

# THE MUSIC IS OUT THERE

By Nicky Baldrian

Shawn Gordon is president and owner of Prock Rock Records, he is also a musician in his own right and has recently released a new from his band **PSYCHIC FOR RADIO** called 'Standing Wave' which fans of progressive rock and jazz fusion will lap up. Shawn has played music since he was 5. 'I started with piano, then guitar, then trumpet, then taught myself drums and anything else I could get my hands on,' he tell me. 'I've played virtually everything in various live bands over the years and had dreams of being a rock star, but reality and life got in the way. Fast forward to 2002 and I founded Prog Rock Records which gave me the incentive and opportunity to finally put an album out of music I'd been working on.'

The inspiration for this album came from a ton of varieties of music. 'The only musician I could say inspired me was Tony Banks from Genesis, he is why I got my first 12 string and why I bought certain keyboards. Saga is my next favorite and they showed me how the vocal was its own musical instrument as opposed to just following the melody of another instrument. I know Genesis did this too, but Saga for some reason made it real to me, maybe I was too focused on Tony Banks playing. There is no direct inspiration for the album, the germs of some of these songs go back 30 years, I wanted to finish up old ideas and experiment with some new ones. There was no attempt to make something that sounded like a cohesive band, some people like that variety, some don't,' he says.



PFR isn't really a band. Shawn originally wanted it to be a band thing but it didn't end up going that way. 'All the songs or song ideas are mine and produced by Henning Pauly, who also plays a lot of instruments on it. This is really just a very unique blend of music, even in the couple spots that I'll cop to specific influences. My writing style is very odd, I've never been good at emulating anyone else, and I tend to write in very strange time signatures or torture a straight 4/4 when I happen to play in it, it isn't deliberate either, it is only after I've come up with some parts that I have to figure out the drums and then try to figure out what the hell time signature I'm in. So, I guess this is a vanity project and that alone is going to make it different than most other artists as they don't have my particular vanity.'

The album runs the gamut from OSI influenced, hyper over produced modern metal, to Genesis inspired 12 string and piano with a bit of Weather Report and Howard Jones thrown in for good measure. 'Someone told me the first 20 seconds of one of the songs reminded them of Spocks Beard. I like melody so this album has great vocal melodies that hide the fact that the time signatures and structures are so complex, one reviewer even said he didn't think it was prog and I was scratching my head thinking 'Did you actually listen'? I mean the lead off track is in 14/4 with some really complex arrangements. The Genesis inspired track "She Knows" sounds like a Waltz beat, which it is, sort of, but the arrangement is so totally messed up that the vocalist was tearing his hair out practically trying to find the groove, you can't tell that in the final product, which is part of the genius of the final product and production,' he says.

Some of the album was recorded at Shawn's home studio in Southern California, the bulk of it was recorded in Germany at Henning Paulys studio, and 3 of the 4 vocalists recorded at their own places. 'I've been working on this thing for like 6 or 7 years off and on with a great number of vocalist turnovers. I lost over 2 years waiting on a couple of vocalists. Henning and I produced it, but I can't stress enough how Hennings work really made this thing shine, the man is an absolute genius,' he smiles.

For the future there isn't much else planned for this project. 'The music industry is in such a shambles that I doubt I'll do another album, I do have a digital single that is done, just gotta finish up vocals in the next few weeks, but even though I'm almost sold out of stock, I doubt I'd even do another pressing given the piracy and all the other problems.' A shame as this is a fantastic album, I for one would love to see another release. For more info visit: [www.therecordlabel.net/progressive-rock/psychic-for-radio/](http://www.therecordlabel.net/progressive-rock/psychic-for-radio/)



**PRIMITIVE OVERFLOW** is the new band of Los Angeles based guitarist/songwriter Hoyt Binder with a passion for deep music. A few years ago we featured Hoyt in Fireworks on a solo album he worked with for his wife Saskia. For this new project the influences range from jazz, rock, metal, funk, r&b, pop and folk, Binder aspired to write an album with no boundaries. Everything melds into the progressive melting pot that is Primitive Overflow. The end result is a unique sound, integrating progressive rock with catchy pop vocals, dripping with melody. The band became a reality when Binder was recording an album with his wife and ran into one of his idols, singer/songwriter Donnie Vie from Enuff Z'Nuff. The album which is called 'Honor Way Down' which is out now via Prog Rock Records.

