



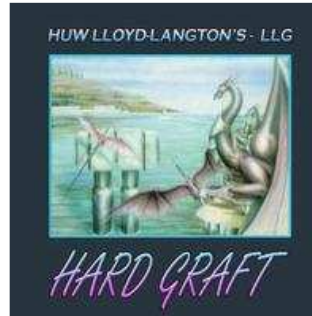
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Huw Lloyd Langton

Huw Lloyd Langton's LLG – Hard Graft

Review by Gary Hill

Hard Graft is the latest album from Hawkwind alum Huw Lloyd Langton. In many ways it very much resembles the sounds that band made when Langton was part of the group. One of the things I like best about this disc is that it looks back to the days when guitar soloing wasn't limited to little compartments in the middle of a song. Langton takes every opportunity to shine here and it really adds a lot to the effectiveness. I'd have to say that the three blues guitar solos that are added as bonus tracks kind of take away from the set, though. They don't fit musically with the rest of the tunes and since the main album is bookended, those bonus tracks distract from that effort.



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Track by Track Review

Huw's Intro to Hard Graft (Part 1)

A delicate and pretty introduction leads this one off and holds it for the first minute or so. Then it powers out to a hard edged prog jam that's got a lot of psychedelia built into it. At times, especially the spacey instrumental section mid-track, this resembles Hawkwind. There are also punk rock elements built into the number at points.

Hello Friend

This one really feels like it could have come from the Langton era of Hawkwind. It shows just how big a part of the group's songwriting Langton was during that period. It's a hard rocker that's tasty.

A Dream

Given the title, one would expect some dreamy music here. While this has a crunchy edge, it is suitably slow moving and spacey. There's some smoking hot guitar soloing built in, though, ala Robin Trower, perhaps. As this builds up it really feels a lot like Hawkwind at times.

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The Hawkwind elements are still on the table, but this is a hard rocking, slightly raw jam that's quite tasty. There is a cool bass riff driving it and Langton solos all over this slab of sound. This tune doesn't change a lot; instead it derives its growth from the powerhouse guitar work that continues throughout.

Hey Mama

Here we have a tune that's a straight ahead hard rocker. There isn't a lot of Hawkwind heard here. It does have a slow moving, almost dreamy atmosphere to it, but the vocal delivery is sort of a blues rock style. Langton again solos all over the surface of this tune.

My Eyes See Only The Sea

When it comes to songs feeling like Hawkwind, this really takes the cake. It's a slow moving slab of space rock that's incredibly tasty and incredibly Hawk-like.

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So Long Too Long

This is arguably the coolest tune here. It's still got a little of that Hawkwind element, but only a little. It rocks out hard and features a lot of psychedelia built into it. There's an especially cool fast paced vocal bit later in the piece.

Strange Flower

I love the hard rocking sounds of this tune. It combines Hawkwind sounds with a more straightforward rock element to create a tune that's both familiar and novel in approach.

Hard Graft (Part 2)

Here's the second part of the album opener. It definitely feels a lot like Hawkwind. It's got a great space meets hard rock texture and a slow moving tempo. Around the four and a half minute mark it drops to the same gentle and intricate music that started the album. Had the bonus tracks not been added, that concept would have made for a great bookend.

So Long Baby

Here we get a bluesy romp that's essentially a slide guitar solo. It's still got some Langton trademarks, but delivered in blues fashion. Of course, when the subtitle of this bonus track section is "Huw's Blues," the blues outlook kind of goes without mentioning.

Slow Train A Coming

Although this is a different song, the approach is the same as on the previous number. It gets quite intricate and pretty and wanders more into progressive rock territory than did its predecessor.

Cowboy Blues

While the overall concept isn't altered from the last two, this one has more of a country flavor to it. Of course, that's pretty obvious from the title, right?



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