

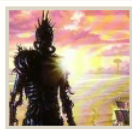
## DAMANEK – “MAKING SHORE” PROGRESSIVE ARCHIVES (2)

### [Making Shore](#)

[DamaneK](#) Crossover Prog

Review by [BrufordFreak](#)

Collaborator [Heavy Prog Team](#)



★★★★☆ Guy Manning is back and he's got a great band of collaborators as well as a great sound, thanks to the ROLI Seaboard keyboard.

- Part 1: 1. "A Mountain of Sky" (7:15) From the amazingly pristine sound delivery of the opening song I can tell that I'm in for an audiophilic listening experience. But then the full musical soundscape kicks in and I am put off by the sound(s) used to record the drums. They sound so plastic--so fake and robotically over-sanitized! I love the multi-tracking of the saxophones in the fifth and sixth minutes

but then hate the sudden switch to Reggae-mode at 5:38. The vocal performance is quite nice--from Guy and within the full choral arrangement. (13.25/15)

2. "Back2Back" (5:59) from the very opening of this one I am deposited into the 1980s--a lost Gary Katz production of some music for Donald Fagen/Steely Dan, Rosie Vela, or Love And Money. (Even the excellent bass is Tony Levin like.) Surprisingly good! (8.75/10)

3. "Noon Day Candles" (6:33) more amazing sound production of nice instrumental performances beneath a kind of lackluster and weak vocal arrangement. Still, a very nice message in the song's lyrics and some really nice music, textures, and instrumental performances. (8.75/10)

4. "Americana" (4:55) Wow! This could come straight off of a STEELY DAN album! It sounds great (like the Gaucho album). The vocal delivery sounds so much like that of ROBBIE ROBERTSON from his amazing 1987 self-titled solo album. Great sound but not my favorite song. (8.5/10)

5. "I Deep Blue (Sea Songs Pt. 1)" (4:23) nostalgic shlapp. Pleasant as an overall listening experience but nothing of what I'd consider "progressive rock music"; this is like a diversionary off-beat piece used to deliver back story or secondary threads to a stage musical. (8.667/10)

6. "Reflections on Copper" (5:02) more 1980s Steely Dan! Despite it's initially irritating simplicity, it's such a pleasant listening experience! (8.667/10)

7. "Crown of Thrones (Sea Songs Pt. 2)" (6:04) another "old" sounding song--one whose musical base and vocal delivery feel quite at odds with one another. (8.33/10)

- Part 2: 8. "Oculus Overture" (9:07) a Broadway show tune! From the new West Side Story! What great sound production! It's like you're there in the orchestra pit with the musicians! And it's an overture: nine minutes of instrumental work! (17.5/20)

9. "Act I: Spot the Difference?" (4:31) I get it: This "Part 2" is really a collection of songs that make up a musical! "Oculus"! The most confident, relaxed, and IAN ANDERSON-like Guy's voice has sounded on the whole album. A very well constructed prog song. Stylistically, Guy and Peter Jones (TIGER MOTH TALES) have a lot of common musical knowledge that they draw from. (8.875/10)

10. "Act II: The Corridor" (4:25) the story continues--and continues to keep me interested and engaged. The "Caribbean Queen" rhythm track is easy to overlook because of the storytelling. (8.75/10)

11. "Act III: Passive Ghost" (6:28) more music befitting a West End stage production. I've got to hand it to Guy: his bard-like lyrics are quite poetic, quite compelling (and this from me: a music listener who rarely hears lyrics). (8.667/10)

12. "Act IV: A Welcoming Hand" (7:17) a very simple, spacious musical foundation is very quickly, nicely filled by a weave of multiple layers of completely separate saxophone melodies. Very cool! Another great delivery of beautiful storytelling--one fit for live stage performance. It has more than a little AL STEWART feel to it. (13.25/15)

Total Time 71:59

So often during my listening to this album was I filled with a nostalgic feeling that I was listening to a Gary Katz product--like some new STEELY DAN material; this album of eclectic if old stage-worthy jazz-pop is so beautifully engineered that the lush listening experience alone is worth your time. I just wish the music wasn't so rooted in 1970s standard rock forms and constructs--especially the ultra-simplistic multi-keyboard chord progressions. Also, during the first "part", Guy's very nicely controlled voice sounds a bit frail, a bit old. The second disc's Oculus suite is a far more satisfying listening experience than "Part 1" because the music seems to all run together with an integrated fullness as well as a cohesive purpose. Would that the listening experience of the first seven songs be as flowing and uniform as the last five. At the same time, I can say without equivocation that this is my favorite album I've ever heard by Guy Manning. Also, after several listenings, it has also proceeded to deliver increased enjoyment with increased familiarity. (I've always loved Gary Katz' sound production as well as stage musicals.)

B/four stars; an excellent addition to any music lover's collection--definitely one amazing display of sound production!



Studio Album, 2023

4.22 | 30 ratings

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