

# Making Notes in the Margin

by Dave Kulju

Writing for this album began back in December of 2007 as I started sketching out some piano ideas for what over time grew into the centerpiece of the record, *A Poet's Talespin*. The intent was to release this extended track as an EP as a relatively quick follow up to my debut release *Abstract Expression*. The big departure here from both my first release and the two I've done with *Electrum* is that parts of *Talespin* have vocals <gasp!>. It wasn't a conscious choice but rather just that the piano ideas seemed like good accompaniment for voice.

In the Spring of 2008 I was in a fiercely grouchy mood so I programmed a heavy drum beat and wailed on my guitar for a couple of hours just to vent. By the end of the evening the basic parts for *Get the Hell off my Lawn* were born.

By Fall of 2008 I had 2 more songs in various states of (de)composition so it no longer made sense to pursue an EP, but rather go forward with doing a full length second album. Over the holidays in 2008/2009 I finalized and recorded a solid demo version of *Lawn* and continued to refine the epic *Talespin*.

In the late winter of 2009 I received a strange voice mail that resulted in *Skating on Europa*. I'd been thinking about trying to write something in a "space rock" vein for some time and that phone message triggered an idea for an introduction. The drum, bass and guitar parts were written over about 3 days, while the keyboard parts took an additional 3 weeks to arrange and record while I experimented with doing real time control of filters and knob twiddling to create a sense of motion with analog type keyboard sounds.

*Know Again* had gone through several rewrites but finally came together about the same time as I wrapped up *Europa*. The A and B themes were set early on but the C theme went through many rewrites. Luckily, the work paid off and the reprise of the C theme is, I think, one of the nicest moments on the album.

By late Winter 2009 I completed the final arrangement for all of *Talespin*. Though final resolution of the lyrics and vocal melodies wouldn't finish until late April. Initially the piece was written around poems that I ended up not being able to acquire the rights to. Then I reworked the piece with a couple of poems by Amanda Joy, but had trouble reaching her. So I reworked it again with a set of lyrics I wrote. Luckily Amanda eventually did contact me and I went forward using her poems - which ended up making for the best possible marriage with the music.

In May of 2009 I started sending off tracks to drummer Frank Basile and production was officially underway. The recording took twice as long as I hoped it would, but given the complexities of working with 4 people on 3 continents, I guess that should have been expected. By March of 2010 everything was tracked and a long and painful 3 months of mixing began. My goal was to have the CD ready in time for NEARfest 2010, I made it, but just barely. I picked up the CDs at the duplication plant the day before the festival started! *No Margin for error!*