

tracks, which are older and were originally intended to be CD extras. Musically, there is continuity between the tracks and they are joined together by sound design, giving the album a unified mood and creating a world apart - a world you can stray into and perhaps get lost in for a while."

There are several highlights throughout the album that John's loves, depending on the listener's tastes and preferences. 'Dawnsong' has a dreamy mood reminiscent of Pink Floyd that appeals to many listeners. "It's quite an epic song from its intimate opening to the elaborate brass arrangement at the end, which was influenced by minimalist music," he explains. Three songs have string arrangements that swell to an impressive wall of sound are 'Riptide', 'Tumbleweed Days', and its 'Reprise'. "If you prefer something heavier, you're probably going to like Riptide and Birdman of Bogno; if an intimate acoustic atmosphere is more your thing, the bouncy 'Open Page (Journey to Enceladus)' or the darker closing tracks might be more to your taste. But it's really designed to be listened to all the way through as an album," he encourages.

The live shows are also going very well, and it's in live performances that the wow factor comes into play. So far the guys have only performed in Finland. "We're hoping to do dates in the other Nordic counties in 2017 and possibly to organise a short tour of the UK in 2018. A priority has to be performing with other bands, because every time we do that we win people over," he champions. The festival circuit is a priority next year and 'The Fold's' release came too late for that in the spring. "Hopefully we'll be well established enough next year to reach new audiences also internationally. There's a sense of us being an unknown gem at the moment, a cherished secret, but I'm hoping that will change as we get more coverage in the international music press. For some reason unknown to me (possibly the collaboration with Kimi Kärki and the reputation of our label), we're getting a lot of attention from the hard rock and metal community, even though I'd never categorise my music in that way. It's pretty uncategorisable, and is more like indie-influenced or proggy but song-based folkier rock than any existing category you can think of. Although that description does it a disservice too," he smiles.

'The Fold' was recorded at VR studio in Turku, Finland, in the spring of 2016. Because the band were so ambitious, recording orchestral parts, elaborate harmonies and sound design as well as the core band, the project overran its schedule by quite a margin, and ended up taking twenty six days of studio time. Part of that was because of accidents that happened along the way. Richardson was determined not to compromise in his artistic goals and kept going until it was done. "Some of the synth and sound design parts were recorded on my laptop at home using Logic Pro X, which saved quite a bit of time and expense," he adds. John also produced the album, although the mixing engineer Jussi Vuola offered his valuable expertise during the recording process. "In some ways I'd like to work with an experienced producer on the next album and in that way learn some new tricks," he says with satisfaction.

John is already three tracks into recording the next album and he has a few ideas for additional songs. "It's quite encouraging to observe that the new songs are going down very well at gigs, perhaps going even deeper into moods explored on the Fold, as well as new places. I'm hoping to record that album next summer with a possible release in winter 2018 or spring 2019. Plenty of gigs and perhaps some touring abroad. Because I'm from the UK originally, I'd definitely like to reach audiences there," concludes John, bringing an end to our conversation.

Check John Richardson out at [www.slowfloe.com](http://www.slowfloe.com)  
[www.facebook.com/songwriterJohnRichardson](https://www.facebook.com/songwriterJohnRichardson)  
[www.svartrecords.com](http://www.svartrecords.com)



Currently stirring up press interest from the likes of Prog magazine and various internet zines and radio platforms we find rising up to the light progressive rockers **VICTIM OF ILLUSION** from Torino, Italy, who have an amazing new eight track CD out now called 'Invisible Light' which runs in at just over fifty minutes long and is the band's third release. If you like modern

melodic progressive rock such as Porcupine Tree/Steven Wilson, then you will love this album as you can clearly hear the inspirations; however the album also asks the listener to keep an open mind as it explores different styles of compositions. Victim Of Illusion are: Peter Hamer - guitars/programming, Paolo Gurlino - vocals, Luca Imerito - bass guitar and Michele 'Mike' Santoleri on drums.

Guitarist Peter Hamer has always been attracted by music of every kind. He dreamed of his first stereo amplifier and Hamer spent two years saving money to buy his first electric guitar. "When I was twelve I played in the school's big band and started 'working' with other musicians, this is where I laid the first brick of my music wall," he tells me. "At some point I discovered the beautiful 70's rock bands and I spent months practicing guitar, consuming the Jimi Hendrix, Led Zeppelin, Deep Purple and Van Halen's cassette albums." Peter played in a lot of bands and surfed between rock, ambient/experimental, math/post rock, metal, funk and progressive.

