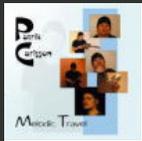


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### Carlsson, Patrik - Melodic Travel

Lion Music  
(2006)

This is the second release from Lion Music; but actually, the cd of '**Melodic Travel**' is the officially **Patrik Carlsson**'s fourth album if you count and include '**Figstomper 01**' and '**02**' as well. His previous album showcases uptempo and technical guitar shreds with nice twists and turns that sound a bit similar to **Steve Vai** and **Joe Satriani**. On this album, the atmospheres and approach he has taken here are very different from previous works in my opinion. What I have heard here has more honest with his roots...let's say his Swedish origin, and great mixtures of complex guitar instrumentals with song-oriented like friendly compositions. There have very up-tempo and technical stuffs, and also some smooth and nice melodic tunes everywhere. In particular, the guitar sounds are quite nice. Even though this cd contains more than 16 tracks, I do not get overwhelmed and confused at all. Somehow, the style on this cd reminds you of **John Petrucci** and **Mattias IA Eklundh**. While playing his music in the nature of complexity and hard-driving, his performance stays in somewhat mellower and very friendly than the players that I mentioned above. Again, you could say that another talented musician comes out of the Scandinavian region. Some people would consider this album sounds a softer and mellower than '**Phraseology**', but I think this album has much appeal to my ears. His music covers really diverse stuffs in guitar instrumental world. There is no monotonous and repetitious parts like other guitar instrumental music that tends to be. In the case of 'Melodic Travel', he has managed to balance out pretty well to appeal for guitar instrumental fans. Overall, I'm very impressed with the materials and his style here. I hope he continues and explore his original style with nice complexity. Recommended for Lion Music fans in general who enjoy guitar-oriented instrumental music.

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### Patrik Carlsson - Phraseology

Lion Music  
(2004)

Swedish guitar player, **Patrik Carlsson**, has been a relatively unknown musician. His first release from Lion Music, *Phraseology*, features lots of interesting guitar licks, ideas, and incredible chops. Like most Lion Music artists and musicians, Patrik's guitar chops and musical ideas are really extraordinary and fabulous indeed. *Phraseology* contains lots of varied guitar-oriented instrumentals. Patrik Carlsson is really good at **Steve Vai**/**Joe Satriani** style technical performance, yet he showcases different styles, such as rock, funk, neo-classical, hard fusion on the each track, and has executed really well. As you know the guitar instrumental music tends to get very serious and hard to absorb many notes and information, but he adds his own charms and magic into his music. However, Patrick's case is slightly different. Uniquely, Patrik incorporates amazing chops with wit and humour to entertain. While I am impressed with his songwriting and performance, the tunes of his creations make me smile. These elements might remind you of **Freak Kitchen**. Overall, I have nothing to complain about his guitar playing at all. I wish he will continue creating interesting guitar playing. If he forms a band with skilled players in the future, more interesting would be coming out.

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### Castle In The Air - s/t

Independent Release  
(1999)

Now defunct melodic symphonic prog metal band from Japan. Stylistically, their music is symphonic keyboard laden heavy progressive metal kind of blending of Japanese Prog Rock giant like Novela, Yngwie Malmsteen Rising Force, Royal Hunt, and some other symphonic rock influences. Personally, this band was quite impressive back then, esp., keyboard playing and sounds by Yuhki Nakajima (currently, he changed the name "yuhki") are quite interesting and entertaining. Guitar and bass players also create kind of hard driving speed and tension. Sound production is not superb, but they did very good job. Most impressive tune was called "Castle In The Air". This tune is very excellent symphonic progressive metal piece for me. This tune's approach is quite amazing since I heard. Other tunes are also quite furious and hard driving, but not as amazing as this title tune, however it is definitely worthwhile to check out this band for me. Not super technical or not really mind-boggling type band, but they executed really fabulous chops and nice melodic song approach. It is too bad, they disbanded already. Later, keyboard player "yuhki" joined Marge Litch. And then, some ex.members of Marge Litch with yuhki formed a new progressive hard band called Alhambra. Alhambra is supposed to release new album in the near future.

