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Google Ads**Interviews: Roswell Six returns with part 2 of the Terra Incognita saga**Posted on Sunday, June 13 2010 @ 09:35:02 CDT by **Pete Pardo**

Acclaimed husband & wife sci-fi/fantasy author team Kevin J. Anderson and Rebecca Moesta teamed up with ProgRock Records' Shawn Gordon and a host of popular prog & hard rock musicians and vocalists for 2009's *Terra Incognita-Beyond the Horizon*



under the guise of **Roswell Six**. Well, one year later, Anderson, Moesta, Gordon, and a different crew of characters are back with the next installation, titled *Terra Incognita-Lines in the Sand*. Sea of Tranquility Publisher Pete Pardo caught up with **Kevin J. Anderson** and **Shawn Gordon** to talk about the history behind this project, the line-up, the changes in style between the first and second release, and future plans for the Roswell Six.

SoT: Take us back to 2009, and talk a little bit about how Kevin J. Anderson & Rebecca Moesta and Prog Rock Records put their ideas together to come up the first Roswell Six installment, *Terra Incognita: Beyond the Horizon*?

KJA: From the beginning this was a unique project and the fact that we came from different parts of the creative landscape seemed to draw us together. My writing has always been inspired by music -- Kansas, Rush, Styx, Dream Theater, Pink Floyd, etc. And I realized, upon absorbing the lyrics, that many of those bands were inspired by SF in turn. I've long had the idea to do a synergistic project, novel and CD, created at the same time. As I got to know Shawn Gordon of ProgRock Records, we discussed the idea and decided "Terra Incognita" was exactly the right project. While I was writing the novel, we were also writing lyrics for the songs, listening to demos of the music, talking with some of the performers. Often, the lyrics and songs that were meant to highlight part of the novel ended up sparking new ideas, which I would then go back and add to the manuscript. It really is a synergistic project, the book and the CD.

SG: This is sort of a

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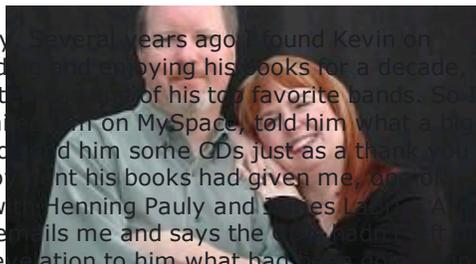
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testament to the fanboy. Several years ago, I found Kevin on MySpace, I'd been reading and enjoying his books for a decade and I saw Dream Theater as one of his top favorite bands. So I took a chance and emailed him on MySpace, told him what a big fan I was and offered to send him some CDs just as a thank you for all the hours of enjoyment his books had given me, one of these was Frameshift with Henning Pauly and James Igo. A couple weeks later he emailed me and says the CD was a great player, it was a total revelation to him what had been going on in the prog that he was unaware of. It was shortly after that he broached the concept of the book and CD, and I just jumped on it. It was basically 2 years to the day from that conversation that we had our first CD release party with most of the people who had been on the album, and here we are a year later with our 2nd CD and book.



SoT: Yes, it's now mid 2010, and part 2 in the saga, A Line in the Sand, is upon us, yet there are some changes this time around. While Erik Norlander was somewhat of the 'master of ceremonies' on the first part, his position has been taken this time around by Frameshift's Henning Pauly. Can you talk a little bit about the creation of this new CD, and how the line-up was chosen for it?



SG: Henning was someone we talked about for the first album as part of a group of composers we were thinking about. As you know, ultimately Erik ended up doing a great job on the first album. A lot of the original cast was very tied up this time around and we had a hard deadline to deal with, and we wanted a heavier sound this time, so Henning seemed a logical choice. Kevin and I discussed this a lot at ComiCon last year (July 2009) and Kevin came up with the profile for the song "Spiral" and we asked Henning to demo it. We were both

blown away by what he came back with and the version on the album is only slightly changed from that original demo, so we were very comfortable with having him do all the music. This changed the dynamic a bit because Henning is such a virtuoso multi-instrumentalist, it didn't make a lot of sense to have a bunch of other musicians involved. Henning and I have worked together since I started the label, he was one of the very first people I signed and we've done a lot of projects together. I've spent countless hours in the studio with him and I know how good he is and I knew what I'd get out of him. He and I can have very heated arguments and drop it all 2 minutes later and Henning will always be straight with me and tell me what's on his mind, so I knew that no matter what, we'd be able to hammer through this and be happy with the results. You can't say that about everyone, these big projects are stressful, there are a LOT of balls to keep in the air, so you need to make sure you can get through it and still be friends and able to work with each other at the end of it.

KJA: This was always going to be an "Alan Parsons"-style project, and we put together the musicians, composers, and vocalists that best fit the CD and story. Many of them were very enthusiastic about the project and bent their schedules to work on it. The second CD is a whole different part of the story, with a new set of characters, so it needed a different crew.

SoT: A Line in the Sand is definitely a bit heavier and more rock/metal oriented in spots. Would you say that is due to the presence of such artists as Pauly, Steve Walsh, Charlie Dominici, Arjen Lucassen, and Sass Jordan? Or was it a conscious decision to go for a more aggressive sound?

SG: The intention was to be heavier and more aggressive because

of the subject matter of the book, which was a big reason for having Henning do it this time, so we needed to find the voices that made sense for the characters. This stuff tends to evolve in a rather organic fashion due to the nature of things, like Arjen and Charlie were fairly far down the line in the recording process, like a couple weeks before we finished everything.

SoT: Speaking of Sass Jordan, she's more of a mainstream artist-how did she get involved in the project?

