

Kephas

BAND STORY

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Bio written by **Dan Kimpel...**

Kephas is a word with both Greek and Aramaic origins, the equivalent of "Rock." It is also the moniker of a man on a spiritual path and the name of an accomplished recording artist. Kephas is a Florida-based songwriter, producer, guitarist and vocalist at the axis of an expansive collection of sounds: electric guitar lines soar over a percolating hotbed of Latin percussion in songs that map a terrain of textures and rhythms across a cinematic soundscape.

Born in Miami to Cuban immigrant parents, Kephas was raised on the sounds of their homeland: urbane big bands easing effortlessly into the rhythms of Africa. Kephas' first instruments were cello and drums, but when he picked up the guitar his pathway was illuminated. "I felt a calling," he notes.

It was the era of guitar heroes, and Kephas was influenced by the extended jams of Southern Rock and inspired by Carlos Santana, an artist who also crossed cultures. "I work in English," Kephas avows. "The music that I do, even my Latin stuff, is Americanized."



Blessed with the technical facility to master the complexities of digital recording, Kephas creates full-blown tracks in his own studio where he spends long nights overdubbing instruments until they gleam with a shining veneer. Although he has worked with bands, his expertise also gives him the facility to recreate his sound solo, with vibrant authenticity. While the techniques are impressive,



STATS

Visits	Plays
21,907	796
Streams	Downloads
691	105

Featured Songs

-  **The Cross Is The Ladder Of God-feat Bob and Pat Ross** Progressive Rock
-  **La Frontera Del Corazon-with Larry Talbot (TLT50)** Latin Rock

what designates the power of Kephass' musical mélange is an effortless and intuitive creative flow. " I let the music write itself and I ask, 'Where is it going; what does it mean; what is the sense of the composition?' " A strong spiritual connection informs Kephass' artistry. " Something with the potential to lift someone' s spirits. Even if it sounds melancholy it evolves into a happier space."

With an immense backlog of material, Kephass estimates that he could conceivably work for the next five years on his preexisting catalog. Two recent projects collect his handiwork: The first, an instrumental CD titled *Threshold of Truth*, explores the spiritual path of music through evocative melodies and deep Latin percussion. Also in the pipeline is *Corazon de Leon*, a Latin/Spiritual project with a track penned by Kephass' late uncle. Above the infinite sustain of electric guitar, the surge of the Hammond organ and the syncopated grooves of timbales and congas glows an aura of reverence and thankfulness. " All of my songs are prayers," Kephass concludes. " I' m offering meditations through music. To me it' s not an earthly thing –it' s divine –it has to come from God. And that' s why I do it."

LATEST NEWS

Review by Dan Kimpel



Review of *Threshold of Truth*

KEPHAS: AN ARTIST AT THE *THRESHOLD OF TRUTH*

An Artist' s Musical Litany on Humanity, Compassion and The Spirit

Miami, Florida

By: Dan Kimpel

With his new CD, *Threshold of Truth*, Kephias explores a realm of divinity through a compelling song cycle that aligns prayer to percussion, six strings with the sacred. *Threshold of Truth* charts a journey, and the sequence of the tracks marks the arduous path encountered in living a spiritual life. As an explosive timbale riff intros the first track, "The Fall of Death," the Florida-based guitarist, songwriter and producer's signature sustained guitar sets the tone. "Death is not the cessation of our earthly life," says Kephias, "but the birth of our spiritual life." The music to this track was inspired by a poem of the same name penned by the artist.

Other key milestones include the hypnotic "Paraiso," a Spanish word that signifies a gift. Kephias references the Book of Corinthians 1:6 as he explains that the lines in the Bible reveal, "Yet do we speak a wisdom to those who are mature..." to differentiate this state of grace from a temporal utopia. The invitation to sanctity is underscored by the lush grace of "Calor Y Ternura" (literally, "heat and tenderness") as Kephias notes, "My experience of God is predominately heart based, as opposed to the apocalyptic rendition popular in some circles."