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### Centaur - God Complex

B.O. Records  
(1998)

They do nice and melodic metal music with bits of neo-classical flavored keyboard works and small amounts of proggy moves. At first, their style reminds me of **Vanden Plas** and **At Vance** a bit. To me, the second half of this album is really impressive. Definitely, German Melodic Metal/Hard Rock fans will enjoy this album I assume.

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### Centrica - s/t

Musea Parallele  
(2008)

This is the first album of Italian prog metal group. According to the booklet and information on their website, **Centrica** consists of relatively young, yet enthusiastic four musicians. After having some listening sessions, this Italian group shows thrilling instrumental sections and energetic passages that I really enjoyed quite a lot. Even though this group's main focus on this cd is technically challenging prog metal instrumentals, adding some vocal melodies might have added depth and more interesting dimension in my opinion. Their instrumental performance is really peculiar and skilled, yet I did not get overwhelmed or getting lost at all. **Centrica**'s music also puts the emphasis on friendlier and melodic approach, so various instrumental fans would enjoy their technical calibers. Musically, the fans of **Dream Theater** style and technical prog sounds would definitely get into their dramatic instrumentation, overall. They pull off interesting tempo changes, odd-time beats, and intricate rhythms in various sections, so personally I've really enjoyed their performance skills quite a lot.

In the nature of their music, most tunes are long pieces. Nevertheless, prog metal fans who are into technical passages and complex lines would feel very enjoyable I hope. Moreover, a few tracks include slow and middium tempo with calmer and ballad-like atmospheres as well. I'm quite amazed that their entire performance is very consistent. This Italian group already displays some confidence in every area, so next materials in the future would sound better. Additionally, the structure of each track is very solid, and each composition has been carefully constructed. At first, I was a bit surprised to hear their official release coming from prog rock special label **Musea Records**. Basically, Musea Records from France do not usually have many instrumental-oriented prog metal groups, or carry song-oriented prog/power style groups (except for a few bands like **Scenario** and **Cymoryl** in their label catalog). Anyway, we thank they picked up one of excellent new comers like Centrica. I think they should do that more :-)

I assume that this group 's keyboard player **Andrea Pavanello** and guitarist **Giorgio Rovati** who compose songs mainly with their other members, and direct the entire music production of self-title debut album. Probably, sound-making and production for this cd was mainly done by themselves with some engineers of their friends from Italy, their first full-length instrumental album relatively showcases a pleasant result to my ears. As I've mentioned before on the above, this Italian prog metal group delivers fresh energy and strong passions on their album. There have lots of colorful and unique parts in everywhere to sound more Italian way with their own originality. Highlights of this group are technical guitar solos with many intricate keyboards/synth lead and bombastic rhythm grooves that I'm quite happy to hear.

Again, there are no indications of indulgence or anything like that from their solo sections. Yet, the structure of each solo is friendly and

Again, there are no indications of indulgence or anything like that from their solo sections. Yet, the structure of each solo is friendly and well-constructed for every listener of prog metal. Esp., **Andrea Pavanello's** keyboard performance is very interesting to my ears. His performance style and sounds would surprise many practicing keyboard/synth musicians who respect **Jordan Rudess'** prowess. However, please do not get me wrong. Of course, Pavanello has his own style and charms to make his keyboard parts outstanding and interesting. I'd say good jobs for his accomplishment on the cd. Additionally, **Giorgio Rovati** also contributes exciting guitar solos and other works. Somewhat, speedy and thrilling parts in the instrumentations of **Centrica** remind me of other quality Italian prog metal groups like **Eldritch**, **Astra**, and **Icycore** (of course, in positive ways as a reference for someone).

