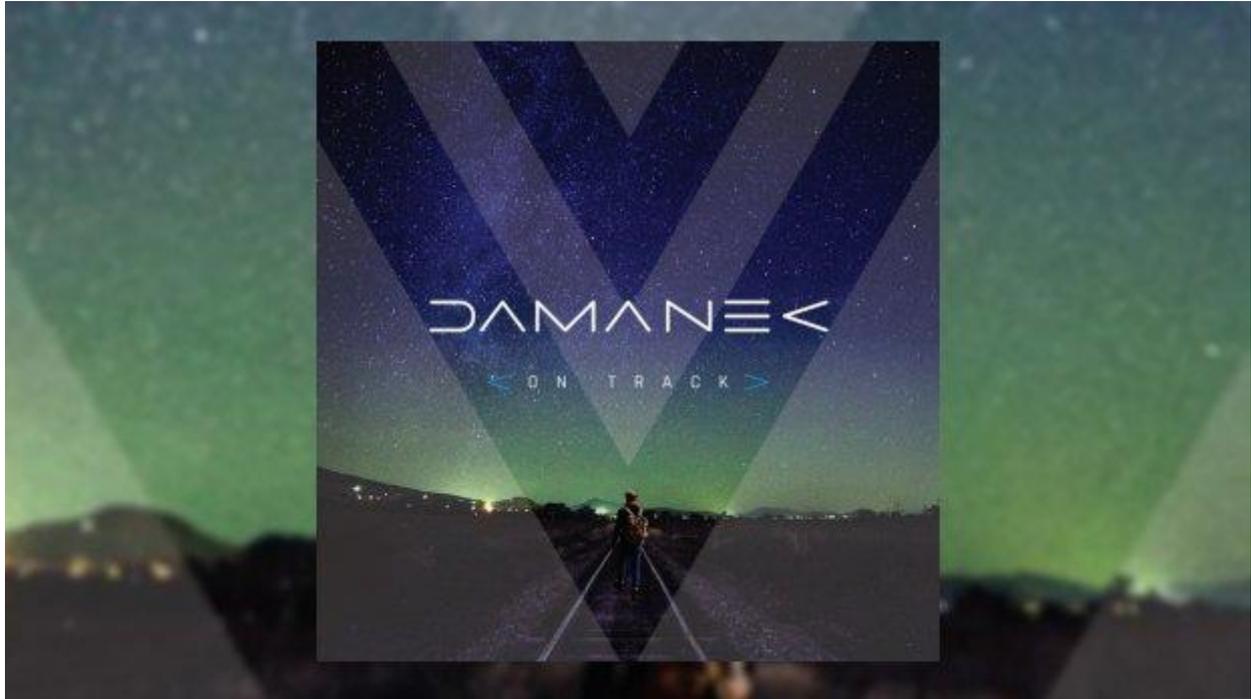


## THE PROGRESSIVE ASPECT

### CD Reviews



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## DamaneK – On Track

Article by: [Rob Fisher](#)

The call to arms comes in many guises. None, I suspect, have come with such sublime clarity of vision or such chilling emotional discernment than the passionately crafted debut album *On Track* from DamaneK. The warm embrace of the sumptuous soundscapes are constructed with a thrilling elegance which frames an unnerving message delivered with a dark, poignant and disturbing finesse. We are out of control, heading in the wrong directions. Time to heed the signs and hear the call before it is too late: time to get back on track.

Guy Manning's subtly challenging outcry of bewilderment and despair at the state in which we find ourselves and the things we are doing to our world is both beautifully observed and achingly honest. *Long Time, Shadow Falls* is wistfully haunting in the way it tackles the sheer wretchedness of poaching in bringing animals to the verge of extinction. Sung from the point of view of the animals themselves, the lament rises:

*"Shall we mourn them? and play our part  
They wait for a sign, that Man no longer needs us  
Just pictures in a glossy magazine  
Long time, a shadow falls and the Earth is lessened."*

< [Long Time, Shadow Falls – Promotional Video](#) >

*Oil Over Arabia* similarly gives voice to the utter decimation and annihilation of the animals caught up and given no thought in the ugly fiscal greed and political selfishness of war, the singing of the song itself a painful voice of remembrance. The exasperating folly and stupidity of war continues with *Big Parade*, a deliciously brilliant parody written in a Vaudeville style to humorously lampoon the carnage we unleash when we take up arms against each other.

