



SAGA

*****Brand new 'Network' album out 27th Sept on SPV, Mean Fiddler headline gig 31st Oct*****

Michael Sadler – Vocals. Jim Crichton - Bass and Bass Keyboards. Ian Crichton – Guitars.
Jim Gilmour - Keyboards and Vocals. Christian Simpson - Drums

Saga count among the undisputed protagonists of the genre that was originally referred to as 'Art Rock' and later became known as 'Prog Rock' and are considered legitimate successors to groups like Yes, King Crimson, or Emerson, Lake & Palmer. Their brand new album 'Network', released on SPV on September 27th, a collection of ten new compositions, sounds fresh and inspired, yet unmistakably Saga. Maybe this is because the band have used a line-up change to their advantage, making the most of the energy surge it provides.

Drummer Steve Negus is currently taking time out, and Canadian Christian Simpson was enlisted to fill in for him. "Steve asked for a sabbatical" Jim Crichton explains. "He simply needed more time for himself and his private life. We won't put any obstacles in his way. Steve knows that he can return any time and will be greeted with open arms." In Simpson, Saga have enlisted a new drummer who immediately made his presence felt. "I think that *Network* sounds rawer, more lively and more spontaneous than our previous albums. No doubt that's also thanks to Christian. He came to Toronto for an audition and impressed us so much that we hired him on the spot." Another reason for the freshness and vitality of the *Network* material lies in the recording process "Most bands record their drum parts directly on the computer. That's easier and less time-consuming, but it frequently sounds pretty sterile. We still use an analogue tape machine for the drum tracks because it makes them sound warmer, more natural. It gives them more depth and a real rock attitude."

Commenting on the music, Crichton continues; "Listening to the material on *Network*, I frequently feel reminded of releases like *Silent Night* or *Worlds Apart*. Call it retro? I call it the continuation of typical tried-and-tested Saga elements, combined with fresh ideas and sounds." In terms of content, about half of the new material deals with TV as a medium and its effect on people. 'Live At Five' criticises the excesses of sensationalist journalism. "Some programmes are all about how to shock the audience in front of the box," Crichton grumbles. "Their motto is: 'By the end of this programme we'll have shown you 55 reasons why you should feel permanently afraid.' What a load of bullshit!" 'On The Air' (Crichton: "Definitely one of the most important songs on *Network*; it sounds very abstract.") is about people for whom the TV is their only purpose in life. "They live in a fantasy world, never leave the house and completely lose touch with reality."

When Saga got together to compose in spring 2004 each band member had already been writing songs at home since January. "There were probably around sixty to seventy vague suggestions," says Crichton, a little surprised at his band's creative surge. "Twenty song fragments were so good that we put them on the short-list. Ten of them made it onto *Network*."

Musing on Saga's upcoming European tour, which kicks off at London's Mean Fiddler on October 31st, Crichton says "I don't want to give too much away, but alongside our new material and greatest hits we're thinking about performing one of our early album successes all the way through in one go." Sounds like a treat for the fans!

Networking – Roland Hyams on 020 8677 / 8466 / 8769 6713. 8th September 2004.
www.saga-world.com



SAGA

Brand new 'House Of Cards' album out 5th February on SPV through Koch

Saga count among the undisputed protagonists of the genre that was originally referred to as 'Art Rock' and later became known as 'Prog Rock' and are considered legitimate successors to groups like Yes, King Crimson, or Emerson, Lake & Palmer. However, unlike these other acts, Saga have survived to this day – and in their original line-up at that (!!) Their new album 'House Of Cards', released on SPV through Koch on February 5th 2001, a collection of eleven new compositions, sounds fresh and inspired, yet unmistakably Saga.

“No other band sounds like we do. You can recognize a Saga track among thousands of other songs, no matter which era of our band’s history the number in question stems from,” declares bassist Jim Crichton proudly. “At the beginning of our career we described our style jokingly as ‘medieval funk’, an indication of the band members’ sense of humour, but it also shows that we knew precisely from the start that we were creating something unusual. These days we no longer need fantasy terms to define our music. It’s simply Saga.”

'House Of Cards' is an intense and inventive Saga recording continuing the band's 'chapters' series, which is particularly popular with the fans and has been an integral part of the band's albums for some 22 years. “The 'chapters' are a kind of musical puzzle,” explains Crichton. “We have a precise outline of the whole story, and every album reveals more information. To make it more of a challenge for the fans to work out the whole tale, the 'chapters' do not appear in chronological order but at random. Our debut album featured chapters 5 and 6, the last recording parts 9, 10, and 13.” House Of Cards contains sequels 11 and 15 in the songs 'Ashes To Ashes' and 'We'll Meet Again'. “We may reveal the rest on the next album,” reckons Crichton, hinting at a resolution of the story. “Let me just say this much: it’s about what’s going on in the world, about politics, culture, and religion.”

