



Rock 'N Roll Telephone

[Nazareth](#)

Convexe Entertainment - CVX904783

Available from [MVD Entertainment Group](#).

A review written for the Folk & Acoustic Music Exchange
by **Mark S. Tucker**
(progdawg@hotmail.com)

Like fellow rock monsters Golden Earring, Nazareth never really received the love they so richly deserved on these shores, much more appreciated in Europe. I, however, was nailed from the moment I arrived home with their third LP *Razamanaz* in '73. Floored by singer Dan McCafferty, owner of one of the best sets of pipes the rock world has ever spawned, I doubled back to pick up the first two releases and afterwards snapped up everything else as album after album emerged for 45 years—yep, even during that odd period in which, among other puzzlers, Jeff Baxter produced 'em. All of that not enough, I devoured every DVD, and when the *NazBox* box set appeared in 2011, I nearly busted out the window to the record shop door in my haste to grab the sonofabitch before some other maniac could. The first two CDs of remastered hits and cuts were all very well, though I had them all, but I had to have the other two discs of live cuts and unreleased songs before my head exploded. A grunge group was named after what I experienced through headphones: Nirvana. Then there was the great 64-page booklet with all kinds of photos and a great history written by Joel MacIver.

Only two founding members remain in the ensemble, McCafferty and Pete Agnew, and this may very well be Danny's swan song due to health problems. A replacement singer, Linton Osborne, has been chosen, but I dunno...Nazareth without the fiery whiskey-voiced McCafferty???...I just don't know. All reports have him already retired, but I think, after hearing this slab, I'll be following the band anyway, 'cause guitarist Jimmy Murrison is an excellent axehandler on both sides of the equation, whether pounding the headbangers out or laying back into a decorous ballad. He's been at the six-string helm since late '94 and might best be described as a cross between founding fretmeister Manny Charlton, who sadly passed in 1990, and Mike Schenker at the top of his game.

Catch *Winter Sunlight* for an excellent evocation of the sophisticated "soft" side of the band, but when the railsplitter tracks come roaring in, well, whatever it is Dan's suffering from (constructive pulmonary disease, actually), it sure as hell doesn't show, not for a second. The nail-spitting roustabout is as scorching, passionate, and commanding as ever, and the songs he rides to incandescing volcanoes resurrect the band's best years. Bassist Agnew is as stalwart as on Day One, and his son Lee, drummer and keyboardist, is damn good on both, the two gents anchoring the quartet for the tempest whenever McCafferty threatens to tear the floorboards up, which is just about every cut, even the ballads, 'cause you can't hold the guy back. He's said he may very well keep working in studio with his compadres, but his touring days are over (Osborne will handle that end), and he acquitted himself with rare distinction.

Lay an ear to what's probably their most anthe