



Artist profile: Manning

by THE ROCKTOLOGIST



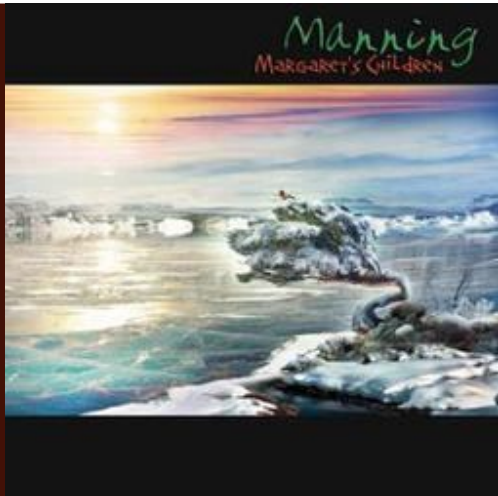
Guy Manning

The band Manning has been in existence since 1999, formed around singer / songwriter / multi-instrumentalist **Guy Manning**.

Guy was previously an associate of Parallel or 90 Degrees (PO90) and also a founder member of the internationally respected, The Tangent.

Guy has an impressive record of having a new Manning album ready for release annually!!

"Manning produce an eclectic mix of music which broadly falls within the 'progressive' genre, but in



reality spans many different musical forms from beautiful ballads and folk-tinged songs through to awesome all-out rock workouts and true progressive epics – no two songs sound the same!"

Other members of Manning are **Julie King** (additional keyboards, percussion and backing vocals), **Kris Hudson-Lee** (basses), **Keve Currie** (electric / acoustic guitars and backing vocals), **Steve Dundon** (flute and other blowable things), **Chris Catling** (lead guitars and backing vocals) and the newest recruits, **Martin Thiselton** (keyboards and viola/violin) and **Rick Henry** (drums and percussion).

Such a sizeable line-up is able to reproduce the quintessentially symphonic Manning sound on stage!

Manning have also been very fortunate in having some terrific musicians making special guest appearances on the albums including Andy Tillison (The Tangent and PO90), Laura Fowles, Ian 'Walter' Fairbairn (Lindisfarne/Jack the Lad and Hedgehog Pie), Angela Gordon (Mostly Autumn), Martin Orford (IQ), Marek Arnold (Toxic Smile and Seven steps to the door), Leon Camfield (Tinyfish).

The band experienced a surge of interest and support, with the 2007 album "Songs From The Bilston House" being

nominated for "Album of the Year" by the Classic Rock Society (CRS) and a series of storming headline gigs in support of the critically acclaimed album, "Number Ten" (released 2009).

2010 was a milestone breakthrough year for this remarkable band with some amazing festival slots including the first venture over the Atlantic to appear at the RoSfest in Gettysburg, PA. USA in May.

The eleventh MANNING album "Charlestown" was released in Oct 2010 and was again nominated by both the CRS and the Italian ProgAwards for "Album of the Year".

2011 continued all the hard work with even more UK dates and a brand new (12th) studio album "Margaret's Children" released to critical acclaim!

2012 is shaping up to be a very important and busy year including our first European shows, the main stage of the Cambridge Rock Festival and an afternoon headliner performance at the fabulous Summers End Festival...so stay tuned!

Interview with Guy Manning (2012)



By Rok Podgrajšek

The name of Guy Manning has been floating around the progressive community for quite some time now. His first album was released in 1999 and he now already has 12 albums under his belt. His latest "success" is called Margaret's Children, released in 2011.

Guy took some time to answer our nagging questions.

Can you tell us how you created the universe of Margaret's Children and the Anser family in general?

From my imagination!!...I looked at history and started with Margaret Montgomery (nee Fleming) who I wanted to be a White Witch for the storyline.

I picked a good time for her to live (1600s Scotland) with plenty of historical unrest etc. and so it all began...

After that we created a family tree of people by making up lives, names, DOB, DOD, marriages etc.

I could then look at all the people I had created and see if I had any other stories for them and gradually, I built up the "Anser's Tree" (AT) songscape and then of course "Margaret's Children" (MC) in the same way.

Some of the characters are based on real people, if I understand correctly?

Well just 2.5!

1. William Barras (AT). His name did appear on the list killed in the Wallsend Mining Disaster. I took the name and made the story up.
2. Amy Quartermaine (MC) was based on the true life story of Nurse Edith Cavell.
3. Joshua Logan (AT) is based on my son Nathaniel and all the curious questions he used to ask us when he was young!

Is there any specific point you're trying to make with "Margaret's Children" and "Anser's Tree"? Is there any philosophy behind this?

The underlying theme (if there is one) is the one of Ecological disaster. AT POV is from the research done by Dr Jonathan Anser in our near future when the ice caps have melted and he is trying to find his own lineage. Some of the songs (on both albums) tell the story of how this was discovered and the consequences of that.

Are you happy with the way the new album turned out, both musically and lyrically?

