

ROCK PRESENTS PROG

ON THIS MONTH'S FREE CD

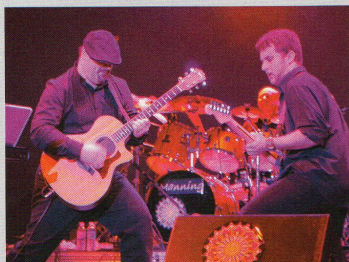
Prognosis 12



1 TINYFISH The Big Red Spark

Title track of the second full length album (see review on page 105) from the London five-piece, who started out as an acoustic band in the early 1990s. From there Tinyfish have developed into one of the most interesting and challenging of progressive bands. Taking their cue from King Crimson, they've developed a dark sound that owes much to the way they use synthesizer and guitar.

Taken from: *The Big Red Spark* on F2 Music
www.tinyfish.org



2 MANNING Charlestown (edit)

Formed in 1999 around multi-instrumentalist Guy Manning, known for his association with The Tangent. Since then, they have released an album every year, the latest being *Charlestown*. The eight-piece have a diverse approach, from folky ballads to ballsy rockers and epic progressive pieces. This has been a big year for them, and it looks like *Charlestown* will take Manning to a new level.

Taken from: *Charlestown* on F2 Music
www.guymanning.com

"This is where the magic happens!": Guy Manning in the studio.





Fantastic Voyage

Manning

Charlestown FESTIVAL MUSIC



Despite playing in bands from an early age, it wasn't until multi-instrumentalist Guy Manning hooked up with keyboardist/songwriter Andy Tillison that both parties finally gained some recognition, firstly with Gold Frankincense And Disk Drive, then (much more prominently) with late 90s outfit Parallel Or 90 Degrees. Contrary to belief, Manning didn't actually join PO90; just as they got a wind in their sails behind them, Manning moved abroad due to other work commitments, and Tillison continued the band without him, Manning appearing on PO90's *No More Travelling Chess* through his affiliation with GF&DD. His association with Tillison continued until earlier this year, when Manning left The Tangent, the band he had been involved in with Tillison since its inception during 2002.

Manning released his first solo album in 1999 and has pretty much issued an album every year since. *Charlestown*, his eleventh, is described by Manning as 'challenging', mainly thanks to the 35-minute opening title track. Based on a ship's voyage from the port of Charlestown in Cornwall, encountering a storm along the way, Manning's anchorage of detailed, lyrical storytelling and melody are ever present.

It's his most adventurous album to date, a release where one discovers even more inlays of beauty and mood after each listen, but perhaps because of the well-crafted way in which the textures and layers of this particular composition, at least, are structured, as well as the airy production which allows the tracks to breathe, it perhaps is far more accessible

than is being conveyed by Manning. And this can only be a good thing. Sometimes on a lengthy track such as this one, there's an impression that it could develop into an over-indulgent display or even have the listener succumb to wall-staring boredom during sections. Thankfully, this is never the case here. Yet simplicity is never a Manning trait either. Consequently, we have a continuous rolling ball sustaining interest, keeping the listener on board and never capsizing in the choppy waters of languor.

Not only is the opening sea-faring yarn packed to the gills with wave upon wave of stylish, compelling, progressive music but the rest of the album is too. Granted, the Jethro Tull comparisons will continue for Manning, even more so here one suspect, but that's inevitable with the use of thought-out prose, flute and a voice akin to Anderson's vocal tremble.

Dipping into calmer waters, *Caliban And Ariel* follows the opener with a quiet counterpoise before *The Man And The Mirror* and its use of fiddle reverts back to the skipping, tumbling melody of being at sea. *T.I.C.* is a bit of a curveball, however, with its blues-influenced guitar and light reggae beat, yet somehow captures the essence of the album's varied presence. Last song, *Finale* is an instrumental full of flair and could be described as a rather ship-shape (*any more nautical references and you'll be walking the plank - Ed*) ending to over an hour's music. If he wasn't before, Guy Manning should be on your radar now.

Richard Thompson

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