

Mp3 Thom Rotella - A Day In The Life

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Contemporary Smooth Jazz Guitar with a twist. 14 MP3 Songs JAZZ: Smooth Jazz, JAZZ: Jazz Fusion

Details: When Thom Rotella started recording his first solo album in the mid-Eighties, he was simply looking for a creative outlet apart from his busy career as a session player and jingle writer. In fact, the guitarist was completely unaware of the emerging New Adult Contemporary radio format that would soon make him one of its core artists, with his three recordings for DMP--The Thom Rotella Band (1987), Home Again (1989) and Without Words (1990)-topping play lists and sales charts across the country. These days, the terminology for his blend of melodic jazz, funk and soul is "smooth jazz," and Rotella is once again at the top of his game with the extraordinary radio and retail successes of How My Heart Beats (1995) and Can't Stop (1997). Just as his recordings have been well received both critically and commercially over the years, Rotella's live show has become one of smooth jazz's most exciting and dynamic attractions. In 1998, Rotella and his core band -- keyboardist Chris Rhyne, bassist Vail Johnson, saxman Michael Lington, drummer Land Richards and percussionist Arno Lucas -- played some of the best attended shows and festivals in the genre: radio station festival celebrations for The Oasis in Dallas, KIFM in San Diego and Santa Rosa's KJZY; the Newport Beach Jazz Festival, and the 94.7 The Wave stage at Taste of Orange County, among others. "There is nothing more fun than playing live," Rotella says, "because I'm able to get an instantaneous response to what we're doing as a band and to see how that moves people emotionally. The interplay between these musicians is incredible, and always leads to surprises, taking tunes to places that were unscripted, previously unexplored, bringing our music to a whole new level. It's very inspiring." Thom Rotella may be best known to longtime smooth jazz listeners for his five popular releases since 1987, but they only tell part of his story. One of the most renowned session guitarists on both coasts, he's performed or recorded with a wide variety of well known artists both in jazz and mainstream pop music. Over the years, he's worked with Rick Braun, Keiko Matsui, Doc Powell, Stanley Turrentine, Kirk Whalum, Tom Scott, Eric Marienthal, Bob Mamet, Michael Paulo, Gerald Albright and Gregg Karukas, as well as pop stars Donna Summer, Cher, The Beach Boys, Lionel Richie, Bette Midler and (last but hardly least) Frank Sinatra. His multi-faceted composing talents have taken him

far beyond NAC radio as well, as he has written music for shows like "Santa Barbara" and "China Beach"; in recent years, he has also been busy creating TV commercial jingles and underscore music for a wide variety of accounts, including Ford, Cadillac, Goodyear, Chevrolet and Northwest Airlines. In addition, Rotella has also performed on "The Tonight Show," "The Tracey Ullman Show" and numerous movie soundtracks, including; Same Time, Next Year, The Gods Must Be Crazy and Mississippi Masala. Aside from completing work on his next release All B Cause of You, Rotella is currently involved in a wide variety of other projects. His acoustic guitar will be featured on the soundtrack to the upcoming Lifetime TV movie "Invisible Child", and he recently began producing for other artists, beginning with tracks for harpist Cheryl Gallagher. Fans of Rotella's graceful 1996 Christmas release Spirit of the Carols will be glad to hear he's now working on a sequel. Finally, he recently formed an organ based trio with master jazz keyboardist Bill Cunliffe and legendary drummer Roy McCurdy. Born and raised by a very musical family in Niagara Falls, NY Rotella set his sights on a musical career by the age of eight and began jamming with rock bands in high school before enrolling at Ithaca College (as a Radio TV major) and then transferring to Berklee College of Music, where his focus was on performance and improvisation. "I was inspired by a wide range of electric and acoustic guitarists, from Wes Montgomery and George Benson, to Eric Clapton and classical virtuoso Andres Segovia," he says. With the help of mentor Tommy Tedesco, Rotella quickly established himself as a top call studio musician in Los Angeles. He soon realized that he needed something more creatively fulfilling to balance that aspect of his burgeoning career. "All my life, I wanted to be a studio musician," he says. "It's rewarding work, but I knew I wanted to be a solo artist. So I put together a band, started playing clubs and pursued that avenue as well." For a time during his years with DMP, Rotella moved back to New York and became a fixture in the studios and on the club scene as well. The jingle business brought him back to L.A., where he built a home studio and began retooling his sound in anticipation of the next phase of his solo career. Thom Rotella has been an integral part of the smooth jazz world ever since, with recordings and a live show that have made him one of contemporary music's most popular composers and guitarists.

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