

LIVE 4 METAL

<http://www.live4metal.com/>

MSG: Schenker/Barden - In The Midst Of Beauty (**Inakustik**) By: Joe Florez

I must say that as much of a fan as I am of Schenker's work, I have not been pleased with his releases past 1989 for the most part. Sure, there are songs on each album that are decent, but nothing came close to his 80's material. When I first heard that original singer Gary Barden was taking hold of the mic again, Simon Phillips on drums, Neil Murray on bass and Don Airey on keys, I nearly wet my pants as this would be considered a dream team of music. My appetite was further satiated when I read in Classic Rock Magazine (yes, this scribe reads other publications too) that the music was a welcome return to old, I knew I had to have this. Small side note, Glenn Hughes was asked to be on this record,

when things didn't work out for him to play bass or sing, talks fell apart and here we are now. Well, the time has come for the review.

Opening track "City Lights" has a familiar sound to the 1980 debut except with a better production and a more modern sound. Furthermore, the keys are heard only faintly and doesn't come off as obnoxious. The music is pretty simple and basic and the solo I might add, was pretty tame. Nothing outrageous going on here. The thing I was shocked at was Gary's voice. Now, I know that he is older and might not be able to capture his original sound, but he sounded quite tired. "Competition" contains some good background harmonies and it's a bit catchy, but it again it seems like the steam is running out here. Here we go now. "I Want You" has a shot of energy injected into this track that was lacking on the first two. The keys have a retro classic 70's rock vibe which comes off as Deep Purple, but I mean this with much love. Everyone sounds like they feel at home with "End Of The Line" as this is more of a rockin' blues cut that expresses a lot of life in it and it shows. Nice use of banging piano ala Jerry Lee Lewis. "Summerdays" is a ballad of sorts that shows Mike's mature playing here that is sophisticated. Not a great number, but guitar wise, it's good. It's a good thing that I gave this record a second chance because in my mind when I first listened to this I bashed it to bits. Perhaps, I was not in a right frame of mind cause I just got off of a thrash fix. Also, I was expecting too much of this to be a carbon copy of the old days thanks to what I was reading. After clearing my head and giving it another shot, it's ok. I wouldn't call it great, but good. You can tell that what is showcased here reflects their age as they are all getting older. There are moments where this thing does rock, but also slows down a lot. Do not expect a completely blown out retro record cause you will be disappointed. No return to glam moments will be

allowed here. This is just a more mature record, that's all. The energy levels will come and go here and if you are a fan of the man's music you will notice it. May a Red Bull or two should have been in the studio for everyone just for that extra jolt. Free of the Shrapnel Label. This album may be hard to get as it's on a new German label called Inakustik. In the end, this is good. www.in-akustik.com | www.michaelschenkerhimself.com