

Fraternity/Southern Empire family of progressive acts manifests on this album both musically and through a lineup joining players from those incarnations with an array of guest contributors – 18 musicians total. Leading the way on this debut effort are multi-instrumentalist/singer Guy Manning, keyboardist Sean Timms, woodwinds player Marek Arnold and bassist Dan Mash, comprising Damanek proper.

With music/lyrics written by Manning channeled through Timms' masterful production sense, the band breathes unhurried spaciousness into *On Track* with gorgeous melodic themes and swirling instrumental crosscurrents folding ethnic and jazz motifs into predominant symphonic rock arrangements. Lyrical themes include notably evocative reflections on global human conflict/political and religious hubris ("Oil Over Arabia," "Big Parade"), ecological concerns ("Long Time, Shadow Falls," "The Cosmic Score," "Believer-Redeemer") and indigenous spirituality ("Nanabohzo and the Rainbow").

On ornately crafted 13-minute closing piece "Dark Sun," Damanek addresses the ominous climate-change crisis with heartfelt conviction while demonstrating that

somber topicalities need not be imparted with downbeat music. Rather, the sensitively forthright tone of Manning's delivery is poignantly enhanced by a wistful melody that weaves through changeups incorporating tastefully executed rock and jazz passages. Moving, indeed.
John Collinge

DAMANEK

On Track

2017 (CD, 54:03)

GIGANT ELECTRIC PEA GEPCD1055

PROGRESSIVE ROCK

★★★★★

Damanek's kinship with the
Unitopia/United Progressive