Please do not forget the excellent rhythm section of this group. Foundation of rhythm parts are complex enough, and bass and drum parts are really dynamic and amazing. Esp, the drum performance of **Dario Ciccioni** who involves other Italian groups a la **TwinSpirits** and **Empyrios** is shining as well. Congratulations for really well-done job on this debut cd. I wish they would continue working hard to keep balancing good song-writing approach and bombastic progressive sounds. Next album is going to be more interesting results. Recommended for people who are into quality instrumental groups and Italian progressive rock/metal bands.

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### Chrome Shift - Ripples In Time

DVS Records  
(2003)

**Ripples In Time** is the first full-length debut album of Danish prog metal band, **Chrome Shift**. Since 90's, there have been many young talented and enthusiastic prog metal bands coming and going. In recent years, Netherland based **DVS Records** have been working really hard to release impressive new generation of prog rock/metal albums. Of course, Chrome Shift is one of best new acts from DVS Records. So far, melodic prog metal fans enjoy Chrome Shift's first offering quite a lot. Chrome Shift plays really punchy and immediate prog metal with nice hookliness and hardness. In the case of Chrome Shift, they manage to create memorable songs, solid and catchy melodies, as good as other quality prog metal acts. As long as I listen to Ripples In Time throughout, this band features **Jakob Lund Paulsen's** nice keyboard works, **Rasmus Bak's** strong mid-range vocal performance, **Otto Schutt's** heavy and chunky guitar parts with memorable guitar solo, **Paul Terkildsen's** pounding drums with nice and sharp shots, and important bass lines and phrases created by **Jens Christian Nielsen** who also wrote many important music parts and main lyrics. In particular, I am really impressed with **Jakob Lunk Paulsen's** impressive keyboard solos and nice passages with his sound making ability. In addition, vocal melody lines, guitar passages, and rhythm sections have woven tightly. I would say that they emphasize melody and hooks over technical parts, however there are lots of bombastic moments and incredible ensembles, esp., on instrumental sections. Successfully, they combine each instrumental section with main vocal melody lines cohesively and effectively to enhance dynamism and sensibilities on each track on this album. Stylistically, the instrumental parts remind me of slightly **Pain of Salvation** and **Wolverine**, but they do make their own style as well. As usual, the artists and bands of DVS Records make me good impressions and surprises that their sound production is relatively all quite magnificent and very warm. Ripples In Time was produced by Chrome Shift themselves with helps of **Jakob Hansen**, who engineered, mixed and mastered. The sound production turned out very well-done. Each instrument sounds and vocal performance have been well-balanced and very clear to hear. Thus, it does not sound like debut album. Rather, it seems sounding like very matured. (indeed, it is very matured and quality work). My favorite tracks that sound shining are, "Shadowsong", "Kosmonanten Er Dod", and "Le Temps Des Assasing". Highlight of the album for me personally is epic "Ripples In Time I-IV". Actually, I like all tracks of Ripples In Time. Hopefully, they continue making quality albums. One of best new comers in 2003.

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### CJSS - 241

Lion Music  
(2006)

If you are a big fan of American Power Metal and Heavy Metal, you would recognize the name like **David T. Chastain** and his related groups and projects. **CJSS** is one of well-recognized metal groups for U.S. Metal fans. Before jumping into the cd, please do not get confused with it as new album. **241** is an actually re-release cd including both '**World Gold Mad**' and '**Praise The Loud**' that were not available in Europe until recent days. They were only available as imports, but difficult to find them. Thanks go out to Lion Music's big input to finally release them as a format of 241. Comparing to later era of David Chastain's works, CJSS music is basically heavy and more straight-forward. Somewhat, the music from 'World On Fire' remind me the early stage of U.S. Metal like **Obsession** for instance, and giving some slightly NWOBHM vibes. I am guessing that those tunes would appeal to the fans of 80s metal and European Power Metal in general. In my honest opinion, the music from 'Praise The Loud' side is much enjoyable. The quality overall on the cd is slightly better and accessible than 'World Gone Mad', and immediate punches to grab the metal listener. Moreover, the tunes like "**Danger**" and "**Thunder And Lightning**" give me a really good impression. **241** is a fine power metal album overall. It's definitely good for all metal fans to re-visit the time that metal was purely hot and heavy.

