

The digital release of Subtle Truth in 2011 follows twenty years after the initial release in 1991 on cassette tape. There was no physical CD manufactured for this EP album, though there was a digital stereo master created simultaneously with the analog master. This digital recording was derived directly from the original master digital data.

Subtle Truth was Dan Krimm's second, and at the time final, audio recording under his own name as a bandleader (the Dan Krimm Ensemble), via his self-owned record label, Overtone Records (decommissioned in 1993). This marked the culmination of his endeavor to break a career as a self-supporting musical artist, and in particular his efforts to stretch his technique into chording/comping roles in his group, as well as extending his improvisational range.

Dan had become comfortable with the piano-less quartet format (sax, guitar, bass, drums) playing with guitarist Rolf Sturm in the late 80s, and ultimately gravitated to that format for his own group when he was ready for a second recording project several years after recording Sentience in 1985. This ensemble format provides more room for the bass to contribute in a variety of ways than a group with piano, with bass playing more melodies and chording. It was a natural choice to invite Rolf to join the group (and to include several of Rolf's compositions in the live repertoire). Percussionist Tom Nazziola was a respected colleague in the group Monkeyworks, and Mike Foster on sax was a connection via singer-songwriter Susan Fiering, with whom Dan had been playing for a couple years as well. Mike had been working in a free-improvisational mode for awhile and Dan was beginning to stretch further in that direction, so Mike's affinities in this area were pertinent to Dan's aspirations for the group. Tom also had compositional and arrangement experience to bring to bear on the music, and it was a goal that all members have compositional experience on their own merits.

The concept of the group was to present mostly original works (about half by Dan and another quarter by Rolf and Mike) plus a few particular covers that provided an opportunity for arrangement along the lines of the group concept, which was to highlight the expanded role of the bass guitar, to perform works that explored fresh harmonic structures, and to stretch on occasion into hybridized forms of arrangement that combined well-defined tempo with more avant improvisational expressions.

The four original compositions on Subtle Truth were all written in 1980-81, but three of them were first recorded on this recording (Spirit Dance was included in a slightly different arrangement on Sentience). Walden is a lilting jazz waltz that modulates to a variety of keys with intermediate modal sections -- this arrangement begins with the guitar solo, as a change of pace. Spirit Dance is an extended track (over 12 minutes) based mostly on a five-beat meter (interludes in 3 and 4), with extended modal jams on the 5-meter. (This is a layered meter with syncopated accents in the middle of the bar, as if a 2+3 type 5-8 meter were superposed over a 5-4 meter, providing a kind of rhythmic symmetry rather than the uneven 2+3 or 3+2 breakdown.) The treatment on this recording is more ethereal and atmospheric than the Sentience version, and provides lots of room for the soloists to stretch out. Night Sea is a short latin-based head, evoking images of an ocean beach in a summer night. And Jewel is a gentle ballad anchored by lydian modes and smoky saxophone.

There are few additional production notes of interest associated with this recording:

- * There are no overdubs on this recording. All compositions were arranged for live performance, and were performed as such in the studio.
- * Dan plays chords on the bass on the heads of: Spirit Dance, Jewel
Dan plays chords on the bass during guitar solos on: Night Sea, Jewel
- * Percussion and drum-set are occasionally played simultaneously by Tom. Once again, this is live, not an overdub.
- * All synthesized sounds are produced by Rolf, with a MIDI hookup on his electric guitar. When guitar and synth are interposed, this represents a real-time sound change by Rolf during the live performance.
- * The bass Dan plays is a five-string fretless "Buzz" bass made by M.V. Pedulla Guitars, strung with a high-C. The Buzz design includes a full 24-semitone range (two octaves) yielding a top note of C-above-middle-C. Because of the extended range and the chordal and melodic approach, Dan prefers to call this a "bass/baritone guitar" after the tradition of referring to classical male singers of intermediate range.



Photo: Susan Rutman, 1991



Photo: Ted Nirgiotis, 2008