When bass player Luca Imerito was thirteen his uncle gave him an acoustic guitar and taught him the first chords. Years later, at age of nineteen, some friends were looking for a bassist for their band. "From that moment on, the bass became my instrument. Many have been the bands I've played so far from heavy metal to rock, post rock, pop, progressive rock and so on," says Luca.

Music has always been a fundamental part of singer Paolo Gurlino's life. At the age of fourteen he was so involved that he decided to propose for himself for a



local radio as a conductor of a metal program. "At first they looked at me with suspicion, and then they decided to give me two hours of program! I left home with the bus and a bag full of vinyls and cassettes....amazing," he smiles. This was the time when Paolo realized that

music was a real passion. "The next step was to enter in a band as a singer at the age of fifteen and over time I collaborated with several rock, prog, crossover, studio and live bands."

Back in the nineties, Hamer was attracted to bands like Genesis, Yes, Rush and Living Colour. However, his big inspiration comes from Porcupine Tree, Steven Wilson and all the music labeled as modern progressive/metal rock. "The inspiration is a little more 'open' to adjoining genres like indie rock or melodic rock," he explains to me. Peter tried to build a more 'actual' sound set, paying attention on each single source. "A couple of songs come from the very first compositions, so I did a strong rearrangement in order to make it ready to play in the same album."

Everyday Luca listens to a lot of different kind of music. "I think it is very important for a musician. I can start a day listening to PJ Harvey and end with Slipknot, with a world in between. It is a wave that moves following my needs," he says. "My favourite artists, just to name someone, are Tool, PJ Harvey, Ben Harper, Radiohead, Sigur Ros, Faith No More, Massive Attack, Porcupine Tree." Of course Porcupine Tree and Steven Wilson are the contact point and the primary source of inspiration for Victim Of Illusion as Peter has advised, but, obviously, VOI try to put their personal imprint into their creative music.

Paolo grew up enjoy bands like Iron Maiden, Black Sabbath, Metallica, Judas Priest, Queensryche. He then got into more contaminated music, and opened his mind to different genres, such as electronic, psychedelic rock, jazz, progressive, trip hop and alternative metal. "I like new prog bands like Porcupine Tree, Steven Wilson, Riverside, Opeth, Pain of Salvation, but also bands like Goldfrapp, Radiohead, Portishead and Massive Attack. 'Invisible Light' is an album that represents an evolution for Victim Of Illusion and I'm very happy about that, because I think it's very important to explore new sounds and feelings in our music," he points out.

In their down time outside of music Peter tends to enjoy sports and mountain walking. "I'm a fan of the DIY body training, so I do workouts three times a week, this is a good way to give vent to the daily stress and at the same time to free my mind and strengthen dorsal and abdominal muscles (this is a must if you spend hours in a studio sitting at your desk or playing guitar in not so healthy positions)," he explains to me. Hamer also enjoys reading books and he is passionate about science and astronomy. "I'm also a movies eater," he smiles. Luca is a graphic designer and he works in a communication

agency between designers and video makers. "I like movies and I like swim, it is a way to relax myself," he says. Paolo enjoys travelling with his family and he loves the sea. "I like cinema and I follow football. I play tennis sometimes. My job is wall painter."

Victim Of Illusion were formed in Torino, Italy in 2010. After some years with an instrumental band, Hamer decided to start a new project from scratch and he then searched for a singer. He met Paolo and the lads started to write some songs at Peter's studio. "The first period was incredible: we wrote a lot of material (and some of that is still in my hard drive...) so we wanted to publish an EP really soon and after some months I called my friend Luca to join us as bassist," he explains.

The band has released three albums including 'Invisible Light' and they are: 'What senses blow away' (EP) in 2011 and 'Oxideyes' in 2014. Victim Of Illusion's music is for sure in the modern progressive rock area, but the guys have some flavours from the ambient genre and a bit of metal and pop. "Our songs don't necessary follow a rigid scheme because the story we tell is more important," he says. "You could find long instrumental intros (almost cinematic), a lot of time signature changes and sounds of every kind. Anyway, our gold rule is: melody rules, always."

