

## **CHARLESTOWN - DAMUSIC (Belgium)**

Would it be possible that Ian Anderson - still before he has exchanged the temporary with the eternal - has reincarnated in Guy Manning? As to Charlestown the comparison with the legendary Jethro Tull both in vocal and instrumental respect is striking. Not that there is a copy, far from, but Manning has rightfully picked up the wire where Tull has let it lie so many years ago.

The first thirty-five minutes of the title number is a nostalgic trip to the pre-industrial years 1800, as a merchant ship makes its perilous return to Charlestown, by the coast of Cornwall. The epic character becomes apparent especially in the musical structure, in which several moods and tempi and returning themes get consistent in a natural way. On a journey on which the extreme is demanded from people, flute and soprano sax introduce balsam for the contused soul.

Mannings lyrics are impregnated with humanity, in contrast to Anderson's cynicism on early Tull records. Furthermore it is especially the recovering voice of Manning (with the same vibration such as Anderson) and the folk arrangements which stipulate the overall atmosphere.

After such superior old-fashioned authorship the rest of the album can only disappoint. It should be this way, but a ballad such as Clocks - that celebrates life - is irresistible. That is attributed in the first place to the leading mandolin motive and the lyric flute.

But that flute sounds still more Tullian on the T.I.C. injected with blues rock. Here you can hear echo's of Andersons distinguished style; a rich sound by blowing over the flute and humming through it, so that the flute was freed from its standard role of sweet ornament. Since Anderson the flute can lead a band which did not hesitate to put things thick and heavily.

Variations on Charlestown's theme return once more in the sultry finale. Here the ensemble (six players beside Manning) obtains everything from the cupboard, as Weather Report did once well.

It is made once more clear that Manning is no one day fly: Charlestown is already the eleventh album of this creative multi-instrumentalist and number twelve is underway.

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