

with various guitar styles here. This really shows another dimension to the multi faceted musician on display here, confirming that he is not a one trick pony.

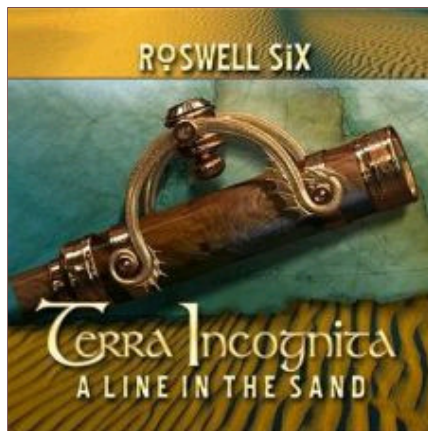
5 has an ethereal / ambient sounding approach for the most part being keyboard driven, which again shows another side to Rodrigo. As ever the electric guitar work steals the show.

So all in all what we have here is a mighty fine album from Mr Rodrigo San Martin, which if you follow this [LINK](#), which makes the album available as a free, yes free, download with the bonus tracks. I mean how good is that? This is a person who is very confident in what he does having great self belief too. I certainly can't wait to hear his future works and pending releases. My friends please take the time to enjoy what has been offered here, you will be rewarded.

Conclusion: 8 out of 10

JOHN O'BOYLE

Roswell Six – Terra Incognita: A Line In The Sand



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|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| Country of Origin: | USA |
| Format: | CD |
| Record Label: | ProgRock Records |
| Catalogue #: | PRR721 |
| Year of Release: | 2010 |
| Time: | 65:22 |
| Info: | Roswell Six |
| Samples: | Click here |

Tracklist: *Barricade* (8:24), *Whirlwind* (5:01), *The Crown* (5:21), *Loyalty* (6:15), *My Father's Son* (6:09), *When God Smiled On Us* (6:01), *Need* (6:06), *Spiral* (6:45), *Battleground* (6:10), *Victory* (9:06)

Although the 2009 debut *Terra Incognita: Beyond The Horizon* was highly recommended by our own Jim Corcoran, my introduction to **Roswell Six** was restricted to the sampler track *Here Be Monsters* included on the *Mały Leksykon Wielkich Zespołów 15th Anniversary Album*. It was enough however to convince me that this was a project that warranted further investigation so when the follow-up release appeared I was eager to offer my review services. Before I talk about the music on this particular release though, a little background information is in order.

The aforementioned debut album *Beyond The Horizon* was released as a companion to a fantasy novel entitled *The Edge of the World* by Kevin J. Anderson, the first in his 'Terra Incognita' trilogy. The second book *The Map of All Things* has recently been published and likewise so has this second album *A Line In The Sand* which features part of the story that didn't appear in the novel. Confused? Don't worry you're not alone! As with the first album, Anderson together with his wife and fellow author Rebecca Moesta has written the lyrics to the songs. That's where the similarities between the two releases end however. Whereas Rocket Scientists keyboardist Erik Norlander handled the music last time around on this occasion Frameshift multi-instrumentalist Henning Pauly is responsible for the music, production and all instruments.

In keeping with the story which focuses on destruction and war, the music is darker when compared with its predecessor being less prog and more metal with a heavy and relentless tone. Similar to Arjen Lucassen's **Ayreon** albums (Lucassen coincidentally performs backing vocals on one track) Pauly is joined by a succession of guest vocalists who often portray a character from the story. The individual performances throughout are singularly excellent. Steve Walsh's histrionic assault during the sledge hammer opener *Barricade*, *My Father's Son* and the bombastic *Spiral* sound's more like **Ozzy Osbourne** than the Kansas singer we know so well and you can almost see the veins standing out on his neck. In contrast Michael Sadler's restrained but commanding delivery during the obligatory ballad *Loyalty* (sounding not unlike **Oliver Philipps** of Everon fame) has just the right air of fragility to portray his characters' anguish. But then Sadler's despair might just be genuine given such uninspired lines as "A

man should never surrender but I surrender to you" to sing.

There are also first rate performances from less familiar names like Nick Storr who reminded me a little of **Geddy Lee** without the high-pitched whine during the moody *Whirlwind*, Charlie Dominici and Sass Jordan especially. The Canadian singer storms her way through two songs *The Crown* and the power ballad *Need* giving a raunchy performance that I can best describe as **Tina Turner** on steroids. During the fast and frantic *The Crown* in particular she literally chews up the words and spits them out, as well she might. The legendary Janis Ian had a hand in writing the lyrics to both songs and it has to be said that I found it hard to believe that it took three people to come up with such short and repetitive lines. That being said *Need* does at least feature some bittersweet wordplay during the chorus where the line "I need you" becomes "I need you to go". Storr for his part mostly avoids the heavy metal posturing and is memorably joined by Alex Froese for some engaging and well thought out counterpoint harmonies during probably the album's most original song *When God Smiled On Us*.

If I've been a little unkind to the lyrics thus far it's because they are by far the albums weakest element with the concluding and simplistic *Victory* being a prime example. Trailing not far behind is Pauly's tuneless and hookless compositions. He is without doubt a superb musician, arranger and producer as admirably demonstrated during the powerful instrumental *Battleground* where fast and impressive guitar soling is underpinned by crunching riffs and bombastic keys. Unfortunately his gifts in these areas are not matched by his abilities to come up with melodies that are even remotely memorable. As such for me *A Line In The Sand* is ultimately a case of style over substance.

Conclusion: 6 out of 10

GEOFF FEAKES

Erik Norlander – The Galactic Collective



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|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| Country of Origin: | USA |
| Format: | CD |
| Record Label: | The Tank |
| Catalogue #: | TTMD-1054 |
| Year of Release: | 2010 |
| Time: | 70:02 |
| Info: | Erik Norlander |
| Samples: | Click here |

Tracklist: *Arrival (1:47)*, *Neurosauro (5:00)*, *Fanfare For Absent Friends (6:08)*, *Sky Full Of Stars (10:00)*, *Astrology Prelude (5:38)*, *Trantor Station (6:27)*, *After The Revolution (12:16)*, *Garden Of The Moon (5:18)*, *Dreamcurrents (5:38)*, *The Dark Water (20:42)*

My familiarity with the music of **Erik Norlander** is admittedly limited to what I have heard on the Asia featuring John Payne single *Military Man*, and the work Norlander did on the excellent debut release from Roswell Six. So his new CD *The Galactic Collective* served as sort of a crash course sampler, as I listened to it for this review.

Norlander is perhaps best known as the keyboardist for American prog act Rocket Scientists, but is also a member of the aforementioned Asia featuring John Payne. He also serves as the producer, keyboardist, and leading songwriter for prog rock high priestess and his spouse Lana Lane. Count in the number of contributions to recordings he has made and indeed, Norlander has appeared on over twenty-five albums since 1993.

What we have here is a collection of ten newly recorded tracks coming from various phases of Norlander's career. On the CD, Norlander is joined by Mark Matthews on bass, Nick LePar on drums and Freddy DeMarco on guitars. Additional guest musicians on a few various tracks include John Payne (Asia featuring John Payne, GPS, CCCP and others) on guitar and choral vocals, Lana Lane on choral vocals, Mitch Perry (Asia featuring John Payne) on guitar, Mark McCrite (Asia) on guitar, and Ron Redfield on guitar.

The style of music on the seventy-nine minute CD is instrumental symphonic prog. Perhaps the most obvious point of