

Metal Only

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Band: Universal Mind Project (USA)

Genre: Melodic / Progressive Metal

Label: Inner Wound Recordings

Albumtitle: The Jaguar Priest

Duration: 58:37

Releasedate: 29.04.2016



The new band project of guitarist Michael Alexander is called Universal Mind Project. With help from singer Elina Laivera they composed a few songs with musicians all over the world. The new album "The Jaguar Priest" will be released on April 29th.

The main band, as you may call it, contains the two mentioned Elina and Michael and also the drummer Alex Landenburg (Luca Turilli's Rhapsody, 21 Octayne) and singer Henrik Båth (Darkwater, Waken Eyes). A bassist is not listed, but therefor the list of guest musicians is accordingly long.

Such a recording is certainly hard and lengthened with so many different and busy musicians with their own bands and own timetables. To put them together in one studio could be a difficult thing, I guess.

The first "Anthem For Freedom" begins promising with a short intro where you might think the speakers burst – but it's just a cool effect. In this track Michael and Elina share the vocals and I try hard to see the difference between them, so this track is not exactly brilliant to me. No question, they both can sing very well, but for me the sound comes out too polished.

The midpart is growled by Mark Jansen (Epica, Mayan), who brings some life in this song. The instruments and the sound are – just as on the whole album – very cool. Powerful riffs overcome the great drum parts, altogether in a swirl of good dosed changes in speed. Even bold strophes and off-key notes are featured on "The Jaguar Priest". They are very on the spot, so it needs some hours of listening to filter them out and soak them up.

The mixture is absolutely brilliant and all the guest singers transform "The Jaguar Priest" into a masterpiece of music. Nils K. Rue (Pagan's Mind), Charlie Dominici (ex-Dream Theater) and Diego Valdez (Helker) do a very good job and put their stamp on the songs.

But also the guest musicians on the instruments including Diego Valdez (Helker), Alessandro Bissa (Vision Divine) and Mike LePond (Symphony X), just to mention some of them, aren't here for nothing – they are allowed to play to the gallery and bring out the best of themselves. This release reminds me of the outputs from Arjen Lucassen and I intend this as a compliment.

Conclusion:

OK, I admit I needed some runs until this album convinced me. That's the way with progressive albums. Not everything confides at first play, but when it made CLICK, you'll never get enough of it. So it is with "The Jaguar Priest" – it's an absolutely great output, which plays in a continuous loop since days in my stereo.

Rating: 9,5/10

Weblink: <https://www.facebook.com/UniversalMindProject>

Lineup:

Elina Laivera - Vocals

Henrik Båth (Darkwater, Waken Eyes) - Vocals

Michael Alexander – Guitars, Growls

Alex Landenburg (Luca Turilli's Rhapsody, 21 Octayne) – Drums

Guests Musician:

Nils K Rue (Pagan's Mind) - Vocals on "Bargain of Lost Souls"

Mark Jansen (Epica, Mayan) - Growls on "Anthem For Freedom", "Truth" and "Dreamstate"

Charlie Dominici (ex. Dream Theater) - Vocals on "The Jaguar Priest"

Diego Valdez (Helker) - Vocals on "Awakened By The Light" and "Seven"

Alessandro Bissa (Vision Divine) - Drums on "Dreamstate", "Anthem For Freedom", "Awakened By The Light", "Bargain Of Lost Souls" and "Truth"

Mike LePond (Symphony X) - Bass on "Truth" and "The Force Of Our Creation"

Emanuele Casali (DGM) - Keyboards on all tracks

Johan Reinholz (Andromeda)- Guitar solo on "The Force Of Our Creation" 07:08-07:30

Tracklist:

01. Anthem For Freedom

02. Truth

03. The Bargain Of Lost Souls

04. Dreamstate

05. Awakened By The Light (Universal Mind)

06. A World That Burns

07. Seven

08. The Jaguar Priest

09. The Force Of Our Creation

10. Xibalba

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