



TRACKS :

1. Nanabohzo and the Rainbow
2. Long Time, Shadow Falls
3. The Cosmic Score (Heaven Song Pt. I)
4. Believer-Redeemer
5. Oil Over Arabia
6. Big Parade
7. Madison Blue
8. Dark Sun

TRAINING:

Dan Mash (bass)
Guy Manning (Vocals, guitars, keyboards)
Marek Arnold (Keyboards, saxophone, clarinet, seaboard)
Sean Timms (Keyboards, banjo)

INVITED

Alex Taylor (trombone)
Antonio Vittozzi (guitar)
Brody Thomas Green (drums)
Chris Catling (guitar)
DavidB (vocals)
Eric Santucci (trumpet)
Julie King (vocals)
Kev Currie (vocals)
Luke Machin (guitar)
Nick Magnus (keyboards)
Phideaux (vocals)
Stephen Dundon (flute)
Tim Irrgang (percussion)
Ulf Reinhardt (drums)

DAMANEK
"On Track"
International - 2017
GEP - 54:01

Damanek is the new supergroup signed by GEP, label with the wind in its sails: we remember in particular Kyros, who made the cover of our previous issue. The idea of this new band came to Guy Manning, and he recruited bassist Dan Mash (from Maschine), and the singer, keyboards and guitars, and the brilliant touch of all German musicians Marek Arnold Toxic Smile, Cyril or Seven Steps To The Green Door) and keyboardist Sean Timms (former leader of Unitopia and anchor of Southern Empire).

And as if that were not enough, many guests are also part of the band, including Luke Maschin on guitar, Nick

Magnus on keyboard or Xavier Phideaux on vocals. The production, provided by Sean Timms, is clear and luminous, perfectly justice to the music of Damanek .To go quickly, we could sum it up by talking about a pop-prog of luxury, in the manner of Alan Parsons Project or Barclay James Harvest. The atmosphere is often close to a jazz general public, the different titles revealing themselves very personalized. Thus, while "Nanahbozo And The Rainbow" sounds very Santana in its orchestrations (what rhythmic!), "Long Time, Shadows Fall" evokes more Johnny Clegg and Chris Rea (delicious guitar parts), his pre-final proves more emphatic and symphonic. More calibrated in appearance, "The Cosmic Score" allows enjoy the deep vocals of Guy Manning, and a relatively developed keyboard solo.

Whereas "Believer-Redeemer" is more a part of the Motown productions, "Oil Over Arabia" of the Canterbury school (ah, these vocalizations as a refrain!), "Big Parade" The pochade, before winning in character. "Madison Blue" plays for its part the role of the classic ballad but terribly effective. The whole record is frankly pleasant, each speaker finding its place in arrangements, very worked, and some instrumental sequences are particularly successful (clarinet-piano on "Nanahbozo And The Rainbow", piano unbridled on "Oil Over Arabia" And another brilliant solo by Marek Arnold), without being excessively developed. It is particularly sensitive on "Dark Sun", Ultimate composition of On Track , which, in a little more than thirteen minutes, weaves mainly an instrumental case for a vocal melody very endearing; The central sequence of a little less than three minutes is nonetheless very pleasant. Weaving especially an instrumental case for a vocal melody very endearing; The central sequence of a little less than three minutes is nonetheless very pleasant. Weaving especially an instrumental case for a vocal melody very endearing; The central sequence of a little less than three minutes is nonetheless very pleasant.

Guy Manning, with Damanek, seems to have created his own The Tangent, more focused songs, with a firm talent for seductive melodies. If we know how to take this record for what it is, a sincere and generous pop-prog manifesto, with consistent solos, we have the assurance of having with On Track an album that will be listened to with delight. While awaiting a second opus probably fairly quickly, the sessions of the inaugural album apparently allowed to produce enough material...

Jean-Guillaume LANUQUE

(Chronicle appeared in Big Bang n ° 99 - July 2017)

DAMANЕК

"On Track"

International - 2017

GEP - 54:01

Damanek est le nouveau supergroupe signé chez GEP, label ayant le vent en poupe : on se souvient en particulier de Kyros, qui fit la couverture de notre précédent numéro. C'est à Guy Manning que revient l'idée de cette nouvelle formation, et autour de lui au chant, claviers et guitares, il a recruté le bassiste Dan Mash (de Maschine), le brillant touche à tout allemand Marek Arnold (leader de Toxic Smile, Cyril ou Seven Steps To The Green Door) aux instruments à vent, et le claviériste Sean Timms (ancien leader d'Unitopia et cheville ouvrière de Southern Empire).

Et comme si cela ne suffisait pas, de nombreux invités sont également de la partie, parmi lesquels Luke Maschin à la guitare, Nick Magnus au clavier ou Xavier Phideaux au chant. La production, assurée par Sean Timms, est claire et lumineuse, rendant parfaitement justice à la musique de **Damanek**. Pour aller vite, on pourrait la résumer en parlant d'une pop-prog de luxe, à la manière de Alan Parsons Project ou Barclay James Harvest. L'ambiance est souvent proche d'un jazz grand public, les différents titres se révélant très personnalisés. Ainsi, tandis que "Nanahbozo And The Rainbow" sonne très Santana dans ses orchestrations (quelle rythmique !), se ressentant de la patte de Sean Timms, "Long Time, Shadows Fall" évoque davantage Johnny Clegg et Chris Rea (délicieuses parties de guitare), son pré-final se révélant plus emphatique et symphonique. Plus calibré en apparence, "The Cosmic Score" permet de profiter du chant profond de Guy Manning, et d'un solo de clavier relativement développé.

Là où "Believer-Redeemer" relève davantage des productions de la Motown, "Oil Over Arabia" de l'école de Canterbury (ah, ces vocalises en guise de refrain !), "Big Parade" et ses ambiances de cirque tient davantage de la pochade, avant de gagner en caractère. "Madison Blue" joue pour sa part le rôle de la ballade classique mais terriblement efficace. L'ensemble du disque est franchement plaisant, chaque intervenant trouvant sa place dans les arrangements, très travaillés, et certaines séquences instrumentales sont particulièrement réussies (clarinette-piano sur "Nanahbozo And The Rainbow", piano débridé sur "Oil Over Arabia" et un autre brillant solo de Marek Arnold), sans être excessivement développées. C'est particulièrement sensible sur "Dark Sun", ultime composition de **On Track**, qui, en un peu plus de treize minutes, tisse surtout un écrin instrumental pour une mélodie vocale très attachante; la séquence centrale d'un peu moins de trois minutes n'en est pas moins très plaisante.

Guy Manning, avec **Damanek**, semble avoir créé son propre The Tangent, plus axé chansons, avec un talent ferme pour les mélodies séduisantes. Si l'on sait prendre ce disque pour ce qu'il est, un manifeste de pop-prog sincère et généreux, aux soli consistants, on a l'assurance d'avoir avec **On Track** un album que l'on réécouterait avec délice. En attendant un second opus sans doute assez rapidement, les sessions de l'album inaugural ayant apparemment permis de produire suffisamment de matériel...

Jean-Guillaume LANUQUE

(chronique parue dans Big Bang n°99 - Juillet 2017)