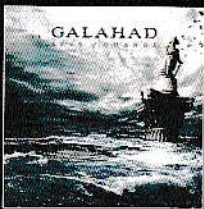


GALAHAD

Seas Of Change

AVALON RECORDS



If there was an award for a band currently fully embracing the spirit of prog, then Galahad win hands down for successfully extending an initial seven-minute musical idea into a forty-two minute tour de force focussing on a very contemporary topic.

Arranged into twelve separate movements, the thorny subject of Brexit is writ large across vocalist Stu Nicholson's probing, sometimes acerbic lyrics. These are set within the orchestrations and arrangements courtesy of keyboards player Dean Baker.

'Batten down the hatches, boys and girls',

declares Nicholson in Storms Are A Coming, the opener which also features some classical piano and orchestrations, angel-like voices and a bar-room talk-in. The influence of new lead guitarist Lee Abraham elevates the album's rock stock through his solo flourishes and interplay with Baker, underpinned by Spencer Luckman's precision drumming and Tim Ashton's elegant bass.

Thunderous riffage is interspersed with little proggy interludes – spot the Genesis, Yes and Pink Floyd references, along with acoustic passages, while Sarah Bolter brings in extra sonic texture on flute, clarinet and tenor sax.

Shifting, changing and evolving without ever losing its overall shape nor the listener's interest, *Seas Of Change* is an album meant to be heard in its entirety. In interpreting the current state of the nation and putting it all to music, Galahad are back to their crusading, adventurous best with probably one of the best albums of the year. **AR**



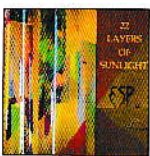
PHOTO: MARTIN REILMAN

Light. They also flirt with funk on the track Break You and are starting to show more early Whitesnake and Purple era Stormbringer influences. Doomsday Outlaw is destined to be a big name on the British rock circuit and Hard Times shows a band that is going places and fast. **TC**

ESP 2.0

22 Layers Of Sunshine

SUNN CREATIVE



Anyone listening to a mainstream radio station in 1982 might have heard Peter Coyle of Lotus Eaters singing their hit The First Picture Of You, followed by the debut single of Big Country, Harvest Home, with Mark Brzezicki playing the

drums. Who'd have thought that more than a third of a century later, those two artists would be collaborating together on a progressive rock album! Well, that's exactly what has happened thanks mainly to Tony Lowe, another experienced musician who has pulled them together to form ESP 2.0, the follow-up to Tony and Mark's ESP project from 2016.

Most songs on the album are between six and eight minutes and have time to breathe and develop in interesting directions, with waves of keyboards frequently used to create dreamy symphonic prog landscapes. Having a quality singer like Peter Coyle certainly helps, especially in the way he can draw out a melody with a very slow delivery. Mark Brzezicki's drumming is also outstanding, most notably so on the two shorter tracks, Algorithm where

the aggressive drumming is high in the mix and has echoes of Phil Collins' In The Air Tonight and the instrumental Ride Through Reality which is driven to a frenzied climax by Mark's drums. Tony Lowe also has moments of glory such as the Gilmour-esque guitar solo in Smiling Forever and the fabulous closing section of Sensual Earth.

A slight surprise is Gunshot Lips which has a more pop-oriented sound and the sort of relentless infectious rhythm that you find in songs like Billy Idol's White Wedding. It's strange song but quite brilliant and probably the outstanding track on the album.

This is a very well-crafted set of songs, clearly put together with passion and care by the musicians involved and certainly recommended for all prog fans. **PW**

EXTREMITIES

Gaia

PAINTED BASS RECORDS



This Dutch quintet's debut contains some good prog-metal but to get to it, without skipping

tracks, depends on your love or at least tolerance of extreme-metal vocal-styles: an energetic cacophony of angry, shouted or growled-vocals amongst the musical elements, including some down-tuned guitars.

If, like me, you prefer more accessible prog-metal that's not dominated by so-called harsh-vocals or tonal-screaming, then first check out their more creative songs: Hydrosphere (8.21), Through The Dreamscape (7.16) and 3-part closer The Inward Eye (17.51). These variously showcase mainly clear English-vocals, great electric-guitar, keys and even cello plus some spacey-saxophone. (Fans of the excellent band For The Oracle, will love these tracks). Extremities' unusual and challenging-hybrid of juxtaposed styles is a tenuous-bridge between extreme-metal and imaginative-progmetal. Dip in and see what works for you! **DK**

FALSE LIGHTS

Harmonograph

WRECKORD LABEL



The blurb around this band is at once intriguing and yet also suspicious: 'folk rock for the 21st

century' is the label often attached to the band, and how often have we heard that sort of claim about something which turns out to be another example of 'old tunes on a new fiddle'. This time though, there's a difference – dammit, if these guys might not just have pulled it off!

New to me, though this is actually their second album, the band display a superb knack of integrating any type of modern music which fits the purpose – from prog rock to post rock to electronica to indie guitar rock – and utilising the whole palette to give a set of (mostly) traditional tunes a jolly good reimagining. Remember that old trick where Steeleye Span would produce something like Long Lankin, Sir James The Rose or even

CONTINUES OVER