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### Clockwork - Surface Tention

Sensory  
(1999)

After having released Search e.p., **Clockwork** released their first full-length album called "**Surface Tension**" through Sensory/The Laser's Edge Label. They were really talented U.S. progressive metal band. The reason why I use "were" is because I have heard that Clockwork themselves are not exploring prog metal format anymore and has changed their name as **Target Earth** (that is what I have heard so far). **Surface Tension** is a versatile prog metal album blending various musical aspects and styles within complex prog metal format. In **Search** e.p., they had been performing kind of technical symphonic prog power metal, but **Clockwork** eventually developed their style with unique blends of folk, classical, prog, and various elements. Their instrumentation is very brilliant, too. The arrangement and ensembles on this album are really well done and very beautiful as well. If you are the fans of **Shadow Gallery**, **Enchant**, and **Perfect Symmetry**, this U.S. prog metal group is a really worthwhile to check out. It's too bad to hear that they are defunct.

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### Cloudscape - Demo Cd

Independent Release  
(2003)

Cloudscape from Sweden plays melodic power prog metal on the cd. Throughout this cd, they try to keep song-oriented ensemble with hard edge sounds. Stylistically, their music seems to reside in the world of powerful prog metal bands like Symphony X and Evergrey. On first tune, "As The Light Leads The Way", relatively they keep playing straight-forward powerful metal. Next tune, "In These Walls", is my favorite tune, because of well-arranged and complex parts that they perform seamlessly and tightly with nice vocal melodies and hookiness. In addition, they add good amounts of keyboards. Third tune, "Under Fire" has some immediate feelings and punchy attacks with nice key sounds. In the case of Under Fire, this tune might need more warmer mixing. The guitar and keyboard parts are main roles to draw my attention on this third tune. To me, Under Fire has some kind of good potentials to appeal to melodic heavy music fans, so good job. Fourth track, "Witching Hour" has quite impressive keyboard introduction and heavy guitar riffs with a soaring vocal performance. Perhaps, this tune will appeal to the fans who enjoy neo-classical flavored metal/hard rock, 'cuz the shredding guitar solos and epic/keyboard arrangements. Last track, "Aqua 275" is mildly mid-tempo tune that has slightly atmospheric and softer parts mixing hard edge movements with staccato riffing. Lastly, I would like to say thanks to the help of Bjorn and Cloudscape for this cd. At the same time, congratulations for signing with an European label. Cloudscape has a bright future. Keep up your good works.

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### Cloudscape - s/t

Avalon/Marquee  
(2004)

Since early 2004, the name of Cloudscape has been popped up and rumored on the discussion in the circle of prog metal fans. So, I was really curious about how good they are. After several repeated listening sessions, I come to realize that Cloudscape has successfully managed to combine the elements of Swedish Melodic Metal with hard edge Prog Metal tendencies. The instrumentation of Cloudscape is undoubtedly very solid like fortress, and well-composed meticulously. Not only is their musicianship good enough, but also they prepared to produce the production really gorgeous and sound almost perfect on this self-titled debut album. Just like other quality Swedish metal/prog metal acts' production, the product of Cloudscape also appeals to the fans who are keen to good sounding albums. I strongly believe that the music of Cloudscape with richly varied sounds and ingredients, would appeal to the music fans of Symphony X, Royal Hunt, Tears of Anger, and the days of Yngwie Malmsteen that released "Eclipse" album.

