



Sunday, September 21, 2025

Progressive Rock Central.com

PROGRESSIVE ROCK, JAZZ-ROCK FUSION, AMBIENT ELECTRONIC MUSIC, PROGROCK, PROG AND BEYOND

[HOME](#) [ABOUT](#) [TOPICS](#) [PROGRESSIVE ROCK RESOURCES](#) [STORE](#)

[CONTACT US](#)



INTERVIEWS

Interview with Multifaceted Progressive Rock Drummer Kimmo Pörsti

👤 Angel Romero 📅 August 1, 2022 💬 No Comments

🎧 Kimmo Pörsti Progressive rock symphonic rock The Samurai of Prog

Kimmo Pörsti is a talented musician and producer from Finland who is involved in many progressive rock projects. The common thread is that they are all high quality productions, where symphonic progressive rock is packaged with beautiful artwork. Additionally, many of his creations are fascinating concept albums. Each project is made with detail and love for music.

We talked to Kimmo about his background and latest projects:

What are your fondest musical memories?

Oh, that's a tough one to start with, as there are quite a few. Probably the first big thing for me was to make music for Finnish Broadcasting company's TV shows with my friend Mika

Syväniemi. The first recordings took place while we were still in high school.

Playing concerts with such a top players like James LoMenzo and Michael Manring with my friend Jan-Olof Strandberg has certainly been a delight – especially when noticing how great persons they are.

I have always enjoyed hearing exotic instruments played live in their real surroundings; for example bagpipes in Scotland, the alpine zither in the Bavarian forest and the hugely talented gypsy cimbalom orchestra in Hungary.

However, maybe the most memorable moment has been a concert that we played at the school of disabled children in US over 40 years ago. Their reaction was unbelievable; I have never had such an audience ever since.



Kimmo Pörsti with his drum set

When did you become interested in playing drums? Did you have any formal training?

After a couple of years of not so successful classical piano lessons, my parents finally allowed me to switch to drums. There was an old Yamaha drum-set in my school and when I got my hands on it, the choice was clear. I studied drums in a music college for a few years, but it was almost entirely “classical” stuff: playing only snare by reading sheet music – even snare duets. My heart was screaming to get deeper into the whole set, how to groove better – and the things that a virtuoso like Ian Paice was playing! So, in that sense, I am self-taught.

You are known for making progressive rock concept albums. How and when did you get involved with progressive rock?

When I was about 13 or 14, I listened to some ambitious hard rock bands like Three Man Army, which helped to lead the way. I was a fan of Deep Purple and progressive music was partly introduced to me by Ian Gillan and Roger Glover as they started to move towards progressive rock in their solo projects at that time (Clear Air Turbulence and Elements).

It must also be mentioned that we had a neighbor, Jari Uusikartano, who was a few years older than me. I visited him frequently to hear music I had never heard before. So, there I heard bands like Yes, Gentle Giant, Return to Forever and Little Feat for the first time. Also, one big moment was when I went to my first Rock Festival (Ruisrock) at the age of 14 and saw Wigwam there. After that I bought their classic album “Being”. It was definitely not easy stuff, but I listened to it so many times that I started to get a grip on it 😊

Wigwam - Being (Full Album) 1974



What do you consider as the essential elements of your music?

Now I am answering from my own personal perspective, not from The Samurai of Prog's or other groups:

I think that music must breathe and there must be dynamics. Fragile parts make the strong parts stronger. I must say that sometimes it is a challenge to make the music breathe when we may have 40-50 tracks full of material in The Samurai of Prog's songs. My mixing process is slow and requires a lot of hand-work as I like to minimize the use of compressors, etc. and try to keep the music as natural as possible.

However, perhaps the most essential objective of my music is the feeling; for me the music is more of a transmitting different feelings rather than trying to show off technical virtuosity.



Kimmo Pörsti playing drums

As indicated earlier, many of recent works are concept albums. How do you come up with the different topics? What inspires you?

To be honest, Marco Bernard is the endless idea bank of The Samurai of Prog, he thinks constantly of new topics. So, usually he suggests one or more concepts/ideas, and then we consider which one would work out best. Usually we two agree about those quite easily. With “The Guildmaster”, Rafael Pacha has a big

role in developing the topics as he is the main composer.

The Guildmaster "Liber De Dictis" (excerpts) 2...



