

that help put that calamity in perspective, turning them inward and then outward to voice various characters' personal perspectives. On this latest album — their first output since Katrina — they navigate a uniquely Southern style, melding sinewy R&B, nimble rhythms, tattered Americana and vintage rock 'n' roll to draw lessons on resilience and determination. "Poor Man's Paradise," "Thorn In Her Side," "Fair Weather Friend" and "Work Clothes" parlay a smooth groove into a vivid analogy that describes the effects of the storm, as well as the ineptitude and injustice that hampered the recovery.

Appropriately too, these restive refrains have a reassuring tone. Despite horror and upheaval, they weave these songs from the musical continuum of American tradition. It's a *Street Symphony* inspired by both a tender heart and a tenacious soul. www.blue-notelabelgroup.com

— Lee Zimmerman

Tangerine Dream
Madcap's Flaming Duty
 Eastgate (2007)
 Grade: ★★★★★

A match made in psychedelic heaven, *Madcap's Flaming Duty* is Tangerine Dream's commemoration of Syd Barrett, the ingenious Pink Floyd songwriter whose troubled life ended in 2006.

Tangerine Dream is led by guitarist/keyboardist Edgar Froese, who founded the innovative German progressive band some 40 years ago. Froese and keyboardist Thorsten Quaeschning compose the hypnotic, ambient music that supports Chris Hausi's lead vocals.

Weaving folk, Celtic and classical passages into 12 progressive-rock compositions, the eight-piece group is filled with versatile musicians who play flute, bagpipe, violin, blues harp and Irish Bouzouki. Throughout the 73-minute disc, the sound encapsulates precise, exceptional performances that accompany the adapted words of 10 important British and American literary figures. With Barrett's experiences in mind, the lyric adaptations were conceived by Bianca Acquaye, who worked with Tangerine Dream on a 2004 film version of Dante's literary masterpiece "L'Inferno," a restoration of a 1911 silent classic to which the group added a modern score.

Tangerine Dream has Pink Floyd's late founder in mind with such song titles as "Mad Song," "One Hour Of Madness" and "A Dream Of Death." The eight-minute "One Hour Of Madness" uses voices and music to suggest muddled, crazed feelings, and its author, Walt Whitman, defied convention in 19th-Century America as Barrett did in 20th-Century Britain.

Foreshadowing the spirit of Barrett's life, the romantic poet, artist and mystic William Blake wrote "Hear The Voice" and "Mad Song," which Tangerine Dream interprets in a more pastoral fashion than the title implies. Capable of imaginative beauty and incomprehensible symbolism, Blake died in obscurity amid (probably false) rumors of insanity and asylum commitment, predating Barrett's demise by nearly two centuries.

The album closes with "Solution Of All Problems" (a/k/a "The Problem"), in which vocalist Hausi chants Ralph Waldo Emerson's words, splitting them in odd places to maintain rhythmic tension; such syllable distortion would likely amuse Barrett. On a more somber note, the great Transcendentalist's poem abruptly ends at midpoint, symbolizing the incompleteness of Barrett's life. www.mvdb2b.com

— Joseph Tortelli

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