"Again for the First Time –Part One" unfolds a dreamy mid-tempo soundscape as the soothing melody spirals skyward. The concluding song, "Visions of Plenty" is a vibrant rhythmic workout that completes the cycle with fervor and exuberance.

Kephias acknowledges that life events and human challenges are tests of faith but he believes that this is a direct conduit to the hearts and souls of his listeners. As the title would indicate, he is now at the doorway of a new stage of enlightenment. "I wanted to offer a taste of what music can, and indeed should, offer humanity: a transcendent experience that will infuse their lives with strength, joy, peace, compassion and truth; a spiritual truth, as opposed to the reality show impersonator." With *Threshold of Truth*, music is a key to the power and the promise of that spirit.

Threshold of Truth is available for sale on iTunes.

Review by Jose Sierra, Moonflower Cafe



Review of "Threshold Of Truth" and "Corazon De Leon"

By: Jose Sierra, Moonflower Café

Floridian guitarist/composer Kephias is a many-faceted musician who shows great promise on his self-produced independent debut "The Threshold Of Truth" and its follow-up "Corazon De Leon."

Three threads run through Kephias' work: spiritual reverence, electric guitar prowess (showing the prominent influence of Carlos Santana), and Afro-Latin rhythms, particularly those of Kephias' Cuban heritage. As such, his music often embodies the passion and earnestness of Santana's 1970's-era creative apex. While Santana's own recent guitar work has been criticized as formulaic, the fretwork on both of Kephias' CDs is rife with the sincerity and delight of an artist on the rise, freshly inspired and feeling his oats.

Beyond his guitar chops, Kephias is a composer whose writing is interesting enough to hold even this world-weary reviewer's interest. Underneath, he has laid a rhythm foundation aligning the sounds of congas, timbales and drum

...recreation, singing the sounds of congas, timbales and drums set into beats that are indebted not only to Latin Rock but also to the innovative timba movement, born in Cuba at the start of the 1990' s. In fact, Kephass' musical and technical knowledge have enabled him to play all of the sounds on his recordings, using Latin percussion and keyboards as well as synthesized drums, bass and horns.

Kephass' first release, "**Threshold Of Truth**"(2007) **** is an instrumental CD featuring compositions that, while they can be categorized as progressive Latin Rock, are quite varied in feeling.

The stirring melody and Afro-Cuban rumba underpinnings of "Threshold' s" lead song, "The Fall Of Death," give one a momentary pause...is this a lost track from one of the great early 70' s Santana sessions? With this level of quality, the listener immediately realizes that Kephass is a man of prodigious talents.

Next on the program, the catchy guitar hook and mid-tempo rock feel of the thoroughly enjoyable "Away And Beyond" call to mind the best of Santana' s 1980' s work during the tenure of lead vocalists Greg Walker and Alex Ligertwood: pop-inflected, but appealingly so.

Kephass has stated that all of his songs are prayers, and the title track "Threshold Of Truth" makes the artist' s spiritual quest palpable. His melody cycles, ebbs, and surges, entering the celestial realms that Carlos and company explored on tracks like "Waves Within" and "Flame Sky," but more dreamily, adrift through misty cloudbanks into brief bursts of sunlight.

"To The Victor The Spoils" melds the spirit of the digital age with that of the ancient "toques" of the Afro-Cuban batá drums, at the same time tipping its hat to Weather Report' s "Boogie Woogie Waltz." The great Latin fusion band Caldera would have been proud of this mesmerizing piece.

From fusion, Kephass sets sail for romance on the next two tracks. The emotive "La Guadalupe," in turns reminiscent of "Samba Pa Ti" and Patti Labelle' s hit "If You Asked Me To," moves from ballad tempo into a double time section over which Kephass' guitar flutters blissfully. "On The First Day Of Forever" brings the sophisticated ambience of standards like "Manha do Carnaval" and "Autumn Leaves."

On "Paraiso," Kephass' instrument sings as sweetly as an innocent child, while we take flight over a virgin tropical forest of lush chord changes and flowing rhythm.

"Star Of The Sea" feels like a meditation on the sanctity of true, pure love. Its enveloping sense of profound calm is akin to Roberta Flack' s "The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face," but percolating percussion and a wailing axe keep Kephass' reverie on a livelier side.

