



“Here on their debut album, Greensboro, NC rockers Irata have made themselves strong contenders for the best progressive rock band in the state. Between members Jason Ward, Jason Duff & Jon Case, the swirling, driving guitars & intricate, pounding drums build epically progressing instrumental gems that call to mind everyone from legends like King Crimson & Tool to bands like Explosions in the Sky, Graboids & the like.” ~ Matt Davis, Village Idiot

Most instrumental music tends to be a little heavy on the cerebral side. There’s an audience for totally cerebral music, sure, but there’s very little in the Explosions in the Sky/Mono model to bridge the gap between the weight of the concepts approached & rock & roll accessibility.

Greensboro’s Irata is that bridge. Sure, they’re an instrumental band, but they rock the body as much as the mind. It’s not post rock, that’s the wrong starting point. Instead start in the 1970s, with Klaus Dinger. Take his unfaltering percussive style – but build on it. Mix in liberal amounts of hard rock flourishes, samplers, & hand drums. Jason Ward’s drumming is inescapable, precise, & fun. Live he wears a red, white, & blue sweatband & plays with a wild abandon – his long hair defying gravity as he attacks his set, not with the dour seriousness of many drummers of his talent, but with the goofy glee of a 3rd-grader riding his first ten-speed.

Irata’s indelible pocket is formed by Ward’s percussion and Jon Case’s basswork. Case’s lines range from righteously syncopated Justin Chancellor-esque spiderings of heavily fx-ed hammer-&-drone to what can only be described as soul on bad acid. Ward & Case form a solid unit when they lock together, like a Voltron made of groove. But this is hard-hitting stuff: the heavy rock grooves are often punctuated by measure-freezing phrases that hang in the air for a split second before going careening, with perfect technical precision, back into the sonic fray.

The self-titled record is still their foundation, with its soaring, delay-flooded guitar & the unexpected soulful lyricism of a whammy & wah-fx-ed saxophone, afloat in a sea of both sunburned reflection & relentless scorch rock. Hipsters, cross your arms & nod your heads. Barhounds, tap your feet. This speaks to you both.



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