Hoys was drawn to music at an early age and powerless to resist it. 'For me, music represents the deepest meaning and all that is intangible in life,' he explains. 'It is and will always be art to me, superseding any notions of music as a business. From as far back as I can remember, I was constantly wanting to learn more about music and was never satisfied, even to this day.'

'Donnie and I share a love for the Beatles and I share in that power pop passion, but I also love a lot of melodic rock like Queen and Van Halen as well as jazz, 20th century classical music and early progressive rock bands. Brian Wilson's 'Smile' had a huge impact on me. Now there's a guy who gave all hive himself to the music and even though it took 40 years, it was worth it. The inspiration behind "Honor Way Down" was to take all that music means to us and create something new, something deep, something spiritual, but still have it be catchy, classic and above all, rock.'

Hoyt feels that the bands only ambition was to create art for art's sake. 'At no point was marketing a driving force,' he tells me. 'We wanted to make music that pushes the envelope, while still being accessible to the average listener, who like us, really loves catchy melodies. Whether it's the Beatles or Stravinsky, we find true beauty and art in both, so we never limited ourselves to one set of rules to write by. When I listen to classic bands that I love, I always want more. I always dreamed

of hearing a life span's worth of music packed into one album. I want every second to be exciting. More is more. And that is what we offer, 110% with no holding back.'

The album begins with an a capella doo wop performed by Donnie that leads into 'Turnin' Round,' a deceptively simple tune with Beatles and Beach Boys influences that leads to some progressive slides and turns along the way. 'Most of the album is designed to be this way, deceptively simple, but there are tunes like the instrumental 'Midnight Rendezvous' that are extremely progressive. The album's singles, 'Day To Day' and 'Waiting For You' showcase the mixture of pop melodies with progressive ideas, but the soon to be released 3rd single, 'Listen Honey,' really highlights the progressive side of things along with a big power pop chorus. 'Caving In' has some very soulful singing by Donnie and a very funky hard rock vibe to it. The title track includes the recurring theme of holding on to love and belief as it details Donnie's moving from Chicago to LA and his battles with substance abuse. The final track which is the longest and most progressive, 'Animation,' ends with an a capella choir that prayerfully wraps up the spiritual rock n' roll journey.'

Hoys had the opportunity of meeting Donnie while he and his wife Saskia, were working on her album 'One Heart' at 4th Street Studios. 'We did a cover of Enuff Z Nuff's 'Blue Island' and the studio owner mentioned knowing Donnie. Being the huge Donnie fans that we were, we were thrilled when we contacted him and he agreed to do a duet with my wife. Afterwards, I approached him with the Primitive Overflow material and we hit it off.'

The band recorded the basic tracks at Dino M4 Recording Facility in Torrance. 'We did vocals and overdubs at 4th Street Studios in Santa Monica. Our engineer, Gordon Michael, did offer a lot of input, but this album was self produced by Donnie and myself, giving us complete artistic freedom over the end result. I took a couple years to complete as there was some downtime until we found the right singer. Once Donnie was on board, we took out time to rework the material in the studio, letting our creative instincts go wild.'

For the future, Hoyt and Donnie have a cool and crazy idea for a rock opera that they have created many demos for already. 'It may end up as Primitive Overflow release if we ever finish it. Donnie has a new album, 'Wrapped Around My Middle Finger' and this summer, I'll be releasing my own solo album called 'Prayrie Go Round' which is instrumental jazz/rock fusion. I'll also be playing guitar on as many future Donnie Vie albums as possible.' Check the band out at: [www.therecordlabel.net/progressive-rock/primitive-overflow/](http://www.therecordlabel.net/progressive-rock/primitive-overflow/)



**MAIEUTICA** are an atmospheric melodic/prog band from Italy and have released a new album called 'Logos' via Deftox Records that is rather good. The band are Thomas Sturaro on vocals, Matteo Brigo on guitar, Roberto Guarino - guitar, Luca Serasin - bass and Mirco Zilio on drums. I chatted with Matteo Brigo to find out more. Maieutica were born in Padova, located in the North East of Italy: their purpose is to keep alive the listeners' critical spirit, which has fallen asleep because of the ephemeral trends imposed by the so-called mainstream. 'Over the years, we developed a musical and interior research aiming at the search of truth. Logos, our new album, is simply a stage of this path, not the final goal,' Matteo tells me.

The band blend their influences together to create something that can sound new and original. 'We all have a rock-oriented background, but our