

REVIEW OF MANNING "NUMBER TEN" By Jason Bermiller

Manning: Number 10

Tracks:

1. Ships
2. The Final Chapter
3. An Ordinary Day
4. Bloody Holiday!
5. Valentine's Night
6. A Road Less Travelled
7. Another Lazy Sunday
8. The House on the Hill

The Troubadour of Prog consistently delivers high quality, and, despite this release being his tenth album, Guy Manning's prolific repertoire does not suffer the rigors of quantity causing a drop in quality. "Number Ten" opens with an electrifying song that features Guy's "favourite topics": "I write about ships, water and death," says Mr. Manning. While a somewhat oversimplification, "Ships" is an opener that crackles and vibrates quite urgently, grabbing and sending the listener off on yet another journey through a Manning masterwork. Especially fun is Guy's bouncy lament "Bloody Holiday!", a song that slips in 10 cc's "I'm Mandy, Fly Me." The illustrious members of 10CC gave Guy the go-ahead to use their song with kudos to Guy for his skilled interpolation.

For the uninitiated, this disc will be a fine intro to Guy's song crafting and style. To fans, this CD presents Guy having, more than ever, fun. From the opening strident "Ships" to the closing of the mini-epic, The House on the Hill, Number Ten, Manning's album sparkles with Guy's delight in his craft. Engaging the listener into quizzical, mysterious lyrics, sometimes foreboding, The Final Chapter, sometimes humorous, Bloody Holiday!, Manning's CD is another triumph for possibly the most prolific artist gracing progressive music today.

Special listens? Well, the whole disc stands strong, but, if pressed to the wall with a threat of injury, I would confess that my favourite cut on this disc is A Road Less Travelled. Maybe because it's quintessential Manning in its topic, maybe because the song demonstrates how an artist can maintain elegance and sensibility simultaneously while still engaging a listener to "take the trip."

Highly recommended and once again, a probable pick of the year.

Review by Jason Bermiller, ProgDog
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