

Ally The Fiddle – Up (2018)

Written by bluesever
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1 Sisyphos 2 Aphotic Zome 3 The Bass Thing 4 The Path 5 Tree 6 Try To Stop Me 7 Living in a Bubble 8 Entering Stratosphere 9 Center Sun 10 Surfing With the Alien
Ally Storch – Strings, Vocals Robert Klawonn – Guitar Eric Langbecker – Guitar
Rouven Haliti – Chapman Stick Simon Tumielewicz – Bass Stefan Hukriede – Drums +
Marco Minnemann- Drums (Track 4) Sebastian Baur and Alf Ator – Vocals (Tracks 5, 9) Benni
Cellini – Cello (Track 5) Jen Majura – Guitar (Track 6) Felix Wiegand – Double Bass (Track 1)

ALLY THE FIDDLE was founded in 2008 as the solo project of violinist Ally Storch. This uncommon band combines the beauty of a violin with the power of a skilled Metal band and the ideas of Progressive Rock and Fusion. Ally herself is a professional violinist and the newest member of German Goth titans SUBWAY TO SALLY. “Up” is the band’s sophomore album, and contains ten tracks (including the Bonus Track “Surfing with the Alien.”).

“Sisyphos” leads off the album, with a swinging groove, a crunchy short riff, and sterile vocals, sung in nearly the same tone. The Progressive elements are shown in the meter and in the odd bridge section feature the double bass of Felix Wiegand. It builds with a crescendo at the end, tying together harmonic vocals with a bevy of stringed instruments. “Aphotic Zone” uses picked bass guitar harmonics in the opening, followed by a somewhat chaotic instrumental passage featuring guitar and strings. The tone is dark at times, followed by passages of lighter music. The entire piece is very unconventional, almost a “free jam” at times. There are irregular connecting passages, leaving you unsure what it was that you just heard. “The Bass Thing” is an eight minute opus of trippy bass guitar. It ventures here and there, in many different techniques, showcasing the prowess of Simon Tumielewicz. It’s more of a personal exploration of the bass guitar and all the elements it has to offer.

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“The Path” has funky rhythm and features the stellar drum work of Marco Minnemann, together with the flying violin of Ally Storch. The two dance together in a heated groove, each seemingly trying to outdo the other, with no apparent winner. Each time one hits a high note, the other counters. The whole of the piece is quite impressive. “Tree” is a much more somber sounding song. This time, hushed male vocals of Sebastian Baur and Alf Ator provide the direction in this dripping, melancholy affair. The last third of the song takes a turn and the song ends on a positive tone, with chugging guitars, and violin leads. “Try to Stop Me” enters with tentative violin notes and staccato strings. It then trades off with a heavy, chugging guitar riff, dancing together in unison. It switches gears about two-thirds of the way through, with a brief clean guitar interlude, before ending with the pandemonium in started with.

“Living in a Bubble” is perhaps the most straightforward song on the album, with a linear progression for the most part, and a fairly commercial sound for much of it. It takes a turn with a fanciful guitar solo followed by some strings. The vocals are done in a harmonized fashion, again with that kind of mesmerizing and sterile approach. “Entering Stratosphere” opens with dreamy and sublime clean guitar notes, in a somewhat depressive tone. It builds to a point where despair is overtaken just for a moment by hope, but it ends as it started. It’s quite a pretty piece. “Center Sun” is the longest song on the album, at close to nine minutes in length. At first, it’s pretty auspicious, with a fairly straightforward riff and vocal harmonies. It begins to pick up elements as it moves along, morphing slowly.

“Surfing with the Alien” is a nice, fun closing song. As far as I can tell, violin and guitar are playing side by side to the main melody as keys provide the support. They break apart and then play varying lead breaks for the rest of the song. Overall, this was a bit of a tough album to swallow. The grandiosity of some of the songs was quite striking. Ally is quite the talented violinist...that is for sure. Sometimes however the focus of the tracks gets lost a bit, in favor of battle-hardened musicianship, and some passages that meander somewhat. What’s obvious is the talent of the band, and they make that known throughout the album. Perhaps a little more focus on succinct songwriting would make a noticeable difference in being able to full digest the album. ---Dave "That Metal Guy" Campbell, metal-temple.com

Miłośnicy progmetalowego gatunku dobrze wiedzą, że jest on zazwyczaj zdominowany przez mocne brzmienia oparte na potężnych gitarowych riffach oraz na skrzącących się ognistą energią gitarowych solówkach. Wpisujący się w progmetalowe ramy niemiecki zespół Ally The Fiddle może jednak zaskoczyć nawet największych znawców tematu. Bo o stylu i charakterystycznym brzmieniu tej formacji decyduje jej liderka, skrzypaczka i wokalistka w jednej osobie, Ally Storch.

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Tak, to właśnie ona kształtuje krajobraz dźwiękowy kierowanej przez siebie grupy, a czyni to za pomocą różnych instrumentów smyczkowych, a przede wszystkim sześciostrułowych elektrycznych skrzypiec.

Ally na czele swojego zespołu stoi od blisko dziesięciu lat i ma wraz z nim w dorobku EP-kę „Red Unicorn”, singla „The Crumbling Autumn” oraz pełnowymiarowy album „One” (2013). W miarę upływu lat styl grupy ewoluował od folk rocka do prog metalu oraz od wyłącznie instrumentalnego grania do twórczości słowno-muzycznej. Ally okazuje się bardzo dobrą wokalistką, czego przede wszystkim dowodzi w utworach „Sisyphos”, „Center Sun” i „Tree” (niektóre partie wokalne razem z Ally wykonują też Sebastian Baur i Alf Ator). To trzy dość reprezentatywne dla nowej, planowanej do wydania przez wytwórnię Gentle Art Of Music (tej samej od grupy RPWL) 14 września płyty „Up”, na której mamy do czynienia z pełną energii żywiołową mieszanką progresu, metalu i jazz rocka. Co ciekawe, na płycie nie ma w ogóle syntezatorów, a oprócz eksponowanych niemal przez cały czas skrzypiec słyszmy soczyste gitarowe riffy oraz mocarną sekcję rytmiczną, w której dominuje Chapman Stick (gra na nim Rouven Haliti). Jako ciekawostkę podam, że wśród zaproszonych gości znajdziemy tak znane nazwiska, jak Marco Minnemann, który zagrał w jednym utworze („The Path”), gitarzysta Evanescence, Jen Majura, który popisał się efektowną solówką w nagraniu „Try To Stop Me”, a także - co jest chyba największą sensacją płyty – legendarny amerykański skrzypek Jerry Goodman, którego usłyszeć można w tym samym utworze.

„Up” to dość nietypowa jak na progmetalowy gatunek płyta, ale jeżeli wśród naszych Czytelników są sympatycy twórczości formacji Mahavishnu Orchestra podszytej niezłymi melodiami oraz efektywnymi ścieżkami wokalnymi, powinni oni koniecznie rozglądać się za tym wydawnictwem... ---Artur Chachlowski, mlwz.pl

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