*"One little soldier takes out his gun  
Another little soldier joins in all the fun.  
A leader hits a button and a War is begun  
Missiles away!"*

The simple honesty and the profound sincerity which exudes from this album underlines the inspired brilliance of how the band have chosen to deliver this fiercely intelligent and gently rebuking message of protest. The music is a joyful smorgasbord of moods, rhythms and resonances from around the world. Each song is a musical voyage of exploration, capturing the spirit and vibrancy of local cultures and sounds in order to bring home the social and environmental crisis on our doorsteps.

The tub thumping, foot stomping momentum of *Big Parade* is matched by the mischievous and light hearted rhythms of *Nanabohzo and the Rainbow*, enthralling, inviting, playing with Native American echoes and beats. The brooding, sultry, menacing atmosphere of *Dark Sun* speaks to the rapidly increasing threat of air pollution whilst using suffocating moods and wavering tempos to create a sense of breathless despair.

Yet not everything on the album is given over to the direct threat and menace of our actions or the consequences which follow from them. In amidst it all, *Madison Blue* is a stunningly beautiful and incredibly simple composition which longingly and lovingly reflects on what happens when someone we love leaves home, the distances which separate us and the lovely surprise of hearing their voices again. *The Cosmic Score* is a charming vignette of the thoughts which cross our minds when starrng up at the night sky and the unexpected cosmic conclusions we sometimes reach as a result.

The musicianship throughout is exceptional. Although this is unfair to the rest of the band, special mention must surely go to Marek Arnold's delightful interjections on sax and clarinet which inject a vibrant sense of impish spirit and weaves an utterly transformative spell on some of the songs. The hugely

impressive cast of guest musicians ensure the album burns so very brightly with a consistently fresh, dynamic character and uniquely natural energy which carries from song to song.

*On Track* is, to my mind at least, possibly one of the most gracefully compelling protest albums of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century so far. Music matches mood, which in turn matches location, which in turn resonates with the sounds and rhythms best suited to the lyrical content of each song. It is a complex and spellbinding set of combinations which unassumingly delivers a provocative, sensitive and timely message for our time. We need to turn things around. We have to get back on track.

### **TRACK LISTING**

01. Nanabohzo and the Rainbow
02. Long Time, Shadow Falls
03. The Cosmic Score (Heaven Song Pt. I)
04. Believer-Redeemer
05. Oil Over Arabia
- 06..Big Parade
07. Madison Blue
08. Dark Sun

Total Time –

### **MUSICIANS**

Marek Arnold – Saxes, Clarinet, Keyboards, SeaBoard

Guy Manning – Lead & Backing Vocals, Keyboards, Acoustic Instruments, Acoustic Guitars, E-Bow, Percussion

Dan Mash – Bass

Sean Timms – Keyboards, Backing Vocals

~ *Other featured musicians/special guests:*

DavidB – Backing Vocals

Chris Catling – Guitar

Kevin Currie – Backing Vocals

Stephen Dundon – Flute

Brody Thomas Green – Drums

Tim Irrgang – Percussion

Julie King – Backing Vocals

Antonio Vittozzi – Electric Guitars

Luke Machin – Electric Guitars

Nick Magnus – Keyboards

Phideaux Xavier – Vocals

Ulf Reinhardt – Drums

The Santucci Horns: – Eric 'Tooch' Santucci – Trumpet / Alex Taylor – Trombone

## **ADDITIONAL INFO**

Record Label: **Giant Electric Pea**

Country of Origin: U.K./Germany/Australia

Date of Release: 15<sup>th</sup> May 2017

## **LINKS**

Damanek – **Website** | **Facebook**