With this last work, the band believes that they have reached a level of 'maturity'. Starting with the message behind, their listeners already know that VOI often speak about the illusion that surrounds them every day. "The 'fake' is becoming more important than the 'real' and we're involved every day in tons of useless inputs," says Hamer. The 'invisible light' is the boundary between a real dream and an illusion. "We want back our real dreams, replacing the illusion that someone implanted us in order to hide our real identity." Musically speaking, the guys worked really hard on each step of the production. "I think we found a good balance between the strongest of prog/metal riffs and the sweetness of soft sounds and arpeggios. I think that in this album you can find a sort of rainbow of sounds," says Peter.

From a personal point of view Peter likes the wide flavour's palette. "A lot of friends and/or fans are telling us that this is becoming their favourite in cars album. They love to listen to it while travelling, probably they can ideally travel between emotions other than places, probably they can find a new reason to travel," he enthuses. One of the tunes he personally adores is 'A new beginning', the albums opening tune. The prog vibe flows through the song's structure and you can find the pure Victim Of Illusion's soul. "We love to mix odd and even time signatures in our songs and we put a lot of efforts in trying to make every song 'turn round' even in extreme conditions," he adds.

Victim Of Illusion are mostly a studio band, so they focus their activity in writing and recording new songs. "We had some shows in the past year but our main goal was to build our repertoire first," he tells me. At the moment the band are involved in massive marketing activity (radios, magazines, blogs) in order to expand their presence and gain more listeners. "Of course we're not avoiding live shows and one of the next steps will be to get in touch with a good booking agency," he says. "We're from Italy but our listeners are mostly located outside our country: U.S. and U.K. on top. We'll organize a U.K. tour to promote our last album and, if things will work in a good way, may be a U.S. tour."

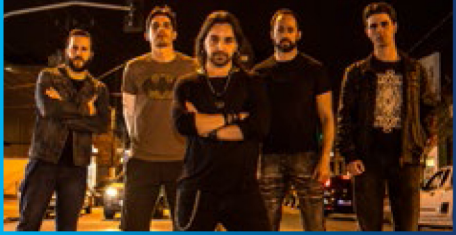
The guys put a big effort in order to produce this album with the best team and gear with Peter producing the whole album. "I followed all the recording sessions. Drums were recorded in Pescara by my 'go to' drummer: Michele 'Mike' Santoleri, vocals were recorded in my studio in Torino," he explains to me. Guitars and bass were recorded at his studio, but only the DI signal. "My mix engineer (Giampiero Ulacco from Pescara) did the reamping in his studio. After that, Giampiero mixed and mastered the whole album and the process took three months in total."

Next up the band plan live shows, interviews and more presence on YouTube, to start. "We'll publish lyrics videos of a couple of songs from the last album and we'll organize some live events on YouTube.

We had some requests about t-shirts and merchandising in general, so probably we'll set up an online store," he says. "We've been contacted by some web radios and podcasts, asking us for a live interview. We're more than happy to join the fellow hosts and, as always, we'll share the interviews in our Twitter and Facebook channels," concludes Peter bringing an end to our conversation. Make sure you check the new album out, and bring the illusion out of the darkness.

Check Victim Of Illusion out at <http://victimofillusion.wixsite.com/victimofillusion>  
[www.facebook.com/VictimOfIllusion](https://www.facebook.com/VictimOfIllusion)  
<http://twitter.com/VictimOfIllusio>

## FREAKY JELLY



From Brazil we find **FREAKY JELLY**, a melodic progressive metal quintet who have a new nine track CD out now called 'Reverse' out now through Rockshots Records which runs in at just over an hour long and is the band's debut album. Freaky Jelly are: Ricardo De Stefano - vocals, André Faustino - guitar, Rafael de Paula - bass, Julio Vince - keyboards and drummer Mauricio Gross.

Each member of Freaky Jelly has diverse experiences that have led them all into the music world. Each band member had a starting point, but the point in common is always the same, that is to see their idols and someday be like them. "Usually it happens in the adolescence where each one had contact with its respective instrument and with the music proper. From that moment on, we are deeply involved in this fantastic and fascinating world of music. We live and breathe music every day," explains guitarist André Faustino.

