



Tyger Tyger, Burning Bright Progressive Rock...

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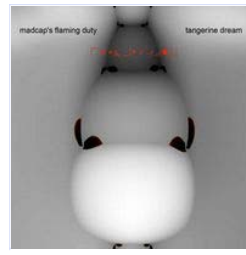
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Tangerine Dream: Madcap's Flaming Duty

In decades past, Tangerine Dream has seldom if ever experienced a lack of transition, having operated most famously as a trio, but also as a duo, quartet, and quintet — and most rarely, a sextet — from its acid rock daze and psych beginnings to the electronic stylings and film score repertoire that became a recipe for worldwide fame. Along the way, the primarily instrumental TD has even indulged such vocals, but founder/leader Edgar Froese usually only ever initiated such a diversion if he felt it was appropriate at that very moment. This resulted in woodwinder and once-and-again Dream'er Steve Jolliffe's warbly crooning marking (or staining) half of 1978's prog-rockin' *Cyclone*, while three-quarters of 1987's *Tyger* found TD's synthetic shadings married to the spoken word and wail of Jocelyn Smith — lyrics derived exclusively from the poetry of William Blake. More recently, Froese penned an entire opera trilogy based on Dante's *Divine Comedy*.



The brand-new *Madcap's Flaming Duty* will go down as another excursion into a contemporary vocal format and ode to the late Syd Barrett, but the pun in that unfortunate title may help it along even more so. For the first time in a while, TD has again swelled to a sextet in the studio (live, different players come and go). Chris Hausl was brought in to do a formidable mellow-goth shtick and parts were written for instruments like dobro, violin, mandolin, didgeridoo, bagpipe and bouzouki, but Froese's and new member Thorstein Quaeschning's electronic palettes are (naturally) most prevalent. Nary a hint of psychedelia lurks in the mix; Froese's fleeting harmonica intro on the opener sounds like an echo of *Stratosfear*, but aping that classic from '76 would've made these proceedings a great deal more engaging. Many of the compositions hover around the same tempo, give or take a few beats, so the speed-up for "One Hour Of Madness" is a welcome one.

TD's trademark sequences of old make a couple appearances but are greatly reined in; some of the timbres have a resolutely "80s" character. On the traditional Irish "Lake Of Pontchartrain," guests Gynt and Thomas Beator's bouzoukis may as well be sample-emulated. Percussionist Iris Camaa remains, but somehow a lot of the "drumming" sounds canned. The tasteful guitar solo on "A Dance Of Death" isn't even Froese's, which is disappointing considering the great guitar work he turned in on album and during concerts in the '70s and '80s. Incidentally, tracks like "One Hour Of Madness" and "Solution Of All Problems" — words by Walt Whitman and Ralph Waldo Emerson, respectively — somewhat resemble Clan Of Xymox thanks to layered vocals and frenetic sequences. Otherwise, the music vacillates between adult contemporary and Coldplay-isms. Here's to hoping Froese may yet revisit Tangerine Dream's cutting-edge, electronic rock heyday.

Tracklist:

1. Astrophel And Stella
2. Shape My Sin
3. The Blessed Damozel
4. The Divorce
5. A Dream Of Death
6. Hear The Voice
7. Lake Of Pontchartrain
8. Mad Song
9. One Hour Of Madness
10. Man
11. Hymn To Intellectual Beauty
12. Solution Of All Problems

Added: August 15th 2007
Reviewer: Elias Granillo
Score: ★★☆☆
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