“I think that the new numbers venture even more strongly into different extremes. There are some very quiet passages where we rely on acoustic guitars, and then there are rock sections that sound heavier than ever before.” Saga composed a total of over 30 numbers between Spring and Autumn 2000. “The songwriting process was repeatedly interrupted by gigs in Canada and Germany, which meant that we were able to transfer a lot of the energy from our gigs onto the record.” 30 tracks, eleven of which actually made it onto the final product, are an indication of the group’s undiminished creativity. 'House Of Cards' was produced by Jim Crichton at his Sound Image Entertainment Studios in Los Angeles, California. “I own two studios in L.A.,” the bassist explains, “so I ended up having to do everything: play music, produce, engineer and be the coffee boy.”

“We don’t have to reinvent Saga,” he says. “We still play our original sound in the original line-up, as we have done all these years. There’s no reason to change our music as long as we can come up with as many new and exciting ideas as we did on House Of Cards.”

The Dealer - Roland Hyams on 020 8677 8466 or 8769 6713.
8th December 2000

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SAGA

Biography

Michael Sadler - Vocals
Jim Crichton - Bass and Bass Keyboards
Ian Crichton - Guitars
Jim Gilmour - Keyboards and Vocals
Steve Negus - Drums

Drawing on a variety of influences, from Rush to Emerson, Lake and Palmer, multi talented musician Mike Sadler, keyboard/guitar playing brothers Jim and Ian Crichton along with drummer Steve Negus formed Saga in Toronto, Canada in 1977.

Their debut self-financed album "Saga" was released on their own label in 1978 in Canada and led to the band signing the first of a number of major deals in 1979. Public and media interest in the band's second album, "Images At Twilight", released in the UK in 1980, was so great that Saga, after supporting Styx in Europe that Spring, headlined their first British tour in the Summer of 1980, supported on many shows by Magnum.

Later that year they added another keyboard player, Jim Gilmore, and began working on their next album "Silent Night", released in 1981, which elevated them into the major concert circuit in America. Saga subsequently released the "Worlds Apart" and "In Transit- Live" albums in 1982, "Head Or Tales" in 1983 and "Behaviour" in 1985. The band also scored several American Top Ten hits with singles such as "Wind Him Up" and "On The Loose" and then Jim Gilmour and Steve Negus quit the group for a "trial separation".

At the beginning of the Nineties, Saga decided to tour again in their original line-up, inked a new recording deal and brought out their sensational comeback album, 'The Security of Illusion' in 1993. The ensuing world tour turned into a global march of triumph; "Although 'The Security of Illusion' had only been out a mere two months, people were already singing along to the new songs word by word. It was overwhelming," Sadler recalls.

Reinvigorated, the quintet regrouped in Los Angeles and began writing, producing and performing music for "Cobra", the US television series produced by Stephen J. Cannel in 1994. "Steel Umbrellas", a new studio album from these sessions, was released later that year.

In 1995 Saga released "Generation 13", a 25 song rock opera recorded with custom made synthesisers and a pipe organ which "exploded contemporary images of of the dysfunctional family and the survival of the planet".

In 1997 the band released their last studio album, "Pleasure and Pain" and on 13th June 1997, during the extensive European tour which followed, Saga's Offenbach show was halted and the band were presented with citations as cultural ambassadors of Canada from the Prime Minister of Canada and the Premier of Toronto celebrating their twenty years on stage.

It was on this tour, in Germany, Austria and Holland that the band recorded 1998's double live "Detours" CD, a 22-song career retrospective which marked the beginning of Saga's new long term album deal with SPV in Europe.

On September 20th 1999 Saga released their first studio album for SPV, "Full Circle", which Powerplay magazine hailed as 'yet another work of genius...every song is a winner. Fans of the band not be disappointed at all and anyone who wants something with a bit more to it than your average rock/AOR record will find something a bit special here. 9/10.'

Saga then headlined London's LA2 on 26th November 1999, their first live appearance in the UK for 13 years. 'There was an almost tangible sense of expectation as the quintet eased into three of their very best songs, "You're not alone", "The Flyer" and "How Long" to commence tonight's proceedings. Nerves banished, it was time for some near-perfect melodic pomp, with front-man Michael Sadler hitting impossibly high notes, guitarist Crichton peeling out jazz rock-style scales and more keyboards than a Rick Wakeman impersonators convention...It was heartening to see such a fanatical, not to mention sizeable, turn out after so many years,' wrote Classic Rock Magazine in their March 2000 issue.

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