On the first half of the album, they put the emphasis on relatively straight-forward faster paced dynamic HR/HM approach with good doses heaviness and immediate punchiness. Mostly, Cloudscape is also really good about including really lyrically beautiful guitar solos, and Swedish metal fans would be loving this kind of approach I assume. On the second half of the cd, you'll find several killer tracks that has prog metallic parts and busy section that I also have really enjoyed. Stylistically, they kept song-oriented approach, and adding some intricate guitar solos and bombastic sections. They know how to balance hard edge sections with dramatic and symphonic keyboard orchestrations to make thick soundscapes (perhaps sonic cloudscape). In addition, the singer Micael Andersson effectively pull off each track's own charms by his powerful and emotional vocal performance.

Speaking of the Cloudscape's 1st album, some prog metal fans might have considered this album as a bit too-straight forward, if they have their own prog metal terminology or mentality. But well..., as you listen to this album very closely, there is no doubt that Cloudscape's music has lots of intricate sections and bombastic instrumental parts with sharp and energetic feeling. Comparing this album to demo cd that previously they submitted for previous review articles, the full-length debut album shows much improvements, and I have been very impressed with this beautifully polished production. I congratulate the successful production of 1st album, and I wish them all the best for their future release in the regions of Europe and America.



### Coenen, Marcel - A Live Time Journey (DVD)

Lion Music  
(2006)

Is it too early to talk about this amazing live footage of ex. **Lemur Voice/Sun Caged** guitar player **Marcel Coenen** with his friends? Courtesy by Lion Music, his first DVD called **A Live Time Journey** makes me shout "this is simply AWESOME". Even though I saw the similar live performance of Marcel Coenen Band at annual prog metal-oriented **HEADWAY FESTIVAL**, this DVD absolutely captures the magical moments of the live performance from Marcel Coenen with his impressive fellow musicians from Europe and U.S.A. The audience of this DVD reacted really great and seemed to be enjoying a lot. Not only does Marcel shred and play impressively, but also do other musicians including **Frank Schiphorst** of ex. **Symmetry** and other new members of **Sun Caged** excel on the footage. This is a definitely must have for all prog metal fans who are especially into Sun Caged and Marcel Coenen's new album, **Colour Journey**. Superbly fantastic DVD I've seen in this year 2006, alone. The instrumental parts are really awesome, however I am totally impressed with the singers, such as **Colleen Gray**, **Joyce Dijkgraaf** from **Elleanore**, **Paul Villarreal** (new singer of Sun Caged), and **Mike Andersson** from **Cloudscape**. Big two thumbs-up for this DVD. Highly recommended for all prog metal fans! It's totally prog metal and aggressive guitar-instrumental haven!!

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### Coenen, Marcel - Colour Journey

Lion Music  
(2006)

"**Colour Journey**" is the second full-length solo album from a Netherland-based technical guitarist **Marcel Coenen**. Marcel has been a really well-known musician among prog metal and instrumental music fans, since his works on **Sun Caged** and **Lemur Voice** are really excellent and critically acclaimed. Unlike his first instrumental album, **Colour Journey** showcases Marcel Coenen's peculiar song writing skills and many vocal-oriented tracks featuring well-established musicians from various groups and solo works. Of course, Marcel proves his incredibly amazing guitar skills everywhere on this new album once again, but his emphasis and focus are definitely well-made song structures this time. His new album contains powerfully driven rock, complex heavy prog metal, groovy instrumentals, intense instrumentals and atmospheric tracks. Marcel and his colleagues from **Sun Caged**, **Cloudscape**, **Time Machine**, and **Persephone's Dream** to name just a few contribute each other to make all tracks shining and fascinating. Yeah, you could say that his new album is really varied like the works from impressive Lion Music solo artists and groups like **Milan Polak**, **Michael Harris**, **Anand Mahangoe**, and **Rob van der Loo's Freak Neil Inc.** With each spinning on the cd, Marcel's new album gets better and better to find an enjoyment of instrumental guitar and virtuoso rock music. Overall, I have been really very impressed with such intensity level and really tight ensembles with great vocal works. This is highly recommended for both prog metal fans and guitar-instrumental listeners.

