasper favors. There's also more than a little of the *Sargasso Sea* benchmark that Ralph Towner and John Abercrombie issued many years ago.

Bassist Jesse Williams and drummer Zac Casher are as subtly imbued as Kasper, Williams oft reminiscent of the environments Julian Preister set for himself in the '74 *Love Love* release along with Henry Franklin (for those who imagined the then-named Pepo Mtoto was just a horns guy, think again and check that righteous LP out, you'll be surprised), Casher solid in his beats while playing around with patterns endlessly. Kasper can shred or slo-burn with the best of the strummers and pickers, and he's one of the very few guitarists I've ever heard who has a line on Alan Holdsworth's unique slurs. T. Lavitz, of the rightly enlegended Dixie Dregs, and Matt Benson sit in for some organ work, alternating the emphasis between trio and quartet format throughout.

The Bumpus is a great stand-out, eerie and balmily reassuring at the same time, tropic like one of those Steve Khan comps of the *Where's Mumfrey* era but also Isotope-y at times, minus the caffeine while fully in exploratory fusion synch. Kasper, at least in this slab, prefers an iced-out expressionism to the speedster mode he's more than capable of, so *Trance Groove* is an exercise in restraint and taste. Plug it in when you're driving the coastline at night rather than cruising the metro streets at rush hour -- unless, of course, you want to keep your sanity amid the hustle and blare, then it'll serve just as well.

AS SEEN IN:



“Kasper can shred or slo-burn with the best of the strummers and pickers and he’s one of the very few guitarists I’ve ever heard who has a line on Alan Holdsworth’s unique slurs.”

-Mark S. Tucker
Folk & Acoustic Music Exchange
Edited by David N. Pyles

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THE JULIEN KASPER BAND

Trance Groove

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AS SEEN IN:



The Julien Kasper Band

Trance Groove

iTunes

When I was a college freshman, I was introduced to a friend of a friend's band and told that the guitarist was one of the best in the city. I watched the band play, confused, as I had, at the time, only heard my brother, a classic rock enthusiast, talk about guitar playing extensively, and this was not my brother's scene. The band was playing music far from the rock solos I'd heard my brother rave about for the previous five years. The guitarist that day was playing what I like to call groove rock, and that's exactly what The Julien Kasper Band makes.

So what is groove rock? It's exactly what it sounds like - it's rock that *grooves*. It's rock and jazz fused together to make something that's so '70s, so Doors-y, that you can't help feeling like you're either the one playing the music or you're there watching it being made.

Trance Groove is exactly what it sounds like, too. It's slow when it needs to be, and much more often than classic rock. There are pianos or organs or both, and the bass is out of control. The solos are spot-on, and the drums are in whatever time signature and rhythm they need to be. Vocals aren't necessary because the music speaks for itself. It's what bands like Sound Tribe Sector 9 try to make, but try too hard and make too electric.

Even if you don't like "this kind" of music, you'll find yourself grooving with The Julien Kasper Band. It's undeniable how much each track makes you want to do nothing but listen.

Key Tracks: *Trash Day*, *Trance Groove*, *The Bumpus*

★★★★★

Abbey K. Davis - MuzikReviews.com Staff

May 2, 2010

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For Questions Or Comments About This Review Send An Email To info@muzikreviews.com

“...you’ll find yourself grooving with The Julien Kasper Band. It’s undeniable how much each track makes you want to do nothing but listen.”

Abbey K. Davis
May, 2010

MuzikReviews.com



THE JULIEN KASPER BAND

Trance Groove

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So what does a professor at the Berklee College of Music do in his spare time? He plays the guitar live and in the studio resulting in his third album. *Trance Groove* follows *Flipping Time* (2003) and *The New Imperial* (2006).

He began his career touring and recording with keyboardist Bruce Katz and supporting Sam McClain in the studio on two of his CDs. His guitar virtuosity has now enabled him to establish a solid solo career.

He plays with a basic band, which allows him the room to improvise and be creative as he places his guitar sound front and center. He is primarily backed by drummer Zac Casher and bassist Jesse Williams. Matt Jenson and T. Lavitz add some Hammond B3 Organ to four of the nine tracks.

Trance Groove is just about a perfect title for his new album. His laid back style draws the listener in and places you under his spell.

He is primarily a jazz or to be more precise a jazz fusion artist and can be placed in the Jeff Beck school of guitar players. He is a fine improvisational player who will constantly surprise with his excursions yet is able to maintain a melodic nature within the songs structure.

He is also a very precise player and each note has a clarity. The phrasing is exact and it all adds up to a very unique and recognizable style.

The title song is the first track and quickly established his style and what is to follow. *Chupacabra* has an organ foundation which challenges him to move off the melody for some improvisation before returning home. *The Reverend* is the longest song at just under nine minutes. There is subtle quality as his guitar wanders, which draws you along with it. I can imagine sitting by the ocean wearing my headphones while watching the waves with this track playing in the background.

Trance Groove is a fine listen, especially if you want to hear a talented guitarist practice his craft. Julien Kasper's style may not rock the house but it is effective and presents him as one of the better guitarists working today.

AS SEEN IN:



“His laid back style draws the listener in and places you under his spell.”

David Bowling
Blogcritics.org

April, 2010

AS SEEN IN:



THE JULIEN KASPER BAND

Trance Groove

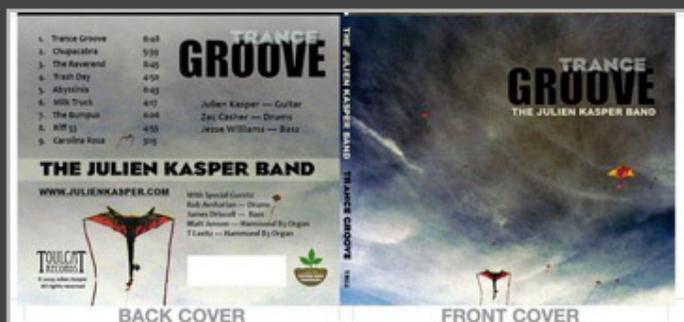
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Green Arrow Radio

MUSIC PROGRAMMED FOR OPEN MINDS & THIRSTY EAR-HOLES!

Trance Groove December 17th, 2009

By The Julien Kasper Band. I have been spinning music mad by *Julien Kasper* for many years now and I am once again struck with the sounds put forth on his latest release *Trance Groove* on Toulcat Records. The nine tracks are filled with personality where needed and some rock as desired. There are some extra jams on the Hammond B-3 Organ by *Matt Jensen & T Lavitz* that add a certain warmth to their respected tracks making me gravitate to "The Reverend" & "Riff 53" (featuring Jensen) as well as "Chupacabra" and the soft spoken "Carolina Rose" (featuring Lavitz). There are two tracks that are the heavier hitters on the album for my radio ear, "Trash Day" & "Milk Truck" have edges that cut a path right into my ear-ways paved and rolled by Julien on guitar, *Zac Casher* on drums and *Jesse Williams* on electric/acoustic upright bass. As always, it is a thrill to listen to and even more thrilling is to be able to share the music of *Julien Kasper* in my little radio world.



“As always, it is a thrill to listen to and even more thrilling is to be able to share the music of Julien Kasper in my little radio world.”

Green Arrow Radio
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<http://www.greenarrowradio.com/2009/12/17/trance-groove/>