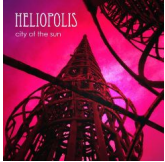


Heliopolis - City Of The Sun (2014)

Written by bluesever

Sunday, 07 December 2014 16:42 - Last Updated Friday, 13 April 2018 20:44

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1. *New Frontier* - 10:12 2. *Take A Moment* - 8:56 3. *Mr. Wishbone* - 3:31 4. *Elegy* - 6:07 5. *Love And Inspiration* - 14:05
Jerry Beller - drums and vocals Matt Brown - keyboards and vocals Kerry Chicoine - bass and vocals Mike Matier - guitars Scott Jones – vocals

Including members of progressive rock bands Gabble Ratchet, Mars Hollow and Ten Jinn, Heliopolis is a new act from Los Angeles but with a familiar sound. Their craft is classic melodic rock that encompasses everything from the past, like Yes, ELP, and Genesis, to the present, like Rocket Scientists and Transatlantic. With *City of the Sun* (the band name in Greek), they're sticking with their comfort zone and expanding upon it.

When I hear bands like Heliopolis, with label mates Supernal Endgame, for instance, I think the musicians have been transposed from both time and place. This should be sometime in the late Seventies and we should be in England. That's not to suggest the music is old, but only that it's developed from the fountain of melodic neo-prog tradition. The music is melodic and clever, the arrangements developed with some intrigue to keep your attention and your ear listening. Heliopolis has that effortless knack to meld both musical parts and instruments in a seamless whole. I noticed this in the first and last third of *Love and Inspiration*. Early there's this great play between guitar, bass, synths, later the bass replaces the electric guitar in emphasis with the others, but that's until the fine drum flurry that caps the segue.

Then listening further there's seems to be a possible pattern recurring here. Nearly every song (there's only five), in its arrangement seems to turn on the bass, synth, and drum triumvirate. Not to diminish Michael Matier's guitar lines, but listening to *New Frontier* and *Take a Moment* that trio, more than anything else, stands out the most. In the short instrumental, *Mr Wishbone*, the guitar is practically non-existent. It makes me wonder if he or the guitar parts came late to the formation of the band. The next meaningful element would be the vocals, with Scott Jones

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sounding a lot like Benoit David touched at times with a little Geddy Lee. All this to say that City of the Sun is fine and entertaining melodic progressive rock, maybe too heavy on the keyboards for my taste, but still interesting. Recommended. --- Craig Hartranft, dangerdog.com

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