My own solo albums have not been so much of concept albums, although their songs have also had some combining elements.

Personally, I am inspired by the great melodies. It is not a wonder that Camel has been a favorite of mine ever since the 70s. I guess I am considered as a prog musician, but I must say that I prefer groove over a technical complexity. A good example of that is John Weathers from Gentle Giant: he always has the groove – even in the most complicated songs.

Your projects combine great music with beautiful artwork. How important are the non-musical art components to you?

Very important indeed. We do value the artwork very much; we like to think our releases as a combination of both music and artwork – which go together hand in hand. That is one of the main reasons why we still release physical CDs only (with mini-LP packages that are expensive to make) – we like to think of it as a one entity. If you take the artwork off, you lose something.



The Samurai of Prog – Archiviarum

Tell us about your recent and current projects. What are the topics, and who plays on the albums?

The Guildmaster is our folk-prog project whose first album “The Knight and the Ghost” was released in 2020. This April, it was time to release the second album: Liber de Dictis. The album is based on a hypothetical book of popular sayings from all over Europe. Each song is inspired on a saying or an idea of that great cultural heritage, which unites us in spirit while reflecting the various traditions of each country. The core of the Guildmaster is Rafael Pacha, Alessandro Di Benedetti, Marco Bernard and myself.



The Guildmaster – Liber De Dictis

“Spaghetti Epic 4” by The Samurai of Prog was just released some weeks ago. It is a follow-up to the first three Spaghetti Epic tribute albums [Spaghetti Epic: Six Suites For Modern Prog Bands; Spaghetti Epic, Vol. 2: The Good, The Bad and The Ugly; and The Spaghetti Epic – Volume Three – The Great Silence], which were released between 2004 and 2009 by Musea in association with Finnish Progressive Rock Association Colossus – and produced by Marco Bernard. As the title reveals, the album is inspired by the Spaghetti Western movies. “Spaghetti Epic 4” features compositions by Marco Grieco, Alessandro Di Benedetti, Mimmo Ferri, David Myers and Rafael Pacha – two of those over 20 minutes.



The Samurai of Prog – [The Spaghetti Epic 4](#)

”The Samurai of Prog – featuring Marco Grieco: Anthem to the Phoenix Star” will be released in September. I think it will be rather different from Spaghetti Epic. As the title reveals, It is featured by great Italian composer and musician Marco Grieco. He has composed all the songs for that album. We also have great guests like Clive Nolan, Olivia Sparnenn-Josh, Bart Schwertmann, Marcel Singer, Sara Traficante, Ruben Alvarez, Yogi Lang, Bruce Botts, Beatrice Birardi, Carmine Capasso, Rafael Pacha, Juhani Nisula, Cam Blokland, John Wilkinson, Massimo Sposaro and Marek Arnold.

To find use for some of my new my songs, I decided to another solo album. Only this time it will be a full co-operation with Rafael Pacha , who already had a major rôle in my two previous solo albums. So, it will be “Pacha and Pörsti : Views from the Inner World”. All compositions will be by Rafael and myself, and lyrics are by Dan Schamber. The album is almost complete. Most instruments are played by Rafael and me, but we also have great

guests such as Ruben Alvarez, John Wilkinson, Marek Arnold, Olli Jaakkola, Ariane Valdivie and Jan-Olof Strandberg.

Marco Bernard is also preparing his first solo album, "The Boy Who Wouldn't Grow Up". It will feature compositions by Alessandro Di Benedetti, Mimmo Ferri, Marco Grieco, Andrea Pavoni, Octavio Stampalia and Oliviero Lacagnina.

How do you decide who plays on each album?

We have a long collaboration with such composers/musicians like Oliviero Lacagnina, Octavio Stampalia, Luca Scherani and Alessandro Di Benedetti – but every now and then a new composer or musician comes along. Sometimes the composers bring one or more musicians with them, but in general when we receive a demo, we try to think who would be the most suitable musician or singer for that particular song. Of course, it helps that Marco has wide contacts in prog field. We are very happy and honored to be able to work with such wonderful musicians that we have as our guests.



The Samurai of Prog

Most of your collaborators live outside of Finland. How do you put together the recordings?

This is how it goes with The Samurai of Prog projects:

When we start to put the album together, the process may vary from song to song.

