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High5 "Music with Michael"

Listening to High5 & Laura Scaglia is like listening to the best pop rock radio station in NYC. High5 is a perfect mix of well seasoned top-quality musicians at every position. Here is my review of this Lausanne CH based musical group's latest release.

Their latest release is "Second Thought" and my favorite song on this day in November 2021 is XY and More - so let's see what I have to say!

XY and More: Harkens back the glory days of ABBA with Ms. Scaglia multi-tracking her vocals against a very complimentary instrumental ensemble that is perfectly matched to the timbre of her sensuous and "come hither" vocal delivery. The song is extremely well-crafted verse, chorus, verse, chorus with a surprising soft-spoken bridge that makes you want to listen again to make sure you got the message Laura is whispering to (who?). I want a guitar solo now and YES here it is, perfectly situated in the mix. Mr. Vulliet guitar solo is soft, smooth, melodic and seemingly effortless; is this a Phil Collins guitar sample? The song ends with a repeated chorus that my ear longed to hear just one more time.

Mother Nature: It's obvious this band knows how to deliver a song with a message. Also, in my opinion political and environmental minded songs should be short so as not to alienate an audience if they don't happen to agree with your message. Mother Nature is such a song, short and to the point. I question the decision to open the EP with this track. I would have preferred to have this song end the EP. But this is one man's opinion. The musical backing (tense and serious) compliments the vocals. The band doesn't get in the way of their message.

Greener Ride: This track comes on strong from the beginning with a tight drum groove from Mr. Robert and syncopated hand claps. The interplay between Mr. Morier punchy bass line and Mr Vulliet chordal work creates an anxiousness that suits this song's intro, very Steely Dan. Another glossy and highly polished vocal performance from Ms. Scaglia accentuated nicely by Mr. Morier intricate, dancing bass lines. I particularly like the way the bass was recorded on Second Thoughts. The verse, chorus formula is taken to a new level on this track. The ascending vocals and chords on the B part of the verses create a feeling of anxiousness enhanced by the overdubbed guitar behind the voice. Surprise the groove changes and the bass player takes the lead with some very tasteful trips around his 5 strings before the track opens up and give Ms. Scaglia space to accentuate the lyrics. Repeat the chorus to end the song and a reprise of the intro is just what I wanted to hear.

And I Sing: Opens with the Mr Morier bass leading us through the chord changes followed by Ms. Scaglia's perfectly pitched vocal, simple rhythm guitar and again that tight drum sound taking us to that super poppy chorus we all can't wait to hear. I really like the way the male voice supports the lead vocal taking us to the multi-tracked "nah-nahs". This is very 80's but it sounds fresh when High5 does it. Back to a new verse and Laura perks up my ears with a few lines in her native French before returning to English. A predictable, formulaic but well played guitar solo closes out the track with a final note falling right on the tonic. If this isn't a happy song that last notes makes you think it is.

Perfect World: High5 seems to be unclear of where this song needs to go and what to do with it. The beginning had me wishing the band had recorded it "country". It sounds like a country song that a pop producer tried to turn it into a pop song but ran out of ideas. No kidding High 5'ers I'd like to hear Perfect World recorded as a country song. There is too much going on in this song, almost two or three songs in one, it never has a chance to settle in.

This band has become my favorite Swiss pop group. Consistent quality song writing, arrangements and production. I WANNA SEE YOU IN CONCERT!!!

Four out of five stars!!!

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