The new album 'Reverse' talks about the relationships of life, about everyday life and how it all influences people's lives. "It is this complexity of moments that exist in the path of each person that has impelled us to write the album. Each song expresses our vision about some point in life," he expresses. The last four tracks of the album are part of a single song called 'Behind the Memories', which seeks to portray the struggle of an individual against their own uncertainties until the moment of their freedom of spirit and body.

The inspiration for 'Reverse' is well diversified. Each member of the band has an influence and a specific relationship with music. But the common point was to unite each of these influences and place them on the album. The guys are inspired by jazz, Brazilian music, hard rock and progressive rock from the seventies. "In terms of the band, our inspiration goes from Yes, Rush to bands like Toto and going to bands like Tears for Fears. The inspiration for the album's songs is diverse. As we said before, we think of each song as being an exclusive song, giving a specific texture and intention to each of them and that when listening to the disc they have a very strong connection," says Faustino.

Freaky Jelly is all about spontaneity and surprises and the guys like how their songs always have something unexpected coming its way. "That's certainly related with the band's members, who have different musical backgrounds, but remain open-minded and



The first three chords of the song 'Highest Ground', right at the beginning of the album are a favourite of Faustino's, along with the introduction of bass of the track 'Saint's and Sinner's' and the part of piano of that same music.

The guys started gigging to feel the band on stage and feel the songs live. "We're preparing a good live gig to bring to our audience. Our will is to do the whole album live and some covers too," he tells me. "What we could see alive is that our songs don't lose the energy alive, they gain more energy. We've been performing a few times until now and we hope the live shows will keep on coming. We wish one day we could do an US and/or European tour. To have a concert for fans overseas, this certainly defines fulfillment."

'Reverse' was recorded at GR studio in São Paulo and the band composed the music and the process took them about two years to complete with Daniel de Sá producing

and recording the album. The band works one song at a time, in order to create a specific environment for each song. "I think that was an important part of the album," he adds.

Freaky Jelly plays with the unexpected, so you'll have to wait and see happens with the band. "A lot of work, and work again! But, we have plans to do something special for the end of this year. Who knows? Only ideas for now," concludes André, bringing an end to our conversation.

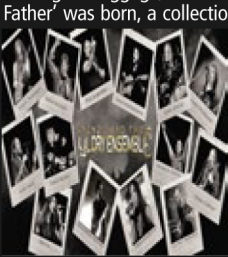
Check them out at [www.facebook.com/freakyjelly](https://www.facebook.com/freakyjelly)



From Italy we find **ENZO AND THE GLORY ENSEMBLE**, a superb progressive Gospel based artist who has a sensational new thirteen track CD out now called 'In The Name Of The Son' out now through Rockshots Records which runs in at just under seventy minutes long and is the bands second album. The band are based around composer and guitarist Enzo Donnarumma and the album requires attention and to be listened to right the way through.

Joining Enzo on the album is a mammoth cast of established artists including Marty Friedman - guitars, Ralf Scheepers - vocals, Kobi Farhi - vocals, Mark Zonder - drums, Gary Wehrkamp - vocals, Brian Ashland - vocals, Nicholas Leptos - vocals, Amulyñ - vocals, Derek Corzine - guitars, Tina Gagliotta - vocals, David Brown - vocals, Alessandro Battini - keyboards, Giacomo Manfredi - bass and singer Weza Moza Gospel Choir.

For composer Enzo Donnarumma everything began one day when he was listening to a song that touched his heart and changed his life. "You understand you want to learn how to do it, learn how to write to change others, too," he enthuses. In that state of mind, at seven years old he started piano and guitar studios, graduating in conservatory and doing musical performer, composer and director of musical theater and songwriter. Two years ago, he embedded in the symphonic metal prognosis. "I tried to realize an act in which I summed up all my musical and ideological luggage, and the album 'In The Name Of The Father' was born, a collection of Bible texts composed by



a mixture of power prog, classical and theatrical symphony and Palestinian folk sounds," he explains to me. As with the new album the debut was filled with a star cast including Marty Friedman, Kobi Farhi (Orphaned Land), Ralf Scheepers (Primal Fear), Mark Zonder (Fates Warning, Warlord), Gary Wehrkamp and Brian Ashland (Shadow Gallery), Nicholas Leptos many others.

