

DAMANEK – “MAKING SHORE”

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What music am I listening to today? Today I decided to listen to the latest album of “**DamaneK**” – “**Making shore**” . Indeed, the musical approach and creativity of **Guy Manning** (keyboards, guitars, mandolin, bouzouki, percussion and vocals) together with keyboardist **Sean Timms** (keyboards, vocals, percussion, production and mixing) and saxophonist/keyboardist **Marek Arnold** (keyboardist also in **Cyril**), I've always liked them and I think this album finalizes and updates the undoubted capabilities of the group. We are dealing with prog songs that do not disdain rock, pop, jazz and folk. The three band members are joined by **Nick Sinclair and Jonathan Barrett** on bass, **Brody Thomas Green**(of **Southern Empire**) on drums and **Cam Blokland** (of **Southern Empire**) on electric guitars, **Riley Nixon-Burns** on trumpet, **Ralf Dietsch** (guitar of **Cyril**), **Jonathan Barrett** (ex-bassist of **The Tangent**), **Linda Pirie** flute and **Julie King** , **Kevin Currie** and **Amanda Timms** provide backing vocals.

The 1st track "**A Mountain Of Sky**" has an ethnic opening of Tibetan sounds which immediately flows into a pressing rock-pop rhythm with a beautiful and satisfying rhythm section, horns and keyboards. The lead vocal is beautiful. At the right moment, a solo synth and an Arabic digression appear, which then transforms into a sort of short-lived reggae rhythm. The final cuts in synchrony of all the instruments close a well-balanced piece that has a beautiful refrain and guitars that sinuously envelop themselves in the overwhelming, enthralling and enthralling tempos of the performance. The mountain to which the passage refers is Everest, a silent, strong, solitary and detached bulwark of the force of nature. A memorable song.

The 2nd piece is "**Back2Back**" with a propped bass (there is some funk) which characterizes the harmonic texture of the piece with great skill of keyboards, winds, guitar and drums. I really like the solo that stands out precise and lanky and what mastery in scrolling through the rosary of notes of an inflamed, visceral and highly imaginative pentagram. The winds continue in conducting the fascinating solo line. The lead voice, persuasive, captures. It deals with overpopulation.

The 3rd piece is "**Noon Day Candles**" with a piano work of rare beauty that captures you, a visceral, emotional piece that deals with the theme of hunger referring to children and a fair sharing of resources. The piece, well balanced, has a placid rhythmic accompaniment, very measured and beautiful, as if it wanted to caress you as it approaches and make you part of themes with dramatic implications.

The 4th song is "**Americana**" and refers to an "X" American farm and its confrontation and struggle with the problems raised by climate change and poverty. The rhythm is always prog-rock-jazz with a measured and fluid mix of sounds. The voice skilfully rides, as a consummate crooner, the reference sound mood of the song that expands its breath on a typical jazz level that joins and vibrates in communion with pop-rock.

The 5th song is "**In Deep Blue (Sea Songs Pt 1)**" a song where Manning proudly talks about a positive experience of his son and therefore presents the courage and determination to want to overcome the difficulties that life can present us. Her voice is loving, passionate, fairy-tale, romantic for a story of love and life. Nice piano and sax accompaniment. The simple and punctual rhythm section embroiders the piece in the chord changes.

The 6th song is "**Reflections on Copper**", a song that has a melody that is sure to catch and which deals with the serious problem of dementia that affects the lives of many people. Romantic with fascinating rhythms and a solo synth that creates an effect of sure effect. The crystalline notes of the guitar, the solo trumpet, the sax and the flute are beautiful.

The 7th track is "**Crown Of Thorns (Sea Songs Pt 2)**", which starts immediately with a dazzling rhythm and chords and well-chosen chord changes and breaks: a real pleasure. The song deals with the coral reef and the problems created by climate change and the exponential increase of starfish that damage coral.

The 8th piece is "**Oculus Overture**" followed in its development by 4 successive acts which constitute the 9th (Act I Spot The Difference?), the 10th (Act II The Corridor), the 11th (Act III Passive Ghost) and the 12th (Act IV A Welcoming Hand) piece. However, we can consider them as a single piece divided into several pieces where we find epicness, majesty and an orchestral dimension in just about 30 minutes which leads us to relax in serene listening and to immerse ourselves in moments of reflection. After the instrumental and beautiful "Oculus Overture" with a valuable work on piano and flute, "**Act I Spot The Difference?**" it returns to the sung piece (at times we find imperceptible Jethro Tull nuances) and theatrical with expressive winds and sometimes folk rock tones, with dry, decisive electric guitar chords. "**Act II The Corridor**" has a more urgent rhythm with an electric guitar riff and a sure-gripping throbbing bass. The battery presses and drags the piece. The solo voice and the choirs carve the piece. "**Act III Passive Ghost**" is a ballad that begins softly with a sweet and dreamy synth and electric guitar arpeggios. A soft rhythmic section follows and a piano that cradles us in its gait accompanying the solo voice. Gradually the other instruments enter the field with a grace and skill that is pleasant and captivating in their lyricism. "**Act IV A Welcoming Hand**" begins with a game of sax and piano chasing each other, which playfully tease each other. Rhythm and solo voice are inserted and the piece progresses with a change of tempo and rock inspiration. The singer gives his best.

What can I say, this album is worth listening to and can be listened to again and again with pleasure.