



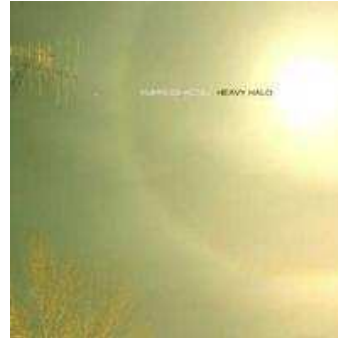
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Empress Hotel

Heavy Halo

Review by G. W. Hill

Probably the best (or at least simplest) reference here would be a comparison to the progressive rock side of Radiohead. Mind you, that's not entirely accurate and surely doesn't hit the full range of sounds one will find on this set. Still, it gets things in the ballpark and this is a strong set of music.



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Track by Track Review

Mach Bach

This is a bouncy number with a lot of cool layers of sound. It's proggy in a modern sense, but also fun and playful. I can hear Radiohead in this, but also Porcupine Tree and even Jellyfish.

Heavy Halo

Retro sounding soulful keyboard elements open this. Then they move it out into something closer to the opening track. That said, though, it's slower and less playful.

Empress Hotel

More guitar oriented and atmospheric, this is tasty music that's a bit different from the first couple cuts. It still fits well into modern progressive rock. This is great music.

Baby Octopus

Radiohead is also a valid reference here. This is like power pop meets progressive rock. It's multilayered and quite cool.

Holly

Parts of this are less lushly arranged than some of the other music. The power pop concepts are all over this.

Last Picture Show

There's a bit more of an alternative rock vibe here. That said, there's a cool, bouncy power pop kind of sound mid-track. This is a cool one that still manages to preserve the consistency of the sound while moving into new territory.

Bells Ring

As this starts it feels like an old time rock and roll Christmas sound. The music works out from there into something more like alternative rock. It's bouncy and nicely quirky. There is some great bass work on this thing.

Auld Lang Something

This brings back that alternative rock meets power pop and progressive rock sound. The layers of sound and the bouncy rhythmic structure work together to create one of the strongest tunes of the whole set. The vocal arrangement is beyond the norm, too. There is a smoking hot guitar solo later in the number, too.

Drugs

There's a cool bit of guitar sound that opens (and returns mid-track for a short reprise) this. The cut features a catchy vocal line and has an almost Radiohead meets Jane's Addiction kind of sound. There's a tasty little keyboard laced instrumental section mid-track and references to the Cure are also valid on this piece.

Search Lights

A slower tune, there's a cool retro, soulful groove to this thing. It's not a lot of tasty elements. It gets a bit of a symphonic



...you get a lot of easy elements. It gets a bit of a symphonic progressive rock slant to it after a time with powerful and lush layers of sound added to the mix. This one is another highlight of the set for certain. There is almost a Pink Floyd vibe to this in some ways. I love how melodic guitar solos over the top of a lot of the piece. That Pink Floyd element gets even more spotlight later as a more electrified guitar solos much like something David Gilmour might play.

Lonely Soul

There's almost a techno or club element to this cut. Keyboards are all over this thing. There are some seriously soulful vocals on this thing. It's a different type of tune, but it also seems to fit with everything else here.



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