

Mp3 Paragon - What Is Paragon?



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Jazz Rock that is as much Led Zeppelin as John Coltrane. 11 MP3 Songs JAZZ: Jazz Fusion, JAZZ: Acid Jazz Details: Paragon is the simple result of five passionate and talented young musicians following their dreams. As a result of this uncompromising approach, the band's music is a powerhouse, a maelstrom of jazz, rock, and other influences that combine to form a substance which is both soft and hard, like a cloud with a razor's edge. From the "News" page on paragonmusic.org: ...Featuring 11 tracks recorded last March, "What Is Paragon?" features explosively interactive playing in a supercharged atmosphere. "What I really like about this music is that it really has something in it for everyone, without really being pop music or commercial music. Some of the tunes are quite intellectual, whereas some are more about groove, but they all have a certain bedrock element that makes the whole thing very listenable. It wasn't just a matter of throwing our best tunes at the time on a record.. it was more about the architecture of the album itself. We wanted to make sure the whole CD flowed naturally from one track to the next," states guitarist Rob Howard. The album indeed flows very naturally, thanks to transitional material such as the fiery "Improvisation" that comes before "The Joy Of Truth", or the beautiful, voluptuous "Introduction to Aurora" that sets up Matt Baumann's composition, "Aurora". The album also features a great balance... for all the heavy rock based tunes such as Rob Howard's fusion homage "Saturday Evening Meditation" there are quiet numbers such as Matt Baumann's "Echoes In A Glass Room". Yet there are no "power ballads" here. Even the tunes that are not a thousand decibels are gut wrenchingly intense. Look no further than Baumann's dissonant and disturbing Melody on "One" and Rob Howard's moody solo on guitar. Perhaps the two "catchiest" numbers on the album are two Rob Howard compositions, "The OX" and "A Light In The Darkness". As Rob himself explains: "Those tunes are really quite opposite in conception. The OX, despite it's catchy flavor, was really composed with a certain amount of

compositional finesse, whereas A Light In The Darkness was written to be intentionally simple. However, the overall effect of these tunes are similar," states the composer/guitarist. "The Joy Of Truth" has always been a favorite from the band's live show. With a riff that borrows from the heaviest of metal, and harmony that borrows from the best of the jazz tradition, this composition features each member of the band taking solos. "Aurora" is perhaps the most beautiful tune on the album. The solists, Ben Langlois, Matt Baumann, and Rob Howard are all playing in strict service to this wonderful composition and prove that they can remove some of their chops in favor of pure taste. "A Short Expedition no.2" is a study in "miniature composition". With a written part that does not exceed 8 bars, the tune also features an interesting component that keeps it from devolving into free/modal excess. The bassist Jason Gahler gets to choose at his discretion when to shift to the next harmony, when he feels the dissonance has gone quite far enough, and it is up to Rob Howard and Ben Langlois to adjust their solos accordingly (or not adjust if they choose!). "In The Presence of Beauty" makes use of Lydian sounds as well as eastern pentatonics in the melody. Written to convey the joy and pain of all things beautiful, the mixture of the two elements is best represented when the guitar part and the saxophone part play together, the two melodies who are at odds with each other and make disturbing counterpoint. The album ends peacefully with "Echoes In A Glass Room". Matt Baumann's moving tribute to Warren Zevon starts with quiet drums, played with tasteful perfection by Matt Schieferstein. Notes fade in as if from outer space, and quiet inward thinking solos follow the haunting melody. Instrumentation: Rob Howard: Guitar and compositions Matt Baumann: Tenor and Alto Saxophone, and compositions Ben Langlois: Keyboards Jason Gahler: Bass Matt Schieferstein: Drums

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