

March 27, 2014

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RELEASES NEW ALBUM
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Peter Hammill & Gary Lucas: Other World

Other World is the first recorded collaboration between Peter Hammill (Van Der Graaf Generator) and Gary Lucas (The Magic Band, Jeff Buckley). The two first met at a live Hammill solo gig back in 1973 when Lucas happened to be in attendance, but it wasn't until 2012 that the invitation from Peter to Gary suggesting they work together actually happened, and this is the result.



Much of the album is comprised of Hammill's soaring vocals over lush guitar soundscapes (created by both) or electronic sounding loops. Those who have been following Peter's work in the resurrected Van Der Graaf Generator over the last few years of course already know that he's still in fine vocal form, and that is indeed the case here as well. Don't expect however VDGG or Magic Band styled prog or avant-garde mayhem on *Other World*. These songs fluctuate between acoustic based numbers with Hammill's almost poetic styled meanderings, or more electric styled tunes with slightly aggressive vocals over biting guitar riffs and ominous loops. Regardless of the approach, there's just a 'stripped down' feel throughout the album that is quite endearing. "Spinning Coins", "Cash", "Some Kind of Fracas", and the bluesy "This is Showbiz" all have a catchy flair, with Hammill's charming vocal delivery just drawing you in and the tasty guitar instrumentation sparse yet totally effective.

There are also some haunting and quite effective instrumentals on the album as well. "Built From Scratch" is a chilling track that shows the more creative side of the duo, as soft guitar arpeggios waft underneath some jarring electric guitar shards and futuristic sound effects. "Altar of Roses" takes a more bleak approach, with almost post-rock styled arrangements and the occasional jazz lead guitar stabbing through the mix. "Reboot", save

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for a brief vocal spot from Hammill, is a nightmarish blob of early Tangerine Dream styled krautrock/space rock, and "Glass" offers up lilting guitar strains under spacey soundscapes for a soothing mind-trip. The lengthy closer "Slippery Slope" follows a similar path, and once again reminds of some of the classic Tangerine Dream material from the early '70s, with bleak spacey atmosphere created by loops, sound effects, and guitars.

Overall, *Other World* is an intriguing listen, probably not going to appeal to everyone, but with its mix of vocal tunes and chilling instrumentals, there is some variety on display here. Both Hammill & Lucas are in fine form throughout, but I think the album suffers a tad from having too many tracks, some of which sound too similar to each other. That being said, Hammill fans should enjoy their hero doing something a little different and Lucas has proved to be a solid partner to create some new musical explorations with.

Track Listing

1. Spinning Coins
2. Some Kind of Fracas
3. Of Kith & Kin
4. Cash
5. Built from Scratch
6. Attar of Roses
7. This is Showbiz
8. Reboot
9. Black Ice
10. The Kid
11. Glass
12. 2 Views
13. Means to an End
14. Slippery Slope

Added: February 16th 2014

Reviewer: Pete Pardo

Score: ★★☆☆

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