Oh Yes! I don't think I would release an album I was not happy with at the time!

Music, Lyrics and Artwork combined are always important on my works.

Looking back, is there anything you'd maybe like to change about it?

Not at this moment in time! In some years from now I may look back at MC in the same way I do with the earlier Manning albums which did not have as good recording technology, virtual instruments etc.



You will be touring with The Tangent and Paul Menel soon. Will the set include most of the new album?

It will contain a good proportion of it yes, but after 12 albums there is a lot of material to choose from and many albums to represent in the song selection!

Will you be joining The Tangent on stage at any moment or is that a secret?

We have not discussed that yet but you never know.

In your writing, would you say you put more emphasis on the music or the lyrics?

Hmm?? BOTH (Plus the artwork, as I said) are important to me! Each one feeds the other in terms of mood, dramatics, plot, feel etc

In prog, we have had great story-tellers and lyricists, like Ian Anderson, Roger Waters, Peter Hammill, etc. Do you think this has become neglected as of late and have you been trying to revive it with your fascinating ideas?

I do what I do really...many people do not even bother to listen to / read the lyrics which I think is a great shame! I write stories because that is my style, my way of getting messages across to the listener, wrapping up a POV in a characterisation of set of events so that you can empathise with the protagonist and feel what they feel, see what they see etc

I certainly LOVE all of the artists you have cited here so that must mean something!

Can you tell us something about your musical background?

A lot of it is on my website in a humorous essay called "Guy - A Life in Music" ...I would suggest reading that!

<<http://www.guvmanning.com/2009site/guy/alifeinmusic.html>>

What about your musical influences?

Oh sooo many!!!!...TULL of Course!, plus the proggers (Genesis, Gentle Giant, Yes, King Crimson etc) Canterbury (Hatfields, Caravan, National Health), the songwriters (Al Stewart, Roy Harper, John Martyn, Nick Drake, Joni Mitchell), the jazzers (Weather Report, Mahavishnu, Return to Forever, Miles Davis), Art/pop rock (10cc, Godley & Creme, Roxy Music, Supertramp) the list goes ever on forever!!!!!!

Are you at all concerned with the prog label when composing or do you simply write from the heart?

I write from the heart always BUT sometimes the 'PROG' labelling does get in the way I think.

What I write on many occasions is not really Progressive Rock...more Singer/Songwriter embellished (like Roy Harper, AL Stewart etc). I honestly think a much wider audience than just the loyal 'prog' fraternity would appreciate some of my material give half a chance.

Do you think the prog scene in Britain is as vibrant and vital nowadays as in the 70s?

Not as in the 70's I think, but certainly getting back out into the open and light again after being hidden away underground for many, many years.

Being associated these days with Progressive Rock is not all that bad today, the ridicule is far less and the stories of 'Persian Rug Roadies' and bails of hay being imported into the recording studios now fading away becoming folklore and a light hearted bit of nostalgia.

Playing our original brand of music live is getting harder for all of us of course.

Venues are closing down, Tribute bands (good though they may be in some cases) dominate the bookings for the busy nights of the weeks, drumming up well needed revenue for the promoters.

Plus, there are a lot of us now out there all trying to get on at the same festivals, the same well trodden live circuit of clubs etc.

Having said that, we are getting great gig offers I am very glad to say!

Thanks for the interview and opportunity to speak to some of the people that have listened to my music...what would I do without you?



www.guymanning.com

Desert Island Discs: Guy Manning

Every month, we will be featuring a desert island discs selection from a different musician. To start us off and do the honours is progressive rock legend Guy Manning, of Manning and formerly of The Tangent. What goodies and surprises will he come up with?



JETHRO TULL - Thick as a Brick

Brilliance - Lyrics, Band arrangements. My fave band at the top of their game (but APP, SFTW, AQUALUNG and MINSTREL ...Oooh so much choice...too many good ones)



YES - Close to the Edge

"AND YOU & I" is a perfect piece - Beautiful Wakeman keyboards on this plus iconic opening from Howe.



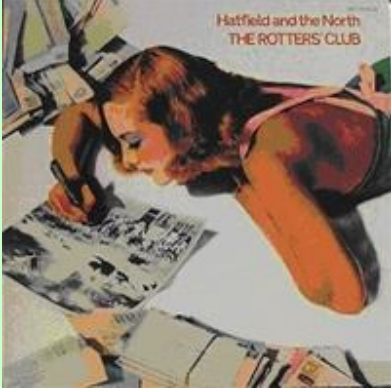
AL STEWART - Past, Present & Future

The man who showed me that songs with stories that were researched properly etc are fantastic - Al is the master of this (Rick Wakeman again is featured here).



