

SINCE 1992, THE JOURNAL OF PROGRESSIVE MUSIC ISSUE 68 FALL 2015

progression

KARMIC DEBT PAID IN FULL
THE COURAGEOUS RETURN OF

OZRIC TENTACLES

INSIDE: 112 PAGES OF EXCLUSIVE ARTICLES, LIVE REPORTS PLUS MORE THAN 120 CD & BOOK REVIEWS!

BOOK REVIEWS / CD REVIEWS

BOOK RATINGS

are rated according to the four criteria that *Progression* reviewers generally equal weight in the evaluations. Please note the magazine's prior 16-point rating has been replaced by a simpler star system figuring thusly:

Basically not worth your time).

and bag, value in the ear of the

solid bet for fans of that

★

GOOD (impressive, with strong appeal).

★★

EXCELLENT (a special work you'll keep back to).

CRITICAL:

quality as well as quality of the writing (clarity, dynamic range and mix). For live recordings rate as highly as recordings in this area.

POSITION:

writing and arrangement. This assesses originality of ideas, quality of lyrics and how well the pieces hang together structurally, melodically, etc. For lyrics that are highly improvisational in nature, composition refers to how well the musicians communicate with one another in developing a coherent exchange of musical ideas.

TECHNICALSHIP:

musical technical ability—how well they use their instruments (including voice).

JIM REILLY

StickMan

2015 (Book, 276 pp.)

TWO HANDED PRESS

Moog synthesizer, mellotron, Chapman Stick. When it comes to specialized instruments practically defining the progressive music genre, those three arguably stand above all others. Consequently, one wonders why it took so long for someone to officially give Stick inventor Emmett Chapman the overdue recognition he deserves.

With *StickMan*, Canadian author (and also a player) Jim Reilly offers a lovingly intimate tribute to Chapman detailing all aspects of the man and his invention: musically, technically, business-wise and above all, personally.

Reliving the Stick's invention/discovery through Chapman's eyes is touchingly awe-inspiring. "It felt like flying," he's quoted as saying of the revelatory ability to access a piano player's chords while performing intricate melody lines on the same guitar-like implement. His discovery of two-handed tapping technique literally was a "eureka!" moment for Emmett back in 1969 according to his daughter Diana, who was 12 at the time.

StickMan is as much an American adventure story as documentary chronicle, recounting Chapman's experimental struggles in actually building the contraption, refining it and fighting for mainstream acceptance. Engagingly written and loaded with eye-popping revelations, you'll have a hard time putting this page-turner down. **John Collinge**

WILL ROMANO

Prog Rock FAQ

2014 (Book, 400 pp.)

BACKBEAT BOOKS

concept albums, chronicles the history of the mellotron and lists 20 of the genre's biggest epics, beginning with Pink Floyd's "Echoes."

Immensely readable for fans, this book combines Romano's intricate knowledge of the genre with his obvious passion for the music.

Michael Popke

MAX MOBLEY

Rush FAQ

2014 (Book, 254 pp.)

BACKBEAT BOOKS

We shouldn't be surprised that the author of what arguably is the most thorough book-length examination of Rush is a fanboy. Practically every male Rush fan could be classified that way. Besides, when the fanboy in question is as knowledgeable and enthusiastic as Max Mobley (a former columnist for the long-gone *Crawdaddy!* rock magazine), why complain?

The FAQ series of books – featuring band history, music analysis and other information in standalone chapters for serious fans – is branching out to embrace more progressive rock artists. Rush certainly deserves this type of treatment. With so little published about the band (except for what drummer Neil Peart reveals in his travelogues), Mobley attempts to entice multiple generations of fans. He designates 1976's *2112*, 1981's *Moving Pictures* and 2007's *Snakes & Arrows* as the band's three "breakout" albums. Max also uses Rush's multiple live albums as framework for recounting the band's expansive history and examines Rush's ever-increasing popularity through its career.

He gets a little too hung up on the equipment Rush uses in the studio and onstage. Yet overall, this is a compelling read assessing all periods of the iconic band's career. **Michael Popke**