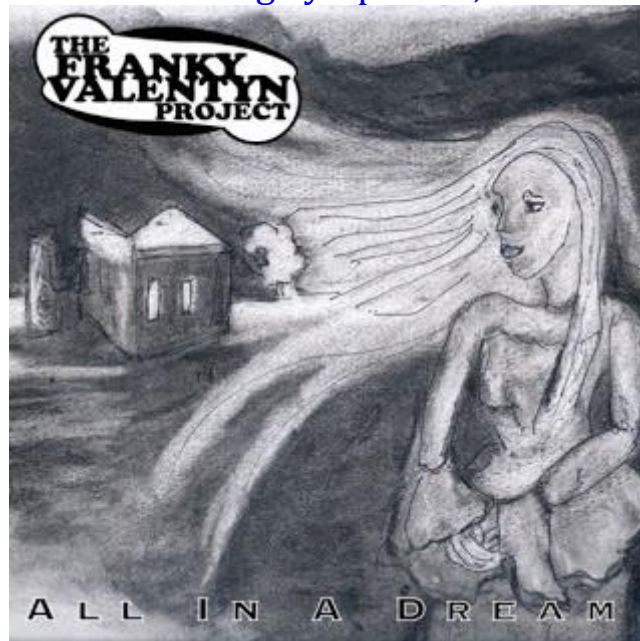


Franky Valentyn Project "All In A Dream" Release March 06, 2017
Australia Prog Symphonic,Classical



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SongTraks is proud to be part of the Franky Valentyn Project Album - 'All In A Dream'. Praised by Rick Wakeman and recently described on radio by Ross M Fear as; 'a very impressive original piece, with an infusion of rock-classical-jazz music with a theatrical dramatic construction of the arrangement that is guaranteed to excite any listener. An absolutely stunning masterpiece album...'...~

All In A Dream is an ambitious concept album with two distinct sets of tracks. The first two pieces are original symphonic rock instrumentals, deeply inspired by classical music, featuring lots of keyboards and orchestrations similar to Rick Wakeman's earlier solo work. Franky Valentyn composed and arranged the music and plays the majority of the instruments featured here. Tracks 3 through 6, on the other hand, sound like pop ballads, stylistically very different from the first two pieces. Valentyn returns to symphonic rock mode on the final track, a long piece titled The Jovian Suite. All In A Dream features several guests, including Ben Craven, Nikki Bennett and Michael Carr on vocals...~

If Rick Wakeman and Andrew Lloyd Webber co-wrote a rock opera, the overture would probably sound like Gothic Horror: the opening track on this strangely transfixing album. Franky Valentyn is the sum of his influences, but he is also so much more. Yes, you can hear the former Beatnix member in the convincing Beatles tribute Paul Isn't Dead, and even some early ABBA in the charming pop of Hope for Llewella Yet. However, what could have been an ungainly pastiche is instead a glorious adventure. Inhabiting the sweeping soundscapes of prog rock are surprisingly accessible grooves and melodies; even in the most dreamlike depths, there are familiar harmonic signposts to guide our way. Once the Sgt. Pepper-style narrative starts to tire, Valentyn leaves the theatre and plunges into film, with the four movement Jovian Moon Suite. A soundscape of strange, majestic strings and delicate melodies that float to the fore; if you close your eyes here you might just see the galaxy in your mind's eye. by... Jessie Cuniffe...~

This album was a genuine surprise to me when I first heard it, a wonderful surprise. You see, I was well aware of the quality of Frank's musicianship as I'd had the pleasure of hearing him play numerous times over the years and anyone who has seen him work will understand just what a talented player he is. He's had a long career in music starting in the early Eighties with bands like Mad Gorilla, The Beatnix, The Generation, Le Club Nerd and was the musical director for ABC's Play School for many years. He is just as active today as a solo artist which is a rare feat these days. The surprise I had with this album was that I was completely unaware of his songwriting and arranging abilities, which are huge. This is a beautifully written, arranged and played album. There is no other way to describe it.

It's easy to hear Frank's influences at play on this album. As he says on his website: "A self-taught musician with no theory knowledge or ability to read music due to his dyslexia, Franky became heavily influenced by the music performed by Rick Wakeman, Kate Bush, The Beatles, ELO, Queen and ABBA (yes, ABBA)"

He has been able to pay tribute to those influences in some quite subtle ways. Sometimes it's just a particular style of sound like the very Wakeman-esque "Gothic Horror", through to "Paul Isn't Dead" which has a wonderful Beatles feel.

There is something quite old-fashioned about hearing an album full of songs that actually belong together on one album. There are no "fillers" here at all. Every song deserves its' place. In the same vein, the arrangements are quite sparing too. Modern technology makes it possible these days to include literally hundreds of tracks in the recording process and unfortunately this gets abused regularly. Not so here. There is not a single sound that doesn't belong. This means each arrangement has a "space" for each part and, despite there being a lot going on, nothing feels crowded or cluttered. It's a lesson many modern musicians and producers could learn.

