

MARGARET'S CHILDREN from Ytsejam.com (Tommy Hash)

When **Guy Manning** unleashed *Anser's Tree* in 2005, it was one of the few albums released in prog rock that had a series of songs with each one dedicated to a character - but that's what **Guy Manning** has always been about, storytelling in a manner where we can all relate to what is being sung about in some circumstance. So nearly seven years later, the sequel, *Margaret's Children*, not only lends itself to each track speaking about a particular character, but the musical diversity is just as unique as the characters themselves.

Obviously, as in the past, the aura of folk-rock shines with a massive Ian Anderson influence on **Manning's** vocals and acoustic guitar as well as flautist Steve Dundon, who gives the silver pipe big prominence throughout the album, but as each tune entails, the record's assortment offers more than just some Fairport/Tull clone. "Year of Wonders" opens up the album with a heavy vibe, yes I said heavy, complete with intense arrangements and crunch laden guitar, not going into blatant metal territories, but flexing the musical might further out from typical 'neo' oriented prog - and with each tune there is something different that prevails. The assortment is found in the gospel inspired "Revelation Road" which puts power pop, country, and funk on a collision course, the Arabian inspired "Sheets of Cairo," and the seventeen minute epic "A Perfect Childhood" are where the true nature of being progressive musically is heard as opposed to playing the same songs over again with all of these different time signatures and key changes.

When it comes to the lighter side of the album, the darkened "An Average Man" and the ballads including the neo soundscape of "The Southern Rain" and the jazzy "A Night at the Savoy" (fronted by Julie King) eases things back, so it's not all about insane musicianship or senseless jamming on *Margaret's Children*, the songs and the melodies holds strong. A very well produced record, sonically, filled with an array of guitars, Hammond's, synths, woodwinds, as it's no 'prog rock' gimmick, being a real group of musicians who produce music organically and not letting technology get in the way of what making real music is about.

Added: March 25th 2012

Reviewer: [Tommy Hash](#)

Score: ★★★★★