

## The Aristocrats

The word “supergroup” is tossed around a lot in instrumental music circles, the result of a seemingly endless supply of efforts to package together individual virtuoso players and make a band out of them. But every once in a while, the group part of that shopworn term becomes authentic and real. Such is the case with The Aristocrats—guitarist Guthrie Govan (Steven Wilson, Asia/GPS), bassist Bryan Beller (Joe Satriani, Dethklok), and drummer Marco Minnemann (Steven Wilson, Joe Satriani) – who defiantly and joyously blow the supergroup stereotype to bits, thrilling audiences and fans around the world in the process with a preternatural band chemistry that equals exponentially more than the sum of its parts. Perhaps Guthrie Govan said it best when he called The Aristocrats “a rowdy democracy of musicianship.

”Despite their individual followings, The Aristocrats’ formation was a matter of happenstance on a barely-paying gig. The electricity was immediately obvious, with their unbeknownst-to-them shared influences infusing a high-energy instrumental fusion with an aggressive, playful, even cheeky edge. The audience response was overwhelming, and the band formed practically by demand on the spot. Three months later, the trio convened in person – eschewing the usual remote file sharing method in favor of actual live band chemistry – to track the album. Consisting of nine tracks (three contributions from each member), the material was a melting pot of their respective influences, ranging from the seminal ’70s jazz-rock fusion of Return To Forever and Mahavishnu Orchestra, to the progressive rock of King Crimson and UK, to guitar heroes like Steve Vai and Joe Satriani, to the absurdly complex and satirical music of Frank Zappa and Mike Keneally, and even to ’90s groove metal like Rage Against The Machine.

Tracked in just eight days, The Aristocrats debut album *The Aristocrats*[2011] was hailed as an instant classic in leading music publications worldwide, appearing on many of that year’s top ten lists. In less than a year, The Aristocrats became one of the most sought-after live instrumental rock/fusion acts in the world. In 2013, the band released their long-awaited sophomore album, *Culture Clash*. The material became more aggressive, adventurous, and intense, embodying a refusal to rest on the laurels of the debut album’s surprise success. *Culture Clash* debuted on the Billboard Contemporary Jazz Chart at #8. Throughout this time The Aristocrats toured the world, bringing their live energy and otherworldly chemistry multiple times to North America, Europe and Asia. This around-the-world touring madness was documented on the live CD/DVDs *BOING, We’ll Do It Live!* [2012] and *Culture Clash Live* [2015].

For the band’s third studio album, *Tres Caballeros* [2015], they rewrote their own rules. The Aristocrats set up camp at legendary Sunset Sound studios in Hollywood, CA, where Led Zeppelin, The Rolling Stones and Van Halen all recorded landmark albums. The result was nine compositions of greater sonic depth and breadth than ever before, with unique textures and lush layering augmenting the band’s near-telepathic ability to improvise both individually and as a group at the highest levels possible. The *Tres Caballeros* world tour began in summer 2015 with an 8-week stint across North America, followed by a winter European leg, with tour dates planned for Asia, Australia and South America in 2016. That’s some heavy touring, but not to worry –it’s all still tempered with a steadfast refusal to take themselves too seriously, and The Aristocrats are still having more fun than an instrumental band has any right to have.