One of the annoying things about being a live sound engineer for over 30 years is that I quite often listen to music with far too much of a critical ear. I tend to focus on the "parts" sometimes instead of just listening to the songs. This is not a problem I had with "All In A Dream". It had me hooked from the opening of "Gothic Horror" right through to the epic closing of the "Jovian Moon Suite". It took me 2 or 3 listens before I started to pick it to pieces and when I did I appreciated it even more. As I said earlier, this is a beautifully written, arranged and played album that I have enjoyed on each

subsequent listen.

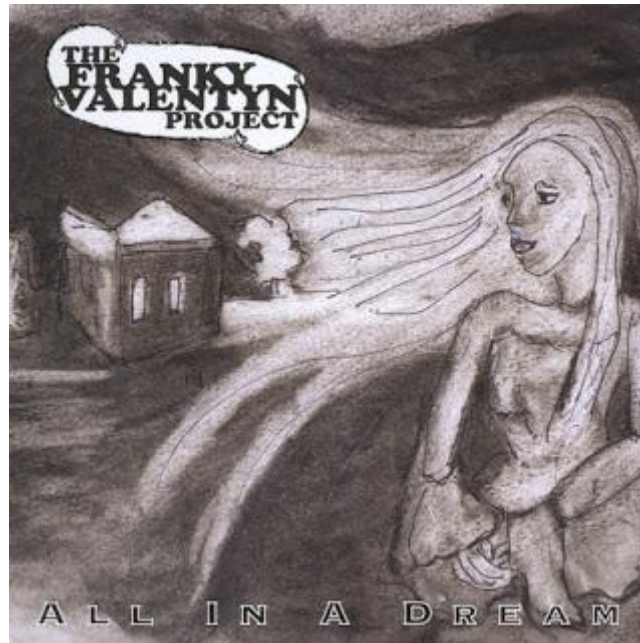
This album took a long time to come to life and it was truly worth the wait. This is a labour of love from an incredibly gifted musician. Buy a copy today, you will not be disappointed.....by.....MARK GIBSON.....~



The name Franky Valentyn might not ring all that many Stateside bells, but in his native Australia he's a well-known veteran showman with a CV that stretches back several decades via the bands Mad Gorilla, The Beatnix, The Generation, Le Club Nerd, and his own Franky Valentyn Duo/Trio (take your pick) and The Franky Valentyn All-Stars. Along the way he's notched numerous ACE (Australian Club Entertainment) Award nominations, and he also put together a children's show called "Fun With Franky." All this may or may not make him the proverbial Renaissance Man—real name: Frank Seckold—with his signature flair for flamboyance, he specializes in cabaret-style productions and covers performances (think Queen, Elvis, ABBA, Beatles, and Sinatra, plus Phantom of the Opera). But his press clips consistently paint him as a tireless entertainer with a huge fanbase.

All In a Dream, then, under the nom du rawk The Franky Valentyn Project, marks a new chapter in Valentyn's book. Keep those above-namechecked artists close at hand, for this lengthy musical treatise is the proverbial full production, a Prog-inclined, Broadway-musical-in-the-making for lapsed Lloyd-Webber fans, with no shortage of Kate Bush pomp and Trans-Siberian Orchestra circumstance. The overture-styled opening cut, "Gothic Horror," more than lives up to its title as a neoclassical, operatic scene-setter that ultimately gives way to a darkly surreal narrative. Later, the regal "Sara"—vocals by Nikki Bennett and guitar by Stephen Layton—simultaneously raises the blood pressure and chills to the bone, as if the aforementioned Bush and Queen's Brian May had joined forces in a quest to seduce and imprison. And the tellingly-titled "Paul Isn't Dead," which features Valentyn himself handling lead vocals (in places he sounds like Ian Gillan during his Jesus Christ Superstar period), is a quirky Prog-rock take on the Macca urban legend.

The nearly 15-minute "The Jovian Moon Suite" closes the record out, its elaborate, and elegant, orchestral arrangement the stuff of pure cinema soundtracking. In fact, if you think of All In a Dream as just that, a soundtrack, rather than a "mere" rock album, the sonic possibilities turn endless. Coming to a mental theater near you, friends.....BY FRED MILLS.....~



Franky Valentyn is an Australian musician based in Blacktown amidst Sydney's west suburbs. The fact that Franky is a self taught musician with no formal training or ability to read music hasn't prevented him from being a successful multi instrumentalist and musical director. Proof that talent triumphs over academia. Having written and recorded music for children's television and sporting events his styles are diverse as they come and sites being influenced by Rick Wakeman, Yes, Kate Bush, The Beatles, E.L.O. and Mike Oldfield. All this becomes evident when you listen to Franky's ensemble of singers and musicians performing on his album All In A Dream.