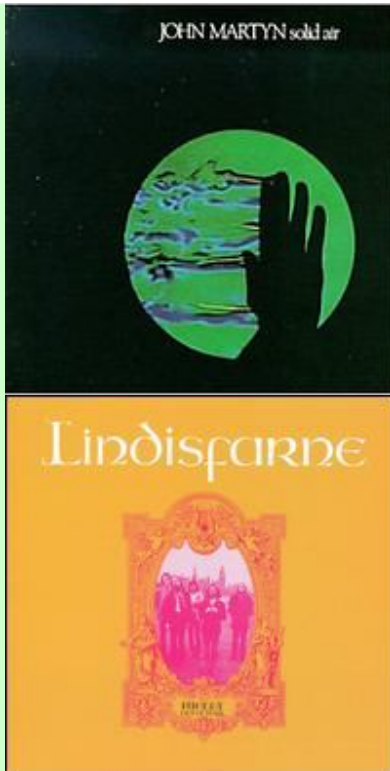
ROY HARPER - HQ

"WHEN AND OLD CRICKETER..." Wonderful evocative song with the Black Dyke Mills Brass Band helping out.



HATFIELD & THE NORTH - The Rotters Club

This band never got the praise they should have. Dave Stewart should be studied by keys players world wide IMO! A perfect example, of taste, melody and cleverness.

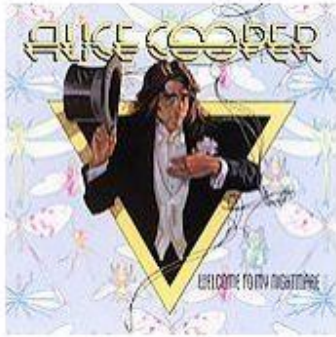


JOHN MARTYN - Solid Air

Sleezy, late night, effortless classy music at its best - sadly missed is old John.

LINDISFARNE - Nicely out of Tune

My first musical love and a brilliant track to boot. Their first 3 albums should be mandatory listening IMO.



ALICE COOPER - Welcome to My Nightmare

Alice at his schlock horror best.



GENESIS - Foxtrot

How to put a collective set of disparate songs together in a fascinating way that makes you want to hear it over and over again. Again, I have plundered this technique!



THE BEATLES - Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band

This is how it should be done ladies & gents. Nuff said !!!!

RENAISSANCE - Scheherazade and Other Stories

That voice ooh it gives me goose pimples. Especially that last note on the album title track! oohh! This is a lovely song.



JONI MITCHELL - Hejira

"AMELIA" Plenty of space, beautiful arrangement, fabulous performances. The lyrics are so evocative, they push out of the music into the air and form pictures in your mind.



SUPERTRAMP - Crime of the century

Lovely tune and arrangement.



VAN DER GRAAF GENERATOR - Pawn Hearts

Not for the feint hearted!



LITTLE FEAT - Dixie Chicken

A superb band that made everything sound easy but it wasn't!

HONORARY MENTIONS:

E.L.O - A NEW WORLD RECORD

My Fave of theirs - not a bad track on it!

DEEP PURPLE - MADE IN JAPAN

Best Live album ever (Especially Side 1).

TORI AMOS - LITTLE EARTHQUAKES

"WINTER" Such a beautiful tender song. And not over the top Tori either!

STEELY DAN - PRETZEL LOGIC

TITLE TRACK - Jazzy, bluesy off beat 12 bar dripping with classic melody.

WEATHER REPORT - HEAVY WEATHER A lesson that I learned was that the Bass could be the lead instrument! I use this quite a lot on mine.

CARAVAN - IN THE LAND OF GREY & PINK

"WINTER WINE" This is my fave Richard Sinclair vocal and I love the bit in the middle ".....sounds of a distant melody..." with the far off reverb piano - Fab!

PINK FLOYD - DARK SIDE OF THE MOON Pivotal album for proggers everywhere.

10CC - THE ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK

Clever wit and songs CAN go together!!! - A perfect song/lyric and rock combination . A vastly underrated band.

PETER HAMMILL - A BLACK BOX

"FLIGHT" - This is the lyrical peak for me with Hammill - absolutely astounding.

JEFFERSON AIRPLANE - AFTER BATHING AT BAXTER'S

Folky sweet album from the early days of JA. Marty Balin never sounded better.

WISHBONE ASH - ARGUS

I used this to learn this on the guitar. My 1st rock gig ever December 15th 1970 at Leeds Town Hall - Fab!

KING CRIMSON - IN THE COURT OF THE CRIMSON KING

TITLE TRACK - This track has everything I love about early Crimson - they were so 'out there' even then.

E.L.P. - TARKUS

If only I could play keyboards like Keith could - sigh!!

GENTLE GIANT - FREE HAND

Vocals, used superbly well to instrumentalise.

LED ZEPPELIN - HOUSE OF THE HOLY

"NO QUARTER" I vividly recall seeing the promo film for this on the BBC's Old Grey Whistle Test in the early 70s - Brilliant!!

JEFF BUCKLEY - GRACE

Wonderful eclectic arrangements and voice.

FRANK ZAPPA - ONE SIZE FITS ALL

So much of Zappa to love, but only so much you can broadcast without an adult warning! This is the best line-up IMO at the height of their creative powers.

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