



Date: 14/07/2007

Format: CD (Album)

Simona Rigano: Keyboards and Voice

Tino Nastasi: Guitar - Rickenbacker Bass

Sabrina Rigano: Sax and Flute - EWI 4000S

Daniele Bambino: Bass

Natale Russo: Drums And Percussion

Here's another younger Italian band with their new CD brought to us by the label Maracash records, who also recently released the new La Torre dell'Alchimista. This little label has built up quite a name for itself recently by putting out material not only from these two great bands but also items for artists like Banco, Gecko's Tear, Alphaterra, Imagin'Aria, Edera and October Equus. While this one is slightly mellower and not quite as dynamic as La Torre dell'Alchimista's Neo, it's still an awesome recording in it's own right.

Led by keyboardist and vocalist Simona Rigano, Conqueror has a wonderfully melodic approach with a jazzy edge that is definitely worth hearing. It's really refreshing to hear a female-led prog band from Italy, there are so few of them; in fact, I can't really think of any at all. Simona employs most of the usual keyboard suspects. She mainly relies on the more basic elements like piano, organ and mellotron but there are ample synth moments as well. Her vocals are simply lovely and give the material a shimmering quality that reminds me of the more recent Japanese singers from bands like Ashada, Theta and Interpose.

There's also another woman in the band, Sabrina Rigano (I believe Sabrina and Simona are sisters but I'm not positive), who plays flute and sax. You'd be surprised how these elements compliment and contrast the music. When the flute is present, the music takes on a pastoral symphonic leaning similar to things like PFM and Celeste. When there is a sax, things get a lot jazzier. These elements really enhance the sound of the band even when they are not out in front dominating the sound.

I shouldn't downplay the contributions from the men in the band either. Guitarist Tino Nastasi is a very strong player that gets in his fare share of tasty licks and solos. The rhythm section of Daniele Bambino on bass and Natale Russo on drums provide a rock-solid background to this beautiful music.

74 giorni is this youthful band's third album. I've not heard the other two but I imagine they have done quite a bit of progressing in the short time they have been around. Apparently it is a concept album and while I can't really convey what the story is because I don't know Italian, I will say this disc has loads of highlights. One of my favorite tracks is "Non maturi per l'adil ", a heavier piece with lots of rocking guitar breaks and some really nice organ work. "Nebbia ad occhi chiusi" is a longer track and gives the band the opportunity to stretch out a bit. This one has a very nice quiet section with atmospheric keyboards and storm sound effects. The final track "Cambio di rotta" is really nice too, with some great moog work, majestic guitar soloing and a ghostly spoken word outro.

I had to listen to this one a few times through before it really sunk in but I'll say with certainty that this is a fantastic CD. Conqueror are a young band (most of them are still in their 20s) and have a bright future ahead of them. This album has all the elements of classic Italian prog plus it features two very attractive and talented ladies. How can you go wrong?.



www.conqueror.it