

Magazine Rock & Progressif

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SO NICE IN NICE

TOTO
BAND OF BROTHERS

SYLVAN
TÉLÉPHONE MAISON

JADIS / ENCHANT
PASSÉ ENCHANTEUR

STEVEN WILSON
INCONTOURNABLE ET INEFFAÇABLE

FRANCK CARDUCCI
DÉCHIRE TOUT

GENTLE STORM
NAVIGUE ENTRE DELIX EALIX

MIKE FLORIO
LA GRAND MESSE DU PROG

MINIMUM VITAL
SE PAVANE EN FORÊT

ANDY TILLISON -
THE TANGENT

RETOUR AUX SOURCES

HASSE FRÖBERG
AND MUSICAL COMPANION

LE GOÛT DU TRAVAIL BIEN FAIT

STEVE HACKETT
HURLE AVEC
LES LOUPS

Steve Hackett © Tina Korhonen

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In the Fall of 2014, Bruno Cassan, writing for French progressive rock magazine Koid'9 conducted the following interview with me as part of his review of my album, *Reconcile*:

I was told that you needed 7 years to do *Arisen* and it seems that it's again the case for *Reconcile*. Of course you have other projects but why so long? How do you compose - is it a slow process?

Arisen took long because I really didn't know what I was doing or what I was getting into! With *Reconcile*, I allowed myself to get distracted quite often. That's because I really don't like working alone - I prefer to have collaborators. So when somebody would ask me to contribute to their project, I put my album on hold. I also spent time producing tracks for my Artifacts collection (volume 1 released in 2013, volume 2 not yet).

What are your favorite bands and those who have influenced you from yesterday and today?

When I first heard ELP's 'Pictures at an Exhibition', I knew I wanted to be a keyboard player. Then I was into Yes and many others. Eventually I started singing and listening to a lot more pop and hard rock, because the singers I liked were in those genres. These days I seem to prefer synth-pop, space/ambient, and modern classical music.

You're described as a *Christian rock* musician. What does this mean for you?

Just like any other songwriter, my convictions influence my lyrics. There's nothing unique about that, but that's what it means for me. One of my most cherished Christian authors was your countryman Jacques Ellul, by the way.

Have you met other musicians like this such as Neal Morse, Kerry Livgren, Mark Bradford and what do you think about their musical world?

I do know many fellow Christian prog-rockers, and have even made music with a few of them. I'd certainly love to work with more of them.

With what keyboards do you work?

For synthesizers, my favorite is my old Korg 01/W, which I've been using for a long time now. The other instrument I try to use in all my songs is my Hammond M3 organ.

What is the sense of the title *Reconcile*?

Conceptually it can have many applications, aside from the obvious religious ones. I like to keep things a little blurry or ambiguous when it comes to titles and lyrics. I'd rather inspire a feeling than a thought. If you get someone thinking too much, it takes them out of the music.

What about the beautiful artwork?

My wife does all my album design and artwork. I just come up with the general concept. For *Reconcile*, I wanted certain "earthy" colors and textures, but she did the rest.

Would you agree that your voice, already very good is now even better and sure?

When I recorded *Arisen*, I wasn't prepared to record vocals at home, so I did them in a studio where time was limited. By the time I did *Reconcile*, I was more experienced and also able to record at home where I could spend as much time as I wanted. So, yes, I agree that the vocals on *Reconcile* are more self-assured and confident.

Arisen was really a great album, enjoyed by plenty of people and magazines, but *Reconcile* is really monstrous! Was it voluntary to sound like Genesis on the two parts of *Seeds of the Earth*? Do you agree? The second part which finishes the CD is just enormous; it's the best track made in this spirit I've heard in many, many years!

I think part 2 does sound like something Genesis might do. It wasn't intentional, however. My guitarist was not always available so I ended up doing more keyboard lines and solos on this album. The guitar is featured more on *Arisen*. I also stayed away from using any string samples on this album, and went instead for more synth textures.

The second and eponym track sounds a little like ELP and UK, two influences for you? Especially on *I Promise* (for UK). Have you wanted to use a real violin at any time?

They don't particularly remind me of those bands, although I certainly love ELP and UK. It's interesting you mention those tracks because I think there's a big contrast between them: '*Reconcile*' being very bright and '*I Promise*' being quite dark sounding. No violin! People already compare me too often to Kansas!

Is it a choice to not have a very long piece? (all are under 7 minutes)

I think a couple of them are over 7 minutes, but, yes. I feel that if you stretch a song too much, it loses its emotional effectiveness and is not as satisfying. '*Paradise of Stone*' from *Arisen* was 9 minutes, and that's the longest one I've done so far.

You really have a great sense of melody and you're a very talented keyboardist. Have you received invitations to join some bigger-name bands?

Well, not too many people know about me! I'd love to be in a real band again, but the right opportunity just hasn't come along.

Are you also the sound engineer of the album? Is it self-produced?

All the tracking was done in my home studio, but I took it to a professional studio for mixing. It's a great cost-effective way to work that a lot of people are doing these days.

Anything you would like to say about *Reconcile*, progressive music or something other?

Honestly, I've grown tired of the progressive rock scene. It seems to me that a lot of prog fans here in the U.S. listen to music as if it were a spectator sport. In other words, they want to be entertained by displays of technique, and they also want to keep score by counting the clichés. Bands are approaching their own music that way too. Perhaps it's time for me to try something different!

Well, I'll stop here. I don't want to use your time and patience and I wish you the best for yourself and for this album which will be in my top 10 of this year.

Thank you very much! I'm very happy you enjoyed the album!