

Prognosis

The first thing I can say about this album is that it is the best progressive rock debut I've heard this year. And let me tell you that I have been listening to a lot of music lately.

Sky Architect is a brand new Dutch band that has signed with ProgRock Records for their very first album, and it is pretty easy to figure out why it must have been tremendously easy for Shawn Gordon to decide that this was a band to bet upon. The reason is quite simple: this is a winning band from the start, as the quality, scope and delivery is stellar and impressive if we consider that they are just taking their first steps.

It is not that easy to depict *Excavations of the Mind* in its entirety at first listens. In fact this is yet an excellent example of those albums that presents us a challenge to frame in words and that makes us listen repeatedly in order to start understanding their music in the full, very wide, picture.

Sky Architect plays a sort of symphonic progressive rock that easily represents the pinnacle of 40 years of evolution of this style. The band sounds completely contemporary while respecting and clearly being influenced by a vast array of bands that have been (or are still) greatly known in the genre.

Excavations of the Mind is a tremendously well constructed amalgamation of influences and reminiscent pieces, resulting in a varied but bizarrely compact piece of work. It may sound like a lot of bands while sounding like none in particular, but the bits and pieces of that array are subtly incorporated throughout the album. In this vast list names such as **King Crimson, Gentle Giant, Morte Macabre, Anglagard, Porcupine Tree, The Flower Kings, RPWL, Spock's Beard, Pain of Salvation** or **Dial** will probably come to mind in apart moments, as the listener is constantly called back to the music in order to further explore its labyrinths and lively (ever changing) patterns.

Overall, the music is very complex and keeps shifting through different meadows and atmospheres, presenting the listener with a dynamic approach that makes the album improper for background soundtrack. On the contrary, this is one of those albums that urge to be listened to loudly and with full attention. It is complex and very technical but strangely easy-listenable, as it always stays inside the purest forms of symphonic progressive, with that very modern tendency to step into the hard prog fields ever now and then. Yes, there is a harder edge on the music that, nevertheless, never takes the music into the metallic fields, but sometimes stay on that verge...like a vertigo without the fall (you can imagine Dream Theater playing pure symphonic prog, if you like to exercise your brain).

Like said, this is really a great album of complex symphonic prog by a band that, despite new, demonstrates that they are not only competent and focused, but that they are also able to translate their concepts and ideas into great prog rock music. This is an essential album, no more no less!