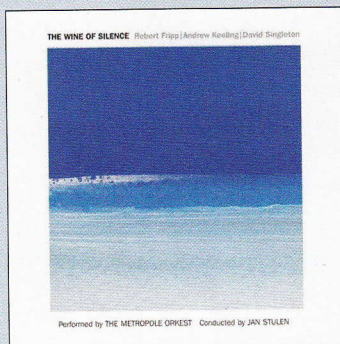


FRIPP, KEELING, SINGLETON

The Wine Of Silence (Orchestral Soundscapes)

DGM/PANEGYRIC

Rich, heady classical blend from the Crimson main man.



Given the symphonic elegance of much of Robert Fripp's *Soundscapes* work, it comes as a surprise to learn that *The Wine Of Silence* is his first album of orchestral arrangements. The story basically goes like this. In 2003 British composer and musicologist Andrew Keeling – an avid King Crimson fan who first wrote to Fripp around the time of *In The Wake Of Poseidon* – created and recorded a series of live pieces with Holland's Metropole Orchestra, based on transcriptions of Fripp tunes by California Guitar Trio's Bert Lams. Nearly a decade on, those tapes have now been treated by Fripp's DGM label partner and co-producer David Singleton, under the guitarist's own watchful eye.

So much for the gestation period, but is it any good? The answer, resoundingly, is yes. Taking its title from a typically gnomic Frippicism dating back to 1980, *The Wine Of Silence* is a stirringly emotive set that takes his original improvisations for guitar (which Fripp would then feed through a digital delay unit to build said Soundscapery) and transmutes them into the classical realm. It might all appear a bit arty on paper, but the reality is often very beautiful and moving.



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Nothing quite illustrates this better than *Miserere Mei*, which amounts to 15 minutes of sombre, string-soaked majesty, complete with Gorecki harmonies and monastic incantations. Likewise, the similarly sized *Requiescat* is a stately procession of violins and cellos, rolling out over the ether and lofted heavenward by subtle fanfares of brass and a sumptuous choral arrangement.

The tone of the album is in the minimalist vein of Arvo Pärt and John Adams, though those familiar with Fripp's Soundscaping collaborations with Porcupine Tree, Thee Travis or even King Crimson will feel his distinct imprint. There's a resemblance to the restive tranquility of last year's *A Scarcity Of Miracles*, Fripp's three-way improv with sometime Crimson members Mel Collins and Jakko Jakszyk.

You could argue that Fripp's recorded product has never been too far removed from the classical world anyway. Take early Crimson, for instance: distinctly un-rock time signatures, daring instrumentation, the idea of progressive music being an impressionistic suite of sounds rather than a series of loosely connected pop songs.

The same curious artistic philosophy is at work here too. For all the structural simplicity of the music, the moods are rich and varied. Sometimes, as on *Black Light* or *Miserere Mei*, it can get eerily disquieting and ominous. At others there's a sense of gradual and sustained uplift. Gorgeous, in a word.

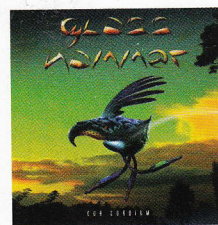
ROB HUGHES

GLASS HAMMER

Cor Cordium ARION

The latest New Yes Frontman, at the day job.

With singer Jon Davison recently becoming the nine millionth Yes vocalist, fans will be curious to ascertain what his own band sounds like. Not that Glass Hammer are actually unknowns: the Tennessee-formed outfit's 14th album continues a 20-year career which began as a lark for two Tolkien obsessives (Steve Babb and Fred Schendel), but has built momentum due to the fact that they're really very good. Like 2010's *If*, *Cor Cordium* is what you'd get if you decided there wasn't enough Class-A prog in the world and asked a robot to make you something equal parts Yes, Canterbury and Genesis.



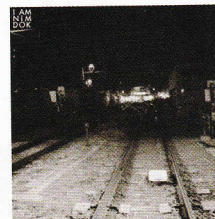
Davison, also fronting the Yes tribute band Roundabout, packs a powerful falsetto, and (long) song structures precisely as and when you want them to, while guitarist Alan Shikuma is no slouch. *Nothing* is an ambivalent oblivion which uses every stop fast-slow trick in the book to great effect. If *Dear Daddy* suffers from excessive therapy-babble, *To Someone* soars romantically a few dozen false endings. Over more *Fly From Here* than *Close Edge*, but Glass Hammer remains in all the right places. **CR**

I AM NIMDOK

The Wave. The Raven. Invisible Dream. IAMNIMDOK.TUMBLR.COM

Post-industrial prog - Intense! Daring!! Free!!!

Japanese-born, UK-based musician Ryuki Akira is giving away his six-track debut EP for free, with more on-the-house releases coming. This instrumental artist specialises in unflinching post-industrial metal, refracted through a lens of 21st century electronics and production smarts. *Staring Into Darkstar* is a prog-metal anthem waiting to happen – you can imagine Maynard James Keenan or Fear Factory's Burton C Bell wailing over this bad boy. Album highlight *Freeland* morphs over seven minutes from shimmering guitars, into a busy mid-section with some crazy kickdrum



action, and out the side into an insistent melody. Akira knows how to break things down and build them up again, a desolate lone pianist. *Endless* is a refrain to amuse-oreille; the discordant synth-all-too-brief introduction leading into 7, the crunchiest, intense and progressive track. *The Wave. The Raven. Invisible* is a breathtaking calling-card of uncompromising talent. Download soundcloud.com/iamnimdok; iamnimdok.tumblr.com or iamnimdok.bandcamp.com. **GM**

LANA LANE

El Dorado Hotel THINK TANK MEDIA

Seasoned songstress finally checks back in.

El Dorado Hotel finds veteran Californian vocalist Lana Lane returning to the fray after an uncharacteristically lengthy four-year layoff. Batteries duly recharged, this is a typical Lane album, produced by her husband, Rocket Scientists keyboardist Erik Norlander.

While Lane's vocals are rightly at the core of the album, as usual Norlander has assembled a cast of musicians from the cream of the American prog scene, including fellow Rocket Scientists multi-instrumentalist Mark McCrite and stick/bass player Don Schiff. However, since Lane's last solo album Norlander has



been co-opted in a version of Asia fronted by John Payne, and as a result Payne and other players with connections also to the *El Dorado Hotel* is generally a notch, in particular track *A Dream From* which includes wonderfully jangling from Norlander and guitarist Bouillet. There are some incidental – that same track is underpinned by a workmanlike chorus and by lyrics – but Lane herself is on hand and while it doesn't reinvent the wheel, *El Dorado Hotel* certainly more than a cursory visit. **N**