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STILL GOT THE BLUES-ROCK



STACKRIDGE

The Final Bow, Bristol 2015
ANGELAIR



Marking the 500th release on the venerable archive label Angel Air, this double CD set

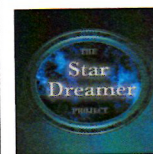
from the final performance of redoubtable and ultra-English proggers Stackridge is nothing less than an absolute cracker, doing full justice to that band's fine, if underappreciated, legacy.

Still containing original members James Warren and Andy Cresswell-Davis, the band had previously gone through a multitude of changes, not least metamorphosing into The Korgis after their original split. Under that alter ego, they scored memorable hits with If I Had You and Everybody's Got To Learn Sometime, which often featured in latter-day Stackridge sets after they resumed activity in 1999.

Not here, however, as this performance is exclusively confined to classic after classic spanning the whole Stackridge catalogue, all superbly delivered. Highlights abound, but the superlative versions of God Speed The Plough, The Last Plimsoll and Gordon Haskell's wonderfully titled No-One's More Important Than The Earthworm take some beating. With former member Mutt Slater joining for a couple of tracks, there's a special air to the evening, and the finale of Do The Stanley will leave many a moist eye among the faithful. We may not see their like again. Get this if you've missed out on what the fuss is about! **SP**

THE STAR DREAMER PROJECT

The Star Dreamer Project
INDEPENDENT



The Star Dreamer Project is the brainchild of Florida born Bob Fischer. Bob played in a number of local bands before pursuing a career in the business side of music (copyrights, royalties, marketing). At the age of 50+, he's finally released this first album which appears to be a solo effort.

The album is very much keyboard driven, with 70's Styx and Kansas being a clear template in tracks such as Epiphany and Yet Again. Several songs, including

Things Fall Apart and Yet Again, have more of a 60s feel, not distant in style from The Moody Blues during that period. The dreamy keyboard theme and the haunting melody of I Speak Of Love is probably the most interesting track here, along with the catchy Almost Home which with its fast strumming on acoustic guitar makes it sound a bit like a Billy Bragg song.

The album unfortunately sounds as if it is a collection of demo tapes that have been recorded in a garage. The sound is thin and lacks any sort of energy – just imagine the most feeble Styx song you know, and you won't be far away from what is here. It's a shame because Bob

is not completely without talent. According to his Facebook page, he's already recording a second album, so one can only hope he gets someone adequate to actually produce it. **PW**

VICTIM OF ILLUSION

Invisible Light
INDEPENDENT



Italian band Victim Of Illusion were formed in 2010 and write as a trio, hiring in a drummer for their studio and live work; they cite Porcupine Tree, Tool

and Massive Attack as influences and sing in clear English, the male vocals sometimes reminiscent of Shaun McCowan (Mr So & So). *Invisible Light* has eight guitar-riff driven songs delivered over 52 minutes, supported by synths and sequencers as required. They switch seamlessly from melodic and reflective sections incorporating acoustic-guitar and piano, to ballistic grade prog-metal with down-tuned guitars blazing. Their soundscapes also have traces of Little Atlas particularly on the guitars; A New Beginning, Before My Eyes and Hollow Man are fine ambassadors of their sound and style. **DK**

EXTENDED PLAY

THE ALL-NEW ROCK SOCIETY ROUND-UP OF EPS

Welcome to a new feature which is our reaction to a quickening pace of EPs received at RS. Our aim is to highlight the top of the stack.



Superman by **PETER DONEGAN** is a five-track Country EP of bold intent that is named after the first track. Peter's strengths are song-writing with lyrics that are believable and memorable. On Ode to a Friend, it's a more crossover sound, akin to Mumford & Sons- and all the songs have a very contemporary flavour. For his next full-length album, in this crowded genre, I would be seeking a duet with the very best Country performers in the States, whilst simultaneously seeking a more offbeat duet for the UK market for more exposure on both sides of the Atlantic. It shouldn't be difficult to arrange as these songs sell themselves and Peter will encounter a lot of goodwill in the music industry in fond memory of his late father, Lonnie.

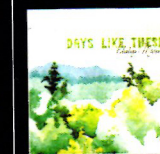


BLACK STONE CHERRY have released *Black to Blues*, a six-track EP. *Built for Comfort*, my favourite Hoochie Coochie Man and I want to be Loved, were written by Willie Dixon (as were Little Red Rooster and I just Want to Make Love to You) and have been performed by Muddy Waters, Howling Wolf, Bo Diddley, as well as by Cream, The Doors, Jeff Beck, The Stones, Led Zep', and 'Hendrix. Black Stone Cherry carve out their own versions of the songs that they say run in their blood. I also see it as merely a continuation of their evolving creativity (still strong after 17 years!) that saw them record Edwin Starr's War and acoustic ballad The Rambler on their last album Kentucky. Make sure there is a passenger alongside if you are listening whilst driving, as

these tunes could conjure up the wrong type of blues in your rear-view mirror.



THE SWIFT DRAG from Austin, Texas are nothing like their name may suggest. Their psychedelic music is far more satisfying and the title of their EP *We Won't Need That*, perhaps implores us to let their music entertain us. Will Evans and David Jobe interlace drums, guitars and impassioned vocals into elaborate patterns combining the energy of The Doors and the creativity of The Black Keys. It's very "Burning Man" in its shamanic percussion, guitar technique and riveting vocals.



Self-released *Days Like These* by American born, Essex based **PHILIP MARINO** is his third EP, ably assisted by The Felice Brothers which came about after replying to an open request to send demos in. What sets this artist apart is his matchless deep and full-bodied voice, meaningful songs and acoustic mastery. He's got a strong following in the South-East for his live shows and airplay on national radio is increasing his well-deserved popularity.



Danish rockers **WE THE MOON** are the final band to make the cut for this issue. Rhea is a four-track triumph on Phillipa Records that has genre-resisting vocals and a heavy groove. I particularly liked how the whole band builds a momentum to each song, bringing a refreshing unpredictability and a rawness to their music.

We hope to bring you more EP news in the future if the pace of the receipts continues. **NE**