

animals as leaders

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Supreme technical / progressive forward thinking metal / ambient / electronica from ex-Reflux guitar genius, Tosin Abasi. For fans of Cynic, Steve Vai and Pelican.

With the Washington, D.C.-based Reflux, 7-string guitarist Tosin Abasi caught the attention of discerning fans with fierce riffs and fleet-fingered solos that sharpened the edge of the band's politically-minded progressive metalcore. The band's moment in the spotlight was brief, but in that time, the group built a dedicated cult following via extensive touring with the likes of Strapping Young Lad, Darkest Hour, August Burns Red, Animosity, From A Second Story Window and many more.

Soon after Reflux disbanded, Abasi began work on an instrumental solo project as a way to further express his musical personality. The resulting self-titled debut from Abasi's new band Animals As Leaders, a 12-track collection of guitar-driven progressive instrumentals with ambient and electronic influences, is a scintillating showcase for one of the finest young guitarists in rock today.

"I definitely wanted to make an album that was 'guitar-centric,' but also interesting from other perspectives," Abasi explains. He succeeded, as his dazzling performances on both 7- and 8-string guitars are flashy and technical, yet also tasteful and melodic. And even though they contain no words, the album's songs speak volumes -- something that's evident from the opening notes of album kickoff "Tempting Time."

"'Tempting Time' loosely deals with some of the time-based societal pressures that come with getting older," Abasi says. "It's about reconciling your place in your life with where society feels like you should be, and understanding the finite amount of time you have in life to do anything."

Although Abasi wrote all the music on the album and played bass in addition to all guitars, he emphasizes that Animals As Leaders is very much a band, and the group has already performed several concerts in and around the Beltway. Additional gigs, including a high-profile return to April's New England Metal and Hardcore Festival (where he performed twice with Reflux), will follow.

As for the band's moniker, Abasi says it relates to looking at the world from an animal's perspective, and that it was inspired in part by the book Ishmael, in which the author uses a telepathic gorilla to critique human culture. "A lot of what we do is completely removed from the fact that we're all essentially animals," Abasi recently told the Washington City Paper. "We have a niche on the planet and we have a role in sustainable sort of ecology, but we've gone against our natural calling. The name is acknowledging that we do have more of a natural role on the planet, but it's also like, who would follow an animal to do anything? I think of the name as being both nonsensical and really literal."

Homepage: www.myspace.com/animalsasleaders

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