



Copyright © Jerry Lucky 2010 All Rights Reserved

Band: Manning

CD Title: "Margaret's Children"

Band Website: www.guymanning.com

Label: Festival Music

Label Website: www.festival-music.co.uk

Release Date: 2011

He says in the liner notes that back in 2006 he wrote down some ideas for a series of narrative tales about the members of a single family that stretched back to the 1600's and extended into the near future where the world is struggling with ecological disaster. That was the basis for the 2006 release *Anser's Tree*. This new release **Manning's** 12th studio recording entitled *Margaret's Children* carries on those stories picking up where the previous CD left off. As always **Manning** handles the bulk of the musicianship (acoustic & electric guitars, drums, keyboards, bass, bouzouki, mandolin, percussion, lead and backing vocals) but surrounds himself with an eclectic cast of players including: Chris Catling (electric guitars, backing vocals), Kev Currie (electric guitars, guitar synthesizer, backing vocals), Steve Dundon (flute), Kris Hudson-Lee (bass), Julie King (backing vocals, lead vocal on "A Night At The Savoy, 1933"), Tim Leadbeater (Grand piano on 4 & 7, electric piano solo on 1), Ian 'Walter' Fairbairn (fiddle), Kathy Hampson (cello), John Kennard (backing vocals, darbuka), Mark Woodward (additional violin), Marek Arnold (clarinet, saxes), Leon Camfield (percussion) and Phideaux (as "The MC at the Savoy"). It's an amazing group of individuals executing some amazing music.

Margaret's Children consists of 7 tracks that range in length from five-minutes to 17-minutes, so for the most part they're all on the longish side and that typically allows for plenty of musical change-ups and stylistic changes to weave their way through each composition. I'm not sure if I've made this observation and I fear I might be the last to do so, but there is a distinct Jethro Tull feel that pervades these musical pieces, mainly from the tone of **Manning's** voice and the prevalent use of flute. That said these are very much songs that fit neatly into **Guy Manning's** oeuvre. Some songs will come across as more straight-forward songs, but then will change part way through the piece, others like the epic-length "A Perfect Childhood" [17:05] will be made up of many different segments all designed to tell the story. And this is what **Manning** excels at; telling stories and setting them to music. And just like any story that's going to contain different emotional notes, so his musical compositions reflect the changing notes of each story. It's classic progressive rock in my books.

Manning has created a very accomplished body of prog. Each album is distinct and yet hangs to the collection. The stories drive the music. I would suggest that any self-respecting fan of the genre should have more than a few of his titles in their collection and certainly *Margaret's Children* is a great place to start that collection. Recommended.