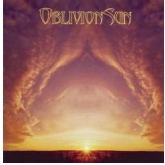


Oblivion Sun - Oblivion Sun (2007)

Written by bluesever

Sunday, 15 March 2015 16:34 - Last Updated Sunday, 30 September 2018 21:55

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01. *Fanfare* 04:41 02. *The Ride* 05:07 03. *Noodlepoint* 03:51 04. *Catwalk* 07:40 05. *No Surprises* 03:36 06. *Re:Bootsy* 03:28 07. *Chapter 7.1* 03:35 08. *Tales Of Young Whales* 05:53 09. *Golden Feast* 06:45 Line-Up: Stanley Whitaker - Vocals, Guitars Dave DeMarco - Bass Frank Wyatt - Keyboards, Saxophones Bill Plummer - Keyboards, Moog Synthesizers Chris Mack – Drums

Oblivion Sun is the new Project founded by Stan Whitaker and Frank Wyatt (2/3 of the creative brains of Happy the Man), who already had worked as a duo for their "Pedal Giant Animals" album. I mention this album because it contains a lot of compositions that were left aside during the "Muse Awakens" post-production phase (the brief Happy the Man comeback period), and the same happens with a couple of tracks from this Oblivion Sun namesake debut release: they were written during the very fruitful "Muse Awakens" era but didn't find a space in the final repertoire. With the experience of "Pedal Giant Animals", the opportunity was there to form a new full band in order to continue to explore this musical vision, in fact incorporating material written by all other three members. One way or another, it was reasonable to suspect that the resulting album would be solid and energetic. And so it came to be that the suspicions were utterly confirmed - the "Oblivion Sun" tracklist exhibits a high degree of intensity and melodic richness, heavily marked by the Happy the Man heritage. No doubt that Watkins is a major influence in Bill Plummer's playing and writing, as he was for David Rosenthal in "The Muse Awakens"; you can also notice a strong "Crafty Hands"-vibe in the repertoire's predominant spirit. The majesty and drive of the opener 'Fanfare' shout these two notions out loud, and so does the delicately complex dynamics of 'Noodlepoint': these two pieces are cornerstones for the listener's frame of mind. Sandwiched between the two is 'The Ride', a hard rocking song in which Whitaker makes his guitar riffs conform the nucleus for development of the main motif: this track sounds like a halfway stance between 79-80 Kansas and Spock's Beard. Warning: don't mistake the synth lead that starts at 1:50 for a guitar (magnificent job, Bill!!!). 'Catwalk' bears a very lyrical atmosphere, including a beautiful Baroque-inspired little interlude that creates a relaxing beauty of sound (HTM-patented). 'No Surprises' is a slightly heavy-oriented piece that conveys a certain density (on a very subtle level), with the segued follower 'Re: Bootsy' shifting things into the realms of funk-inflicted jazz. The alternation of guitar and

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synthesizer solos in the latter states one of the most incendiary passages in the album, despite not being as heavy as the preceding track. 'Chapter 7.1' is yet another example of how to revitalize the HTM heritage with a higher degree of sonic power: the fivesome manage to keep things under control though all the display of muscle and feeling, which only comes to reveal how amazingly solid this ensemble is. Things remain the same (exciting, moving, cleverly ordained) for 'Tales of Young Whales', whose combination of ethereal melodic bases and punchy instrumental assemblies works beautifully. 'Golden Feast' occupies the album's final 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ minutes, at times sounding as some sort of tribute to 'New York's Dream Suite' (the fantastic closure to HTM's 1977 album), but with a more pronounced jazzy edge and a more robust global sound. Oblivion Sun is definitely a testimony of how age doesn't have to affect creative genius at all or sabotage any further development of musical power: this gathering of veterans creates a kind of refreshing (prog) music that would make lots of contemporary musicians terribly envious. ---Cesar Inka, progarchives.com

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