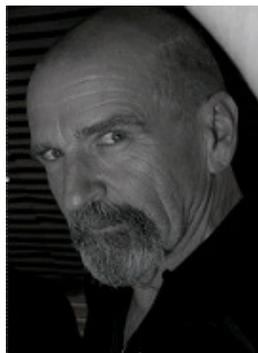
SG: Henning has been a huge fan of hers as long as I've known him and has always wanted to do something with her. With the first album we had Lana Lane picked for female vocals from day one so we never had to consider another singer, this time we had Janis Ian set from before we even started the music, but when the music itself was done, Janis pointed out that her style of singing wasn't really the 'belt it out' kind of voice we needed for an assertive Queen character, so suddenly we ran through a LOT of names, Henning brought up Sass, so



I gave it a shot contacting her and got a positive response and she gave us a wonderful and powerful performance. I think her regular fan base will likely be very surprised when they find out she's involved in this project, but I've also been surprised how many prog fans were familiar with her. She's actually very well known, especially in Canada and has sold many millions of albums.

SoT: Michael Sadler is a holdover from the first album, and once again delivers a great performance. How important was it to have at least one of the vocalists from the original album appear here as well.

SG: This is something we discussed a lot internally, as all the characters were different from the first album, did we want to have all new vocalists for the characters, the fact that several of the vocalists were in reality too busy to make time this time around with touring and recording schedules, that kind of helped make our decision to go with new characters. Even Sadler was tough timing and almost last minute. He wanted to do it early on, but he also was crazy busy, and if there was one thing universally liked about the first album, it was Michael's performance, and we're all just such huge fans of his voice, we really wanted to have him on it from that perspective. We were a bit concerned if this was going to be confusing to the public as they have a different perspective on it than we do, which is from the story line and how best to present it.



KJA: Michael's performance on "Letters in a Bottle" on the first CD is absolutely jaw-dropping (and quite literally has brought people to tears when they listen to it - I've seen it myself). I really wanted him back, specifically talked with him about the lyrics for "Loyalty" way back during our release party for the first CD, so we wrote that song specifically for his voice. He really had to stretch to fit it into his schedule. But Nick Storr from The Third Ending (another band I enjoy very much) did an

extremely creditable job on several of the other tracks.

SG: Yea, I wanted to mention Nick. We've got him and Michael as soldiers and their voices aren't terribly dissimilar, mostly so it isn't a jarring change and allows them to be part of the group in the

songs they do together.

SoT: Can you talk a little bit about the storyline this time around, which coincides with the novel *The Map of All Things*?

KJA: "Terra Incognita" is a big epic about two continents and two religions at war, as well as a group of sailing ships exploring the world in a desperate search for allies, encountering sea serpents, mysterious islands, etc. The first CD focused on the sailing ships and sea monsters and a tragic romance. The second CD is focused on the bloody crusades, the war between Tierra and Uraba (hence the darker, harder sound). This time, there's a storyline on the CD that is NOT in the novel, so to get the whole tale, you need to experience both the music and the prose.

SoT: Though Roswell Six is merely a studio project at this juncture, have you given any thought to perhaps one day, when the saga is complete, doing a few live shows to commemorate the whole thing?

SG: We've talked about this for over a year, there was a thought to play at ComiCon or DragonCon last year. I was at ComiCon with Kevin last year and Chris Brown went with Kevin to DragonCon a few months later. Chris brought his guitar and was playing some acoustic versions of songs and Chris is loving the scifi/fantasy con circuit right now, so he's doing a bit of that. With everyone's schedules though, it's just not really realistic to put a full band together, or cost effective.

SoT: The production on *A Line in the Sand* is very crisp and in your face, thanks to a great job by Henning Pauly. How happy is everyone with the way the CD came out?

SG: We love it, everything is at a good balanced level, as you say, crisp and up front. I can almost always find a nit to pick with a mix, but this one is pretty flawless. Of course now that I've said that, people will try to find a nit to pick!

KJA: What Shawn meant to say is, It's great! For me, this music is integral to the Terra Incognita story, which I've been living very intensely with for the past three years. All the tracks are very vivid in my mind, and it's not only a perfect soundtrack for the series, but a damned fine prog rock epic in its own right.

SG: Thanks Kevin, I really do appreciate how much better you are at words than I am, seriously, I'm not joking !

SoT: Kansas fans should get a real kick out of Steve Walsh being involved in the album-how excited were you to get him on board?

SG: This is actually kind of funny. This whole series of books was originally inspired by the cover of the Kansas album "Point of Know Return". We tried very hard to get Steve on the first album, but he simply didn't have time and had pretty much retired from recording new material. So that was how we ended up getting John Payne, who did a fantastic job. Ironically when this new album came up, it was John that didn't have time with all his touring and album obligations, so I almost literally begged Steve to get involved, but ultimately I think it was the first demo track "Spiral" that was one of his that convinced him this was something he'd be interested in doing.



What was really fantastic about Steve on this is he didn't just treat it like a paycheck, he literally could have done these songs in a

couple days, but he really spent a lot of time with them, weeks, really getting in to creating a mood and sound. The first time I got the roughs for Barricade, it was about 6am and I had just woken up and there it was in my email. The intro just gave me chills, all we had in the lyrics was a spoken "a line in the sand" before it kicks in, and Steve came up with all this other really cool vocal stuff. The guy is just crazy creative, I wish he'd do more albums.

SoT: It's probably too early to start talking about it, but what are the plans, if any, for future installments of the Roswell Six?

SG: It's hard to say right now, we didn't decide till a month or so after the first one came out to do the second one. We have to decide by the end of summer to hit all the deadlines, so we'll take a couple months here to gauge reaction, sales, and just recover from the current one and then decide for sure. The desire is there to complete the trilogy for sure.

Pete Pardo

Photos courtesy of the Roswell Six MySpace Page

(Click here to read our reviews of Terra Incognita-Lines in the Sand)

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