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And from there the rest of the evening was all downhill. The cord we'd managed to solder together (using a pack of matches borrowed from the waitress) decided to commit suicide halfway through a guitar solo, and gave a loud scream of terror as it died. Eight people filtered into the joint by 11:30, and two even danced during one song. Our drummer had consumed a large quantity of beer and was staring blankly at his left tom-tom.

We were obligated to play until one, so we started taking longer and longer solos, and watched the Rolling Stones on the TV above the bar while we were playing. We started trying out new lyrics on old songs: Billy Joel's "It's Just A Fantasy" somehow became "It's Just A Panty-Raid (It's not the fire alarm)".

We whipped through the last set and were ready to leave at the stroke of 1:00. The Jerk was asleep on his table, and managed to knock over a glass of beer in his slumber. My brother eagerly collected our earnings from the owner.

Excitedly, we went out to the car to split up our earnings. After gas for the van and a four-way split, I put my 25 cents into my pocket. "What are you going to do with yours?" asked my brother.

"I have to buy a pick for tomorrow night," I replied.



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disc-ussion

YOU HARDLY KNOW ME Tom Grant WMOT Records

Tom Grant takes the best elements of rock, jazz, R & B and funk, and wraps them all together into a tight, punchy package full of pure joy from the moment the stylus touches down on the vinyl.

Grant, a Portlander, has been playing jazz keyboards in America and Europe for a number of years, and his experience shows. His American debut shows great depth, and a style that veritably soars from Grant's keyboards.

Lester McFarland (bass) and Tod Carter (guitar) are superb. They help give Grant's album a little extra kick that really makes it go. Both McFarland and Carter have played with the Jeff Lorber Fusion, and a certain feeling from Lorber's style can be found in Grant's music. Comparisons are to be expected: Lorber studied under Grant, Lorber uses some of the same musicians as Grant, and Lorber even adds a keyboard solo to Grant's album.

The most obvious similarity, however,

is that both keyboardists have an excellent understanding of how to use synthesizers to their full potential, but without making a sideshow of them. Grant's mastery of his keyboards is solid, and results in a wide variety of equally excellent voicings.

The album has a number of strong cuts, representing a number of styles. "The Imposter," the opening cut, is a Lorber-ish powerhouse. With an excellent guitar/synthesizer unison, a synthesizer solo by Lorber, and a soaring Larry Carlton-esque guitar riff, one would think that the song would be complete. Not to be outdone, Grant comes along with an acoustic piano solo that rips around the ivories like Tom and Jerry, yet does so with precision and grace. The end product is superb.

Grant pulls some nifty tricks in "So Free," another haunting tune. The intro features some almost classical acoustic piano, then takes us into a laid-back piano bar with a mellow Rhodes. A soulful acoustic guitar solo by Carter and a nice acoustic piano lead by Grant add to the mood.



Tom Grant

But Grant suddenly rips the carpet out from under us by shifting from a relaxed 4/4 time sig to an offbeat 7/8. He brings us back out of it lightly, and we're back in the piano lounge again. Amazing.

With Grant's imaginative writing and superb production, "You Hardly Know Me" is an excellent album for anyone who enjoys jazz-rock or fusion. After this debut, those of us who didn't know Grant are going to be watching out for him in the future.

by matt meyer

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and Café Français...*

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