This is an album i found very easy to like as it employs many of the eccentricities i enjoy about traditional Prog Rock yet infused with a fun element. Franky Valentyn just like his music doesn't take itself too seriously which is why i enjoy this album so much. The opening song Gothic Horror instills the Goth/Steam Punk idiom reflected in the albums artwork which reflects a Tim Burton type of scenario. Hats off to artists Lou Steer and Lilly Moorehouse. There is a grand sense of theatre within Gothic Horror which can be a little Andrew Lloyd Webber in places, that is until you hear Franky Valentyn play an absolute bitching Mini Moog solo that would have the latter-day Rick Wakeman Quacking in his boots. The operatic nature is interrupted nicely by some great rhythms which had me thinking of TV shows like The Adams Family and The Munsters. There's even a Theremin in there Played by Yesfanz member Robert Forbes. It certainly brought a smile to my face.

Talking of Rick Wakeman, his melodic and virtuosity can be plainly heard throughout the sweet lament to absent friends Goodbye My Faery Queen. Wakeman's style is present in Franky's playing and chord structures throughout the whole album. A fitting instrumental to celebrate lost friends and loved ones without the need for dour drones or musical sentiment. A crack of thunder heralds the arrival of Sara, A Bonnie Tyler style epic leaning more towards the Meatloaf velocity of song delivery. A song about pointing the finger and accusing someone of something be it rightly or wrongly. Powerful vocal by singer Nikki Bennett. there is some great story telling on the album. One song in particular i found totally enchanting is Hope For Llewella. The sweet tale of an elderly lady Llewella Hope Davies known to Franky Valentyn who at the age of 99 was holding out for her telegram from the queen. She became a local celebrity holding sway in her house determined not to be moved by developers wanting to build a high school where her home stood. Regretfully she didn't get her telegram. Some great electric piano and memorable melodies. The multiple backing singers giving the impression of a school choir.

Indeed there is a fair amount of sentiment in these finely penned songs. The title song All In A Dream finds Franky in reflective mood wondering what it would have been like had he not moved from his old family home which he often passed and thinking how much things have changed. Great vocal by

singer Michael Carr some of the chord structures reminiscent of Wakeman's King Arthur album. Thankfully Michael Carr's voice injects a little more grit than the Ashley Holt of yore!

Among Franky Valentyn's many talents he also toured with The Beatnix a Beatles tribute band as both keyboard player and musical director during which time he was challenged to write a song about the Paul McCartney debacle and the conspiracy theories about the original Paul McCartney having been killed and the present Paul McCartney being a hoax. Challenge accepted Frank penned the rather splendid Paul's Not Dead. A song as quickly titles as it was written methinks. The middle 8 of the song contains a vocal by Lance Smith who does a good job pounding out the Macca overtones whilst the song ends with an appropriate guitar solo by Andy Payne. And though Paul's Not Dead doesn't quite reach the grandiose of A Day In The Life's eponymous finale it will certainly raise a smile with many Beatles fans.

To further showcase Franky Valentyn's penchant for large scale production All In A Dream concludes with a multi layered keyboard opus The Jovian Moon Suite. Listened to in it's entirety with the volume set at 11 The Jovian Moon Suite is a total joy to listen too. Composed as a submission requested by a Yes fanzine (Yesfanz) called South Side Of The Sky it was originally intended for a larger scale work about the solar system. Split into four movements Europa, Io, Callisto and Ganymede, there is everything from delicate piano to all out drama including some powerful keyboard orchestration. Great to hear vintage synthesisers like Mini Moog and ARP Odyssey in the mix too. In keeping with some tradition a reprise of Gothic Horror is included reminding all where we started out on Franky Valentyn's journey. From his love of Hammer horror movies to moving tales of courage, tenacity and loss, to the outer reaches of the solar system. Not shabby at all pop pickers.

As a self confessed Prog head and lover of music that captivates, thrills, entertains what ever label you decide to tag it with All In A Dream ticks a lot of boxes for me. Tell tale signs like being unable to leave your parked car until a song has finished i consider to be a fair barometer that what you ar listening is hitting the spot. This album does just that. Apart from the captivating narratives the sheer fun aspect of this album suggests a hearty recommendation and immediate investigation.....The Progmeister.....~

Members

Michael Carr: Lead Vocals

Andy Payne: Electric Guitars

Monique LeChat: Backing Vocals

Franky Valentyn: Backing Vocals, Piano, Keyboards, Mini Moog, Bass, Acoustic and Electric Guitars, Drums.

Track listing

Gothic Horror 8:39

Goodbye My Faery Queen 4:25

Sara 4:04

Hope for Llewella Yet 4:02

All in a Dream 3:54

Paul Isn't Dead 5:10

The Jovian Moon Suite 14:35

a. Europa

b. Io

c. Callisto

d. Ganymede