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Music for the

October 22, 2007

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### Man: *Diamonds and Coal*

It's been six years since we've last seen an album from UK progressive popsters Man, but here they are again, after numerous line-up changes (Micky Jones and Deke Leonard have since departed for various reasons) with their brand new release *Diamonds and Coal*. Bassist/vocalist Martin Ace is the only original member left at this point, and he is joined by a few folks who have been with Man for a few years now, those being drummer Bob Richards (who replaced former Gentle Giant sticksman John Weathers a decade or so ago), guitarist/vocalist George Jones, keyboard player Gareth Thorrington, and new guitarist/vocalist Josh Ace. While the music here on *Diamonds and Coal* approaches prog rock on occasion, more often than not what you get is a poppy/bluesy/hard rock mix, with tight instrumentation and some memorable melodies.



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The opening title track is a lengthy piece with some catchy harmonies and bouts of interesting musical passages. The tune "All Alone" however is where things start to heat up a bit, this one a heavy prog number with some crunchy guitar riffs, squealing solos, and some hefty organ & synth layering from Thorrington. "Freedom Fries" is a somewhat silly pop ditty with lead vocals from Martin that sound a bit off at times, and "Twisting the Knife" sounds like a strange cross between early Elvis Costello and Bruce Springsteen. The somber "Man of Misery" is a real treat, with Josh's emotional vocals leading the charge over lilting guitar chords, lush keyboards, and nimble drum work, easily the most prog rock sounding number on the CD. Both "Welsh Girl" and "Thank God It's Not Miss Kathy" are lighthearted, fairly uninspiring pop that sees Man almost trying to sound like Dire Straights or even The Band. Not bad, but somewhat bland. Hard rockability rears its head on "Teddy Boys Picnic", and "When You've Got Someone to Hold" is the album closer and another long number, with some breezy melodies and catchy guitar lines. The vocals of Martin are perhaps a bit too crooning here, but he's guilty of that throughout most of this CD.

Overall, *Diamonds and Coal* is not a bad CD, but there's just not enough to get really excited about here other than a few cuts. For a veteran band who have been around in some shape or form since the 1970's, you would have thought that six years away from the business and with some fresh faces that they would be a little invigorated here, but instead they just sound like they are going through the motions. If they can work off the positives here we might be in store for a winner next time around.

### Track Listing

1. Diamonds and Coal
2. All Alone
3. Freedom Fries
4. Twistin' The Knife
5. Man of Misery
6. Welsh Girl
7. Thank God It's Not Miss Kathy
8. Teddy Boys Picnic
9. When You've Got Someone to Hold

Added: October 9th 2007

Reviewer: Pete Pardo

Score: ★★☆☆

Related Link: [Man Website](#)

Hits: 74

Language: english

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