



Ricardo Beas - Reviews

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Café Peyote
Self Titled (CD)

Prog rock. Once the staple of arena concerts, today prog is either lumped in with electronic music or perhaps accurately re-imagined as jazz fusion. But prog rock has retained a core of dedicated followers who continue to look beyond the simplistic turns-of-song that typify rock music today.

Enter local musician Ricardo Beas. He has been playing music since his teens, honing his musical skills in Tijuana cafés throughout the '70s. His own contribution to the prog genre, Café Peyote, is the brainchild of Beas and the talented multi-instrumentalist brothers Paco and Luis Elorza. Borne of the desire to express his thoughts on an increasingly troubled world, this debut has already gotten the attention of Baja Prog Radio mere weeks after its release.

At first blush, Café Peyote might appear to be little more than an album of hymns to latter-day mysticism; indeed, the songs do speak to all that lovely hippie stuff: the search for deeper meaning, lauding of the inward journey, eschewing materialism, etc. But this CD was two years - perhaps almost 40 years - in the making, and it has all the hallmarks of a carefully crafted work.

Café Peyote is an album deeply indebted to its influences - Yes, Pink Floyd, King Crimson, ELP - all of whom are clearly evident throughout. Beas' voice is pure, the musicianship is excellent, and the songs don't often suffer from the kind of overproduction that weighed down prog rock towards the end of its heyday.

The album opens with "Tribute to the King," which calls to mind most of those influences, followed without pause by "Why," also richly instrumented and full of sonic bombast. His Spanish-language songs are more straightforward-sounding tunes. "Ven Acá" is a mid-tempo ballad that would be at home on any Spanish-language radio station, and "En Mi Mente Siempre Están" is a soaring homage to childhood and being both a son and a father to a son.

Beas' songwriting is strongest on "Consumer Joe" and the obligatory prog suite, "You Decide," comprised of three movements: "Good and Bad," a spoken-word dirge imploring the listener to decide what they truly want out of life. "No Tolerance" feels like a '60s generation lament about how they let things "get out of hand." The final movement, "If Only I Could Draw," captures a dreamer's idealism in a wistful tune; if he could draw, he would create the perfect world - no suffering or injustice.

"They're Bombing Again" and its guitar-as-air-raid-siren rips through the utopian whimsy like a song of social outrage should. The album closer, "The Common Law" is an up-tempo tune that none-the-less rails against the loss of civil liberties - kind of like a proggy, Latin-tinged "Get Up, Stand Up."

Beas' lofty ideals and skillful musicianship make Café Peyote an album for any prog fan to check out. He comes across as a man who stands by his ideals and makes the music to match.

[Jennifer Carney - San Diego Troubadour - August 2009 Edition \(Aug 1, 2009\)](#)

I listened to your song "The Common Law" and was struck by your voice, the music, and the remarkable images that accompanied the song. The lyrics say so much.

[Howard Zinn - Historian, political scientist, social critic \(Aug 12, 2009\)](#)

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"If Noam Chomsky and Kurt Cobain made a record it would sound something like this..."

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