



“... an excellent companion for the dark winter months ...”

The name Damanek has been created by the combination of some letters of the names of the members DAn Mash, Guy MANning and MaREK Arnold. But there is a fourth member you will all know. His name is Sean Timms. He was one of the driving forces behind the band Unitopia. Furthermore there is a bunch of guest musicians who contribute to this album that is entitled “On Track”. Well known names in the scene like guitarist Luke Machin (Machine, Kiama, The Tangent), keyboardist and composer Nick Magnus and Phideaux (Phideaux). But the driving force behind Damanek is multi-instrumentalist Guy Manning who after releasing several solo albums and his contribution to United Progressive Fraternity was also for years a permanent member of The Tangent. I did see him perform live in a small cafe in my hometown Apeldoorn (The Netherlands) with the guys of United Progressive Fraternity, a band that came out of the ashes of Unitopia. Damanek released their debut album “On Track” on the Giant Electric Pea label of the guys of iQ. So far the name dropping.

Dan Mash - bass; Guy Manning - lead and backing vocals, keyboards, acoustic instruments, acoustic guitars, E-Bow, percussion; Marek Arnold - saxes, clarinet, keyboards, seaboard; Sean Timms - keyboards, backing vocals, banjo

Brody Thomas Green - drums (1,6); Tim Irrgang - percussion; Antonio Vittozzi - electric guitars; Luke Machin - electric guitars; Stephen Dundon -flute (7); Nick Magnus - keyboards (3); Phideaux - vocals (8); Ulf Reinhardt - drums (8); Chris Catling - guitar (4); DavidB - backing vocals; Julie King - backing vocals; Kevin Currie -backing vocals; Eric Santucci - trumpet (4,6); Alex Taylor - trombone (4,6)

Damanek is the band of Guy Manning, he wrote all the eight compositions you can find on this album. Furthermore he is responsible for most of the lead and backing vocals and plays most of the keyboards and some acoustic instruments. The album opens with “Nanabohzo And The Rainbow” which includes catchy vocal lines, a jazzy bass line and nice keyboard, guitar and saxophone parts. It is a very nice album opener with an uplifting atmosphere.

The next track is called “Long Time, Shadow Falls” and is about Africa. Personally I have a special connection to this track and his lyrics. This is because I visited more than 20 different African countries of this big Continent. It is a beautiful song with a relaxed atmosphere and lovely melodies. For me the first highlight of the album. “The Cosmic Score (Heaven Song Part 1)” is also a fine song with a lovely keyboard orchestration and nice sax and synth solo’s. My hero Nick Magnus is contributing in the keyboard department. He made the special arrangement for this song.

“Believer - Redeemer” has a jazzy trumpet and a nice keyboard orchestration. “Oil Over Arabia” is a song about our delicate ecosystem. The music sounds like a mixture of pop, jazz and rock and swings from time to time. The sax solo gives the piece a Middle-Eastern atmosphere. The name of Steely Dan pops up in my mind. It is a lovely song. “Big Parade”, a protest song, is musically very different and generates with the sax, trumpet, trombone and banjo a New Orleans Jazz parade atmosphere. The short song “Madison Blue” is a ballad like song with delicate sung vocals and a nice flute part. This fine album

closes with a real epic entitled “Dark Sun” which has a duration of almost 14 minutes. Everything comes together in this song about the pollution of the 21st Century. Together with songs like “Long Time, Shadow Falls” and “The Cosmic Score” this are the highlights of the album for me. In the vocal department Guy Manning is accompanied by the voice of Phideaux. Marek Arnold shines with his delicate sax playing in this track.

“On Track” the debut album of Guy Manning’s band Damanek is a wonderful album. You can find some lovely melodies on this album. There are a lot of keyboards on this album and the orchestrations and arrangements are top notch. Nowhere you will find freaky solo’s and ego boost behavior. All the musicians are just playing for the compositions. This fine album has in overall a somewhat mellow character. I would also mention the mix and production of Sean Timms. He did a wonderful job. The album sounds fresh, light and transparent ... you can hear every little detail. Damanek’s “On Track” is an excellent companion for the dark winter months.

Douwe Fledderus - December 2017

●●●● - [Giant Electric Pea](#)