

Joe Satriani had an admirably productive workingman's holiday, forced time away from the road that ultimately produced his 19th studio album, *The Elephants of Mars*, as the final result.

The guitarist challenged himself to create a "new standard" for instrumental guitar albums to be measured against, one which would work from "a new platform of his own design," as he terms it. "I want to show people that the instrumental guitar album can contain far more complexity of creative elements than I think people are using right now."

Satriani and his touring band, all recording remotely in separate areas of the world during lockdown, answered that challenge in spades. *The Elephants of Mars* crackles with an exciting new energy, briskly traveling through stylistic roads that feel freshly updated, viewed through new eyes.

From the gripping, sci-fi madness of "Through A Mother's Day Darkly," to the isolation felt in a decaying urban landscape, as depicted in "Sahara," to the general endorphin levels that peak as the elephants finally roar in the title track, *The Elephants of Mars* offers up an album length journey that never dulls.

It's one that, thanks to the pandemic and no constraints, truly represents the album that Satriani himself hoped he could deliver with his band. "We did everything. We tried the craziest ideas. And we entertained every notion we had about turning something backwards, upside down, seeing what could happen."