

The Passage

By

Mario Raposo

Written by

Steve Sheppard

I must admit I had been looking forward to reviewing this album, a new name, a fresh approach and a certain familiarity can be found here. Raposo has rare skill of building beautiful pieces to wonderful crescendos, so let's begin a new musical voyage with **The Passage**.

The progression in the first offering **New Signs** is amazing, and so beautifully fluent in its construction. Comparisons to *Jean Michel Jarre* are going to be drawn, but this is much more than that, the arrangement achieves such a wonderful tempo and manifests itself easily, into film score proportions.

A smooth and calming beginning lights our way within the track **The Secret**, synths create a mystical essence that swirls around us, while Raposo on keyboards creates a narrative that is not only totally compelling, but extremely riveting to listen to. A special mention has to go to *Luis H Bettencourt*, for a stunning guitar segment on this superb track.

The theme of the next composition seems to be gaining speed across our desperate world, one that seeks balance and peace at all costs, and perhaps this piece can be an anthem for that desire, it certainly has all the right hall marks to do so. **A Glimpse of Hope** is an emotional and emotive offering that is so lovingly and honestly performed by the musician. Raposo has such a depth in talent that each piece is an art form in itself, and this offering is a colourful tapestry of wonderment on its own.

We now go almost short form here with the composition **Communion**, but even on a track that is just over two minutes long, the artist has created a

perfection in energy that highlights not only his skills as a supreme electronic musician, but one that can raise the rhythm's and moods at a whim.

The changes continue to flow from the hands and mind of **Mario Raposo**, as we now move into the realms of the universe within the track **Space Roller-Coaster**. The percussion and style here reminds me greatly of the master *Vangelis*, I would then later turn to the liner notes to find out that this offering was indeed dedicated to the man himself, no surprise there, and what a respectful piece and performance by Raposo.

We now arrive at the half way marker of the album and step foot on the doorway of the title track, **The Passage**. I adore this moment of supreme art and concept and here **Mario Raposo** has done himself proud by manifesting something so wonderfully listenable. There is a hint of emotion, a sensation of movement and layers of suspense, all built into this one quite incredible track. This is a composition that could easily cross a few genres and styles along the way, a quite addictive and brilliant piece.

As we tentatively step inside the boundaries of the latter half of the album, we come across a light filled opus called **Dance of The Stars**. There is a gentleness of movement here that is almost like watching a galactic pirouette of sorts. It has to be said that the performance on keyboards and synths here is outstanding in every way, the layers upon layers of magical tonal quality creates a piece that is brimming with happiness as its main character.

As a flautist, my wife and station manager *Chrissie Sheppard* will no doubt be interested in this next offering called **The Devine Plan**. The addition of the flute (*Patricia Perpetuo*) adds a fresh dimension, and reminds me in parts of the legend that is *Terry Oldfield*. Once more the artist builds upon an arrangement, by adding some lush synths and a piano that manifests an air of mystery, but of something so very vast, yet reassuring, that somewhere in the infinite divide, there is a grand plan after all.

The energy created by **Troubled Era** creates a narrative of a freneticism that seems to want to engulf the world and swallow her up. *Misha Silva* with her soprano vocal was almost like Gaia herself calling out for help, this is an extremely dramatic and frantic offering that paints a worrying picture of the era we were currently living in now.

The electronic nature of **Chromosphere** is sublime; the artist displays a musical image of the lower region of the atmosphere of a star, while the light synths manifest something truly special, one that once more touches the hem of both *Jarre* and *Vangelis*. This is an offering of exciting proportions, and one that has a lively energy about its construction.

Our penultimate offering is entitled **Strings of Life** and the symphonic nature of this composition is so deeply moving that one cannot help but be moved by its sensitive narrative. This may only be just over two minutes long, but the synths here build something that is so poignant and touching and almost angelic too.

So we arrive at the very last portal of the album, and as we step through and back into our realm, the artist has one more musical gift to leave us with before we go; it's called **Long Walk Into The Light**. This has to be the perfect ending composition, the keyboards of the artist manifest a real curtain closer of a composition, one that you would expect to see at the end of a movie, a very smooth and classy way to finish the release.

The Passage by **Mario Raposo** is one of those albums that has that extra special something. The production quality, the performances and the arrangements were touching, exciting, stirring and addictive. Raposo is a genius in motion, and I for one, am extremely happy that his music has touched my life, as I hope it will yours as well.