

Epitaph – Fire from the Soul (MIG Music)

In Reviews March 15, 2016 Scott Adams 123 Views
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Not exactly metal, but rocking all the same...

German (except they're not really German –half the band is actually British but based in that country) outfit **Epitaph** are something approaching legends in their home country; Elsewhere, not so much, but on the evidence of this, their sixteenth album, it's hard to see why they haven't made greater waves on a worldwide scale.

Formed in 1969 and reaching their peak in the mid seventies, they create the sort of sound you'd probably expect from an act spawned in that era. Proggy, at times pompous rock with an occasional eye on bombast (the nine minute long title track is a particular highlight in this style) is the name of the game, though the band ain't shy of a melody, often coming on in their poppier moments as a slightly cut-price version of **Cheap Trick**.

Even in their least rockular moments the band's songwriting smarts mean that they are never less than easy on the ear; The **Wilbury**esque *Spark to Start a Fire* in particular should find a welcoming place in the hearts and ears of anyone with a yen for pleasantly undemanding ear candy, and the overall superior sonics and top-class performances make this album, if not a necessity, then certainly a pretty good way to dispose of a few quid should you come across it in your local record n'tape exchange.

Strangely enough the best track here, an excellent slab of eighties AOR called *Love Child* is only available as a bonus track so I'd hunt that version down if I were you.

There are a host of metallic links to the band in case you're looking for an extra reason to head this album's way; the band reformed at the start of the new millennium at the instigation of **Scorpions** guitarist **Rudolf Schenker**, and for a while also numbered former **Saxon** sticksman **Fritz Rando** among their ranks, whilst this album features a guest appearance from **Klaus Henatsch** on piano and keyboards. 'Who's Klaus Henasch?' I hear you cry... well, he's a member of **Nektar**, the band who wrote *King of Twilight* which our heroes **Iron Maiden** recorded and released as a b-side of their 1984 single *Aces High*. Six degrees of metal separation!

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