

Syzygy Moving Forward

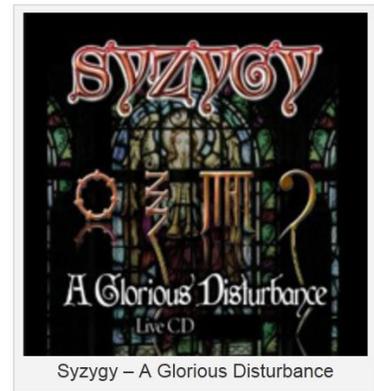
BY ANGEL ROMERO – JANUARY 17, 2013

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Syzygy: A Glorious Disturbance (SME 090808, 2012)

A Glorious Disturbance is a triple disc by Syzygy, a renowned progressive rock band based in Cleveland (Ohio). The nicely packaged collection includes a DVD with live performances, a CD with most of the pieces featured in the DVD and a bonus DVD with interviews.

The excellent quality Concert DVD includes nearly two hours of video from two different Syzygy concerts. The first 5 cuts were recorded at 2009's "Three Rivers Progressive Rock Festival." The rest of the material comes from Syzygy's 2010 performance at "A Day of Prog Festival."



Syzygy's lineup includes four outstanding instrumentalists, Carl Baldassarre on guitars and vocals; Sam Giunta on keyboards; Paul Mihacevich on drums and percussion; and Al Rolik on bass and vocals; plus Mark Boals on lead vocals. I would characterize their sound as a mix of state of the art progressive rock and classic hard rock. Their music truly stands out when the band goes into full progressive rock mode. Curiously, the best vocals (and better suited for progressive rock) in this set are by guitarist Carl Baldassarre instead of their lead singer.

Syzygy features impressive guitar work by Carl Baldassarre, combining skill and finesse, using a wide variety of sounds, including the note bending technique that is reminiscent of the guitar sound created by the great Alan Holdsworth. Paul Mihacevich performs tremendous creative drum work throughout the album, which is greatly appreciated. Al Rolik provides the additional backbone with fine bass lines.

The highlights of A Glorious Disturbance are the pieces that showcase the talent of the four instrumentalists, including 'Vanitas,' 'Circadian Rhythm,' 'Dreams,' 'The Coronation,' 'Beggar's Tale' and their masterpiece 'M.O.T.H.' in which the band ventures briefly into exquisite fusion. There is also a notable cover of the progressive rock classic 'In the Dead of Night' by legendary prog superband UK, in which Sam Giunta gets to showcase his admirable skill as a keyboardist.

On the weaker side of the band are the excessive hard rock riffing in some pieces and the vocals by Mark Boals. He's actually a very good vocalist, but his style is better suited for a hard rock or AOR band.

The Bonus DVD includes a fascinating interview with guitarist Carl Baldassarre which is conducted by Michael Heaton (the Minister of Culture for the Cleveland Plain Dealer). Baldassarre discusses the history of the band, which takes you back to a hard rock band called Abraxas which served as a music school for three of the Syzygy musicians. In Abraxas they learned how to play and compose new songs.

Baldassarre and Giunta later went on to study at a conservatory and created Witsend, which was initially a sort of musical workshop to test their ideas rather than a band. It morphed into a progressive rock band when drummer Mihacevich, joined them. The trio needed a bassist so they called their old colleague Al Rolik.

During the interview, Carl Baldassarre defines his vision of progressive rock, as a genre that moves forward, expanding the empire of sound.

The package comes with a pullout poster containing a lyric sheet and a photo montage of the band in action. Both concerts are in 5.1 surround sound.

Syzygy is a superb band that has tremendous potential in the progressive rock field if they explore more of their progressive side.

The DVD/CD set is available directly from the band at a great price:

<http://www.syzygymusic.com/Shop.asp>



About Angel Romero

Angel Romero has been writing about progressive music and world music for many years. Publications include Eurock (USA), Popular 1 (Spain), Marquee (Japan), Conecte (Mexico) and Nuevas Músicas (Spain). He founded the websites progressiverockcentral.com, worldmusicportal.com, worldmusiccentral.org and musicasdelmundo.com. In the TV area, Angel produced an eclectic music TV show for TVE (Spain). Angel has also produced and remastered progressive rock, world music and electronic music albums, compilations and boxed sets for Alula Records, Ellipsis Arts, Music of the World, Lektronic Soundscapes, and Mindchild Records. Angel was also the executive producer of the first Latino feature film made in North Carolina.

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