In "Calor y Ternura," Kephass uses Dickey Betts brushstrokes to paint a lazy afternoon in the sun-kissed Southern countryside, hinting at the happy vibe of the Allman Brothers' "Jessica." As day turns to dusk, the stroll turns psychedelic before vamping out over a church choir-sounding synth line a-la the Stones' "You Can' t Always Get What You Want."

A Puerto Rican bomba beat drives the flamenco-tinged fusion strains of "Out Of The Depths," first pensive and melancholy, then building into an anguished climax. Kephass, while not a virtuoso keyboardist, captures a bit of Larry Young or Tom Coster' s organ sound here, as he does on some of his other tracks.

"Again For The First Time –Part One" is surreal Latin Rock balladry that channels "Song Of The Wind" slowed to bolero tempo, while weaving in ecclesiastical and classic pop-rock threads.

"Threshold" s' final track "Visions Of Plenty" closes Kephass' debut disc with the type of exuberant melody and percussive push found in some late-period Santana instrumentals, going out with yet another eloquent, emotionally gripping guitar solo.

Kephass spotlights the Latin colors in his palette on his sophomore project, "**Corazon De Leon**"^{****1/2 (2007)} . We are introduced to the artist' s Spanish language vocals over an electrified set of salsa/timba rock, realizing one of the artist' s goals for this album: creating danceable material suited for " deep, pronounced hip movement."

"La Frontera Del Corazon" gets Kephass' second disc off to a very promising start, as a mystical afro rhythm and blistering guitar proclaim an adrenalin-pumping safari of exploration.

Kephass' lead vocal on "Fuego Sobre La Tierra" harkens back to the Cuban "son" tradition with charm and charisma while his guitar work injects infectious good feeling, the jauntiness of the track in contrast with its serious subject matter.

A spicy stew is on the menu with the two combustible cookers that follow, the darkly hypnotic minor dance groove "Bailando," and the merengue-like mania of the title track "Corazon De Leon." Next, Kephass settles into the album' s first ballad, "Gracias A Dios," a tuneful bolero segueing into a double time section tailor-made for his joyous guitar exclamations.

"Que Me Dan' s" mozambique cowbell quickly gathers Afro-Beat and Latin Rock trappings while sanctified rumbero Kephass testifies to the struggles of spirit, the urgent sonic tableau recalling up-tempo jams by Fela Kuti, Osibisa, or El Chicano.

"Ven Ven" is one of the "Corazon" CD' s many successful blends of Cuban roots and moody electric rock textures. Kephass' impassioned singing voice exhorts each of us to find our inner lion...then his dual guitar lead enters to great effect, hinting at "Jungle Strut." Continuing in the inspirational vein, "El Espirito Santo" matches an inventive hybrid percussion groove with uplifting melody and changes to appeal to heaven for salvation, while echoing the Yoruba roots of Santeria in its chant.

Kephass' cover of Santana' s "Europa" is this disc' s lone instrumental. Kephass' original music honors Carlos sufficiently, and this reviewer feels that the Florida guitarist would make more of a name for himself by adapting some forgotten gem from the dusty record bins, rather than re-recording such a Santana signature tune in nearly the original arrangement.

"Una Vida," a steaming chunk of cumbia-salsa rock, amps the intensity way up one last time. A closing journey of the heart takes us across the Florida Strait to Kephass' ancestral homeland on "Llegaremos (Guantanamo)," which finds our protagonist using Cuba' s best-known song as inspiration for poetic musings on his faith-based philosophy and more good guitar licks.

Most important, though, are the facts of Kephass' impressive talent: that his guitar playing often stirs the soul in the way that only the best musicians can, that his compositions are memorable and that his singing voice is appealing.

As such, I can recommend both “Threshold Of Truth” and “Corazon De Leon” to fans of Santana, jazz/rock fusion and progressive Latin music. Latin Rock needs new blood and new ideas to stage a resurgence that can make it viable as a contemporary, evolving art form. Kephas has what it takes to become one of the leading lights of such a renaissance.

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