



September 7, 2010

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Roswell Six: Terra Incognita-A Line in the Sand

In 2009 we had the amazing first part of the *Terra Incognita* saga, titled *Beyond the Horizon*, and now, a year later, the second installment from bestselling author Kevin J. Anderson, his wife Rebecca Moesta, Shawn Gordon & the folks at ProgRock Records, and a star studded line-up, better known as Roswell Six, are back with *Terra Incognita: A Line in the Sand*.



Here, the story focuses on the generations long war between the continents, and musically things take on a heavier and more aggressive tone compared to the more progressive & symphonic sounds we heard on the first part.

Gone are James LaBrie, Erik Norlander, Lana Lane, John Payne, Gary Wehrkamp, Kurt Barabas, David Ragsdale, Martin Orford, Chris Brown, Chris Quirarte, and Mike Alvarez, replaced here by Frameshift's Henning Pauly (who plays all the instruments and produces), Steve Walsh from Kansas, Sass Jordan, Nick Storr from The Third Ending, Charlie Dominici, Arjen A. Lucassen, and Alex Froese from Frameshift. Returning for a second go around is the incomparable Michael Sadler, former lead singer and founder of Saga. Despite the major upheaval in the line-up and the reliance on some heavier sounds, this still sounds like a Roswell Six album, so chances are if you loved the first album, you'll dig this as well.

From a vocal perspective, there are some killer performances here. Walsh amazes on the crankin' "My Father's Son" and the crushing, symphonic opener "Barricade", both tunes also featuring some great riffs and

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keyboard work from Pauly. Storr and Sadler team up on the hard rock piece "Whirlwind", and mainstream rock singer Sass Jordan really turns some heads on the bluesy hard rock of "The Crown". She's not only beautiful, but she can also tear it up! Sadler gives one of the CDs most emotional and poignant performances on the lovely "Loyalty", a piano driven ballad that lets the singer remind us all how much of a talent he still is. One of the heaviest pieces on the album is the monster "When God Smiled On Us", a brusing metal track complete with massive riffage and a great vocal team up from Storr & Froese. Jordan returns again to give a heart wrenching turn on "Need", and Sadler gets all grandiose on us for the symphonic epic "Victory", a tune that will instantly appeal to all those Saga fans out there. Throw in a killer instrumental from Pauly called "Battleground", and you have a highly enjoyable concept album filled with plenty of metal, hard rock, and prog bombast.

OK, so it's safe to say that Roswell Six delivered another winner here, but the question is, how long do we have to wait for the next part? Time will tell I guess. In the meantime, time to spin this one again...

Track Listing

1. Barricade
2. Whirlwind
3. The Crown
4. Loyalty
5. My Father's Son
6. When God Smiled on Us
7. Need
8. Spiral
9. Battleground
10. Victory

Added: September 4th 2010

Reviewer: **Pete Pardo**

Score: ★★★★★

Related Link: **ProgRock Records**

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» **SoT Staff Roundtable Reviews:**

Roswell Six: Terra Incognita-A Line in the Sand

Roswell Six: Terra Incognita - A Line in the Sand

Posted by **Steven Reid, SoT Staff Writer** on 2010-09-04 12:56:34

My Score: ★★★★★

The combining of a novel and a progressive metal concept album seems so natural, that you wonder why nobody had really given it a try until the debut album from Roswell Six, *Terra Incognita - Beyond The Horizon*. With a story and lyrics created by heavy weight author Kevin J Anderson and having a stellar cast list on the disc (John Payne, James LaBrie, Martin Orford, David Ragsdale, Lana Lane and so on) ensured that the expansive and evocative songs written by Erik Norlander came alive in a way that most "project" albums never quite achieve.

Part Two of the Terra Incognita story sees Anderson once more teaming up with Rebecca Moesta to write the story and lyrics, however in what at first glance would appear to be a risky move, the entire ensemble that came together for album number one is nowhere to be seen on this follow up. This time Henning Pauly (Frameshift/Shadows Mignon) writes and performs all the music and with Anderson stating that the story of *A Line In The Sand* is "A darker tale" than its predecessor, Pauly's foreboding, heavier style fits the bill very well indeed. What Henning has managed to do though, is to give the songs the same feel as before, with complicated time signatures and dramatic arrangements still leaving enough room for the all important voices to tell the story.

Those voices that narrate the tale this time are Sass Jordan, Steve Walsh (Kansas), Nick Storr (The Third Ending), Charlie Dominici (Dream Theater/solo), Alex Froese (Frameshift) and ex-Saga frontman Michael Sadler. All six put in effortlessly brilliant performances that allow them to bring a dramatic edge to their delivery, that has only really been hinted at before and Sadler especially exercises an aspect and timbre in his voice that is ever so slightly different to the work he did with Saga. That said the songs where the vocalists sing against each other "Whirlwind" (Walsh/Storr), "My Father's Son" (Walsh/Dominici) and "When God Smiled On Us" (Storr/Froese) are the most effective and when you add the backing vocals talents of Pauly, Juan Roos (Shadow's Mignon) and the master of the multi-vocalist album Arjen Lucassen (Ayreon/Star One/Guilt Machine) to the mix, the results are often stunning.

Grand in scale and intentionally overblown in its execution, the second instalment in the Roswell Six saga, flows on seamlessly from the first part while managing to sound refreshingly different what has come before, although if I was to pick a fault, it would be that there is not enough "light", to counter act the intensity of the music this time.

It will be very interesting to see where this project goes from here, as after two immensely satisfying, yet different albums, it may be a tough challenge to bring a third entirely fresh cast together and expect the results to be as equally impressive. However on the strength of the first two parts, I can't wait to find out.



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