After we agree about the topic, we ask the composers to create music that suits that particular theme or concept. Some of the compositions (as well as arrangements) that we receive are almost complete, so we just have to think how to do our parts and whether the song needs some finalization. Sometimes the composition is more or less ready, but we suggest some changes, for example to the arrangement or the structure of the song. We have also received some compositions that are more or less sketches – sometimes far from ready. Steve Unruh has a remarkable talent of finishing up those sketches.

Once the song is ready, I receive the files from composer (usually with final keyboards). After that, I create the recording project and record my drums over those files. Then it is time to add bass. After we are satisfied with drums and bass, we send the files to other musicians and vocalists to record their parts. As our guests are from around the world, we can't really work face by face.

When finished, they send their recordings back to me (one musician at a time) and I put it all together for mixing and mastering. So it is like a very big puzzle; as said, there can easily be around 50 tracks in one song.

What advice would you give to up-and-coming progressive rock beginners who are anxious and want to make music outside the pop mainstream?

For me, the thing is to be yourself and to make music you love. YouTube is full of videos of extremely talented (young) musicians who want to show how well they have copied some other musician's stuff. Knowing my limitations, for me the greatest reward I can have is when someone tells that he/she can recognize from my sound/style that it is me who is playing.

If you could gather any other additional musicians, or bands, to collaborate with, whom would that be?

If we are talking about prog field, for example, Pete Jones and Frank Wyatt and Stan Whitaker (of Happy The Man and Oblivion Sun). Rare Bird has been one of my favorite bands and I have always loved Steve Gould's singing, so he would surely be one.

However, I must say that I do listen to other good music as well, so I would be thrilled to collaborate with great musicians such as Keiko Matsui, Brian Auger, James Taylor Quartet and Gary Wright (of Spooky Tooth). Sadly, some of the musicians who have inspired me have passed away, like Dan Fogelberg and John Miles.

What is the best way to buy your albums?

I assume you mean in the US? You can find them at [Laser's Edge](#), [Syn-Phonic](#) and some titles also at [Progrok.com/essentials](#).

In Canada, you can find them at [Terra Incognita](#). In addition, our CDs can be found in many well-stocked progressive rock stores around Europe and Japan. However, if you can't find our albums in your favorite store, please ask them to contact us: info@seacrestoy.com

What new projects are you working on?

I repeat myself here a little bit:

"The Samurai of Prog – featuring Marco Grieco: The Anthem to the Phoenix Star" has just been finished, and it is in the factory now. Release date is 20th of September.

The recording's of "Rafael Pacha – Kimmo Pörsti: Views from the Inner World" are almost complete. I will start to mix it soon. If we are lucky, it will also come out in September. In fact, we had about 90 minutes of material and everything did not fit, so there will probably be a follow-up next year.

Marco Bernard is working on his first solo album, "The Boy Who Wouldn't Grow Up". Some songs are already almost complete. Besides mixing, I play drums on two songs. I encouraged Marco to use other drummers; I think it is only good that the solo albums have a different sound and feel than the actual group. We will soon start working with Oliviero Lacagnina (of Latte e Miele) to record his concept album.

—

Kimmo Pörsti Solo and Duo Discography:

Gulliver, as Bernard and Pörsti (Seacrest Oy, 2020)

La Tierra, as Bernard and Pörsti (Seacrest Oy, 2020)

Wayfarer (Seacrest Oy, 2020)

Robinson Crusoe, as Bernard and Pörsti (Seacrest Oy, 2021)

Past And Present (Seacrest Oy, 2021)

The Samurai of Prog Discography:

Undercover (Musea, 2011)

Secrets Of Disguise (Musea, 2013)

The Imperial Hotel (Seacrest Oy, 2014)

Lost And Found (Seacrest Oy, 2016)

On We Sail (Seacrest Oy, 2017)

Archiviarum (Seacrest Oy, 2018)

Toki No Kaze (Seacrest Oy, 2019)

Beyond The Wardrobe (Seacrest Oy, 2020)

The Demise Of The Third King's Empire (Seacrest Oy, 2020)

The Lady And The Lion (And Other Grimm Tales I) (Seacrest Oy, 2021)

The White Snake (And Other Grimm Tales II) (Seacrest Oy, 2021)

The Spaghetti Epic 4 (Seacrest Oy, 2022)