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ILLUSIONS – Music by James GRIGSBY

Inspired by magicians and their classic illusions

CD – Digital – Steaming

Now available from Rotary Totem

James Grigsby founded Rotary Totem in 1984 as a production company for his creative projects. These included albums with the musical ensembles Motor Totemist Guild, and U Totem.

As Glenn Astarita noted in *All About Jazz*, “Grigsby’s music while demanding and complex is also liable to become light-hearted or whimsical...Grigsby’s shrewd and at times roguish compositional style is strikingly impressive; hence, his somewhat legendary status in the so-called progressive music industry.”

After his 2006 album, *Songs for Adults*, Grigsby took a hiatus from music and concentrated on writing stories and screenplays. This period was capped by the publication of his novella, *Vexations*, illuminating the events surrounding Erik Satie’s love affair with artist Suzanne Valadon in fin de siècle Paris.

This year, James Grigsby returns to music with his first solo album, *Illusions*, a set of thirteen compositions inspired by classic magicians and their signature stage illusions and parlor tricks. Grigsby has a lifelong fascination with the history of stage magic, especially the innovative magicians associated with the classic period of magic in the late 19th century.

Each piece in *Illusions* is scored with a unique instrumentation, ranging from chamber ensembles with featured instruments such as hammered dulcimer or prepared piano to a full symphonic orchestra with an expanded percussion section. To bring his scores to life, Grigsby collaborated with conductor/sound-designer/percussionist Timothy Corpus.

The album liner notes include a short history of each of the thirteen illusions that Grigsby has interpreted in sound. The musical selections are organized into two acts, and Grigsby has created a video for each act that includes samples from the music along with text and illustrations about each illusion. – see <https://www.youtube.com/user/RotaryTotem>

Mike Eisenberg of *Avant Music News* remarked about *Illusions*, “To stuff this much musical coherence into such a small box is a special talent... Grigsby does it on all 13 tracks. Each and every one of them is fully fleshed out and exquisitely developed in their brevity... There are so many references, styles, moods, and emotions embedded in this music that trying to mark them all would be, really, hard.”

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