

Another Reason to Celebrate By Elzy Kolb

Picture this



"I love listening to music where you can almost see a movie in your mind while listening," guitarist **Pete McCann** says. When it comes to his own music, there's a good chance that movie includes some scenes from the New Jersey-based musician's home state of Wisconsin. "The open spaces, fields, trees and lakes, that's never far from my mind."

Nor is the amalgam of music Pete heard while growing up. He recalls

checking out albums from the public library—always the permitted maximum of six at a time—and getting so excited about discovering the music, he'd play the records for friends over the phone.

"There's a movie moment right there," Pete declares with a laugh. "Listening to Coltrane or Miles or Chick Corea for the first time, those were life-changing experiences. I miss the social thing of going to someone's house to listen to records together."

Besides playing guitar in church and in high school jazz band, Pete absorbed an eclectic mix of hard rock, 20th Century classical, his father's beloved country-western, plus jazz-rock fusion by John Abercrombie, Bill Frisell, Mike Stern, Pat Metheny, John Scofield and others.

"Mix 'em together, pour in a drop of paint and that's me. It all seeps into my own style," the guitarist muses. "No matter what you do, you are who your influences are, it all comes out in your sound, your writing, how you improvise. 'Sometimes it takes a long time to play like yourself,' as Miles put it."

Pete has gathered a band of kindred spirits to play on his new release, *Pay for It on the Other Side* (McCannic), including alto saxophonist John O'Gallagher, pianist, keyboardist and accordionist Henry Hey, bassist Matt Clohesy and drummer Mark Farber. "I love these musicians, they're all great at more than one style and very open-minded; I seek that out." He enjoys long-lasting relationships with all the musicians, some of them stretching back to college days at North Texas State University.

Each band member has appeared on more than one of Pete's five previous albums. The nine McCann originals on his new recording display his disparate influences as well as his unique voice; the tunes are also a showcase for the spirit and musical telepathy that exists among these frequent collaborators.

Pete notes that he's a slow composer and wants to continue to savor playing the material from *Pay for It on the Other Side* for a while before tackling another recording project. However, "I feel a strong pull to write for a singer for my next record. That's the ultimate color palette, there are so many different ways to go, so many avenues, endless possibilities," explains the guitarist who has worked with Janis Siegel, Melissa Stylianou, Jane Irving, Bayot Kelsey and others. "I don't write lyrics, but I will have to go down that road if I do a singer project," Pete continues. "A lot of musicians are fond of poetry. I want to jump on that train and figure it out."