Road Songs 2
Tim Gemmill

COZGEM

'Road Songs 2' by Tim Gemmill
Produced by Cozzetti & Gemmill
Liner notes by Alex Henderson

1. proteus 2 (6:12)
2. Moog Blues (7:48)
3. Groove On (6:46)
4. Domo Arigato (5:41)
5. Super Cool (8:22)
6. A Little Something (4:02)
7. Can You Read My Mind? (8:50)

All songs composed by Tim Gemmill
(except Can You Read my Mind?)
Songs published by Cozgem Music (BMI)
Instrumentation, arrangements and ADAT
recording by Tim Gemmill (2016/2017)
Recorded at Cozgem Studios
Mixed at Audio Logic Studio
Front cover photograph by Bob Cozzetti
Graphic Design by Tim Gemmill

Mixing engineer: Jay Kenney
(audiologicinc.com)
Mastering engineer: Dave Davis
(theallnightparty.com)

All Cozzetti & Gemmill albums
available - MusicontheWeb.com

COZGEM RECORDS P. O. Box 12630
Mill Creek, Washington 98082-0630

Road Songs 2
Tim Gemmill

COZGEM

Tim Gemmill has absorbed a wide variety of music over the years. The Seattle-based jazz improviser and multi-instrumentalist was influenced by the acoustic post-bop innovations of John Coltrane and Miles Davis early in his career, but he was subsequently inspired by the electric jazz-rock fusion that Davis, Wayne Shorter & Joe Zawinul's Weather Report, Chick Corea's Return to Forever, Herbie Hancock's Headhunters and John McLaughlin's Mahavishnu Orchestra championed during the 1970s. Gemmill, however, also appreciates many different types of rock and R&B; one of his heroes is the late Godfather of Soul James Brown. And many of his inspirations come to the surface on *Road Songs 2*, a sequel to his 2013 release, *Road Songs*.

Road Songs 2, like the first *Road Songs*, is a solo project from the long-time partner of fellow Seattle resident and jazz improviser Bob Cozzetti, who he met in 1965. 2017, in fact, marks Cozzetti & Gemmill's 50th anniversary as collaborators—and after all these years, Gemmill still welcomes Cozzetti's insights. Cozzetti & Gemmill produced *Roads Songs 2* together (with Jay Kenney serving as mixing engineer; Dave Davis as mastering engineer) and decided to release it on Cozgem Records, the independent label they founded in 1981. But Gemmill, ultimately, is the one in the driver's seat on *Road Songs 2*. In addition to playing all of the instruments himself and providing the sounds of everything from drums and bass to keyboards, Gemmill composed most of the material.

"Bob was a consultant on *Road Songs 2*," notes Gemmill, who is also a skillful saxophonist and flutist but doesn't play any wind instruments this time. "When I was recording this album, Bob would come over and listen and comment on what I was doing. I would show Bob what I was working on and get his input. Bob's a great musician."

Road Songs 2
Tim Gemmill

Gemmill composed six of the seven selections on *Road Songs 2*, including "**Super Cool**," "**Proteus 2**," "**Moog Blues**," "**A Little Something**" "**Groove On**" and the Asian-flavored "**Domo Arigato**." The only selection that Gemmill didn't compose was John Williams and Leslie Bricusse's "**Can You Read My Mind?**," originally heard in the late 1970s movie Superman (starring Margot Kidder and the late Christopher Reeve). In its 1979 incarnation, "**Can You Read My Mind?**" was an adult contemporary ballad performed by singer Maureen McGovern. Gemmill, however, performs Williams' melody without Bricusse's lyrics, putting a funkier spin on the song and taking it more in the direction of fusion. And while Gemmill employs sampled wordless background vocals on "Can You Read My Mind?," it is essentially an instrumental performance.

"Digital orchestra" is the phrase that Gemmill uses to describe his work on *Road Songs 2*, which finds him using synthesizers that range from the UltraProteus to the Memorymoog. Gemmill recorded *Road Songs 2* in his home studio in Seattle with eight tracks, devoting Tracks 1 and 2 to the bass, Tracks 3 and 4 to drums, Tracks 5 and 6 to the Kawai (which Gemmill used as the album's central keyboard) and Tracks 7 and 8 to the sampler, the Proteus and the Moog.

"I really do have a digital orchestra on this album," Gemmill stresses. "I'm writing the parts for all the instruments, and I play everything. That's the fun part about it: being able to sit there at the computer and feel like I'm composing for a whole band, a whole orchestra. To me, that's enjoyable. I'm asking myself, 'What can I do to make this sound better?' It just makes me feel good."

Gemmill describes "Groove On" as "a duet with the Proteus and the Moog" and "Moog Blues" as a showcase for the Memorymoog. The Proteus, however, is the dominant synthesizer on this album.

"All of the songs on *Road Songs 2* have some Proteus in there somewhere except 'Moog Blues,' which is all Memorymoog," Gemmill observes.

It is no coincidence that some of the song titles on *Road Songs 2*, especially "Super Cool" and "Groove On," would not have been out of place on a Kool & the Gang, Parliament/Funkadelic or Bar-Kays album from the 1970s. Gemmill points out that he was going for a groove-oriented approach, combining jazz, funk, soul and rock elements. And the veteran musician is quick to cite both James Brown and Miles Davis as inspirations.

Road Songs 2
Tim Gemmill

COZGEM

"Bob and I grew up on John Coltrane," Gemmill notes. "But *Road Songs 2* has more of the R&B and funk influence. When I'm working, I sometimes find myself asking, 'What would James Brown do?' And sometimes, 'What would Miles Davis do?' Miles would create some really interesting sounds. When Miles played a solo, every note was well placed. Miles didn't just run up and down on his horn."

Gemmill continues: "I can listen to these songs and move to the music—not necessarily jump up and down, but move to the music. That's why some of the names are the way they are: 'Groove On,' 'Super Cool.' And I gave 'Domo Arigato' that name because the melody sounded Japanese to me."

Although *Road Songs 2* makes extensive use of digital technology, Gemmill achieves a highly organic sound throughout the album. Gemmill asserts that his bass and drum work on *Road Songs 2* sounds as natural as it does because of all the great bassists and drummers Cozzetti & Gemmill played with along the way.

"If Bob and I hadn't played with all the drummers and all the bassists we played with, I probably wouldn't know how to do the drum and bass parts," Gemmill asserts. "But we played with a lot of guys for a long period of time."

Gemmill, after collaborating with Cozzetti for half a century, has a long list of accomplishments on his résumé. And in 2017, he is happy to be adding *Road Songs 2* to the Cozgem Records catalog.

"When I'm sitting there writing, it has to move me before I'm impressed," Gemmill emphasizes. "I'm pretty critical, but when I listen to this album, I like what I hear. I'm very happy with the music I did on *Road Songs 2*."

—**Alex Henderson**, February 2017

Alex Henderson's work has appeared in Billboard, Spin, Salon.com, Cream, The L.A. Weekly, AlterNet, JazzTimes, Jazziz, The Raw Story, Cash Box, HITS, CD Review, Skin Two, Black Beat, The Pasadena Weekly, Black Radio Exclusive (BRE), Music Connection, The New York City Jazz Record and many other well-known publications. Henderson (alexvhenderson.com) also contributed several thousand CD reviews to the popular Allmusic.com website and The All Music Guide's series of music reference books.