Over a superficial first analysis of 'In The Name Of The Son' what leaps out are ten biblical texts entirely unaltered, plus two unpublished texts of a social argument, in thirteen songs that fuse classical and theatrical symphony with power prog and trips in the Israeli, African and Gospel sound. At a more careful analysis, all these elements that are put together could be less crazy and more consistent. "First, in this musical work there's not one melody (between fourteen or fifteen) that isn't reworked and hidden in at least five other songs. Who listens to it over and over again begins to discover hidden presences of melodies modified and developed in multiple points, almost like a rebus," explains Donnarumma.

But, going to the 'serious' aspect of the record, the CD has a selected Biblical text holding the most universal content, with a musical language that wants to open them up to more secular vision, compatible with all. "In keeping with other different ideas, in short, in our Christian base, we find common aspects with all," he explains. "This is only possible if we break some of the levees of our cultural boundaries, trying to grasp what all the men of every heritage could share.

Here are, then, texts sung with voices of even distant peoples, collected in three cultures: Africa, Israel and Indios. Three oppressed people representing each nation

or people oppressed by a Western presumption of 'higher thinking', mask and pretence, among other things, of economic and psychological power," he encourages.

The track 'Son', though referring to Christ, is actually the son of a peaceful encounter between the various, united by so many human factors in common. "In short, we can't afford the luxury of fighting each other. The record follows a very precise path that starts from incompatibility and ends in the dialogue. Will any antichristian metalhead succeed in opening up to this prospect? I'm afraid not," he questions.

Ever since he was a kid Enzo always loved Bach, Vivaldi, Handel, Haydn, Mahler, Berlioz, Debussy, and Satie. Classical music aside, he loves Gospel, the Soul of Motown Records, American musical theater by Gershwin and Bernstein, soundtracks, Jewish folk, African, Hebrew, Greek, Celtic and Kurdish folk and finally Metal, all Metal. "The musicians who most influenced my metal direction are exactly the ones that play in my album," he says with a sense of pride.

In his down time outside of music Enzo enjoys other arts and dealing with theater and drawing. "Most of my extra musical time is devoted to theology studies, volunteering and reading of historical books," he tells me.

This formidable reunion of famous artists was born by chance and was the result of some songs that Donnarumma submitted to Gary and Brian from Shadow Gallery for a critical analysis which then became collaboration. "Their too small presence unbalanced the album by belittling the value of so many other songs with only me, so I tried to contact the artists which I have always loved since I listen to metal... finding them all on my first record. Here's Marty Friedman, Mark Zonder, Ralf Scheepers, Kobi and the others," he marvels. As the 'accessions' grew, the project's reputation increased and it became increasingly easier to convince the latter, until they became thirteen.

Today they are practically a small family. "Their only presence is already a guarantee of singularity. However I think three first elements can make us different from other bands: the importance of reaching the heart of the African-Gospel ethnic inspiration, the importance of melodic research in orchestral arias, and, with regard to the message, the importance of launching precious messages of dialogue and listening, that is the basics of peace," he expresses.

The public highlight of 'In The Name Of The Son' is surely 'Psalm 133', which synthesizes the sound style. Enzo's personal highlight is the song 'The Trial', which, on the contrary, extends and details the style of the album. "A song of over nine minutes singing the 'Passion of John' going from theatrical orchestra to death metal, crossing Jewish Folk, Gospel and power prog," he explains.

All the members of this project want to join together for a series of concerts. "However, we must be able to take advantage eventual coincidences of time and space feasible to everyone, each already engaged in their tours. We'll do our best," he encourages.

Enzo in general writes all the songs and records demos already orchestrated. After that, all the artists listen to them in the common chat and together, they improve some ideas and set up the parts. "For example: this part suits for Marty, this one for me, or here I need to intervene," he advises. "Then, each one from a different position of the world, they record their parts. I join them and we all listen again the new demos in common chat. After corrections, Gary and I are involved in production and mixing. This process takes at least a year and a half of great effort."

Certainly the project will continue for a long time and Enzo already has some ideas and songs for the next album. "Meanwhile, next Christmas we'll release a second video clip with a new awareness campaign," concludes Enzo, bringing an end to our conversation.

Check Enzo and the Glory Ensemble out at [www.facebook.com/enzoandtheglory](https://www.facebook.com/enzoandtheglory)



From A Coruña, Spain we find **MIDNIGHT SOUNDS**, a progressive rock quartet who have a new inspiring nine track CD out now called 'Chapter I' which runs in at just