

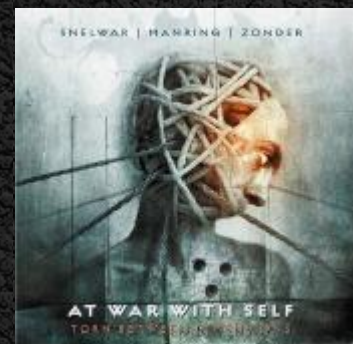
## ATWAR WITHSELF

"Torn Between Dimensions" (Laser's Edge / Free Electric Sound; 2005)

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Reviewed by [Christopher J. Kelter](#)



When reviewing Gordian Knot's debut self-titled CD I was familiar with all of the contributing musicians save for one – that one musician was Glen Snelwar. “Who the hell is Glen Snelwar?” I thought to myself. Even after reviewing the CD I knew very little about the guy except that he fit right in with the stellar cast of players contributing to Gordian Knot. Needless to say, I was convinced through Snelwar's limited contributions that his musical abilities were top notch.

And then I seemed to hear very little about him or his music projects. Finally, word got out that his At War With Self project with Michael Manring (Attention Deficit) and Mark Zonder (ex-Fates Warning) was coming to fruition. The project is titled “Torn Between Dimensions” and is billed as a collaborative effort - but my guess is that Snelwar is the main force for At With Self – and the songwriting credits bear me out on that observation.

The album is carefully crafted progressive rock that incorporates elements of technical metal and fusion. Musically the album is strongly rooted in a progressive mindset that favors mood and atmosphere over flashy brilliance for its own sake. While most of the songs are squarely prog-rock and fusion/jazz there are a number of tracks that stretch into technical metal areas.

As I understand it, the album I supposed be ‘conceptual’ in nature although the lack of lyrics and vocals makes that hard to hear upon the first few listens. Repeated exposures to the sonic diversity and varied textures makes you realize At War With Self isn't something that was just thrown together for fun. The music, while progressive in nature, never forgets that musical direction and concise ideas rule the day. The music seems to fit the artwork in that a man's internal mental struggles can create the kind of tension that is rather debilitating.

Glen Snelwar proves himself to be an accomplished guitarist, musician, and songwriter with “Torn Between Dimensions.” Snelwar shows considerable constraint as he clearly views the songs, rather than his own playing skills, as the primary reason for the album. After hearing Attention Deficit's debut way back in the day, I wasn't particularly enamored with Michael Manring's bass playing, but “Torn Between Dimensions” presents Manring in a far more positive light as his bass playing seems a lot warmer. And what can be said about Mark Zonder that hasn't already been said? Zonder is widely recognized as a phenomenal drummer and his efforts within At War With Self will help people understand why his creative energies are better off at this point in his career in projects like this rather than Fates Warning.

“Torn Between Dimensions” was produced by At War With Self with Ken Golden.

Glenn Snelwar plays electric and acoustic guitars, mandolin, e-bow, keyboards, and string section programming. Snelwar is joined by Michael Manring on fretless bass and e-bow, and Mark Zonder on drums and percussion.

For more information visit <http://www.glennsnelwar.com/>.

### Rating Guide:



A classic. This record will kick your ass.



Killer. Not a classic but it will rock your world.



So-so. You've heard better.



Pretty bad. Might make a nice coaster.



Self explanatory. Just the sight of the cover makes you wanna hurl.

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Revised: 31 Aug 2005 20:49:50 -0500.