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### Conception - Flow

Noise  
(1997)

**Flow** is **Conception's** fourth album. This album sounds quite different from their previous albums more or less. Conception is well-known melodic powerful metal band having solid instrumental performance and **Roy Khan's** great vocal performance with some proggy moments. On the other hand, Conception put some modern technology and synth programming parts into **Flow** most time, so it has bit dark and slightly machinery sounds which make some controversial opinions toward the listeners. However, the last two songs have trademarks of

slightly machinery sounds which make some controversial opinions toward the listeners. However, the last two songs have trademarks of Conception's powerful heavy and hard driving tunes, so do not worry about it. Overall, Conception made solid and streamed line sounds. After releasing Flow, Conception stopped playing together for a while. Nowadays, Roy Khan has been singing for **Kamelot**. In addition, the guitar player **Tore Ostoby** formed an excellent prog metal band, **Ark**. It has a news that Conception will reunite and get together, even though Roy and Tore stay playing in their each own project/band. Anyway, Flow is also an important and good effort from Conception camp in my opinion.

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### Condition Red - Condition Red

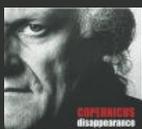
LION MUSIC  
(2000)

Condition Red is another fine Lars Eric Mattoson's secret Prog Metal weapon from Lion Music Records. Mattson is more likely in the vein of Scandinavian Melodic Prog Metal influenced under Yngwie Malmsteen, Glory, Baltimoore and Royal Hunt flavored music, but Condition Red is totally different sounding prog metal project. Musically, the album of Condition Red is a mixture of a bit retro sounding symphonic prog jazz rock and progressive metal with less Dream Theater-esque staccato riffings and heaviness, but more sounding warmth of oldie prog rock and jazz rock to most people I believe. Mainly, Ella Grussner and Torgny Stjarnfelt are taking lead vocals. Other featured musicians on the album are as great as the musicians featured on Mattson - Another Dimensions. Featuring artists on Condition are such as, shred master Alex Masi, keyboard wizardry Derek Sherinian, Alexander King (keyboards), Esa Pietila (sax), and of course, veteran guitar player /mastermind Lars Eric Mattson. To be honest, I need to take time to digest the music of CONDITION RED because I was not familiar with this kind of symphonic jazz rock type music in the beginning. If you are not familiar with the music of Condition Red, you will probably have same feeling to digest this music, but if you sit down and take time to listen carefully with more than a few spins then you will probably find amusement and coolness/sussieness of this music, because there are lots of interesting instrumental guitar/keyboard/violin solos and slightly complex ensembles packed in one album. Highlights and favorite tracks on the album are "Calls Out My Name", "Life Is Now", and "Lighthouse". Probably, typical prog rock fans will find enjoyment quickly than prog metal oriented music listeners. Just relax and have fun to digest the music. Again, I find a few parts of keyboards, drums and sax solos are bit dry to me. I guess that sound production would be improved better slightly if budget were allowed. Although I have minor complaints, the entire complex and intricate instrumentals are really impressive. Esp., Derek Sherinian's modern synth solos on "Life Is Now" reminds me of Dream Theater in the era of FALLING INTO INFINITY, plus lead guitar playings of Alex Masi is lightning fast and brilliant. I like violin play of Ella Grussner very much on the track like "Lighthouse", 'cuz her violin solo has vibe of the soundtrack of Chris Carter's modern thriller suspense, MILLENIUM. Lars Eric Mattson's guitar/bass lines are also strong points to keep music interesting. Keyboards/Hammond-ish organ and fast piano runs courtesy by Alexander King are also tasty, too. Mainly, I find interesting parts from instrumentals, instrumental music fans easily find funs. On the other hand, vocal parts are not rampant for people who like signer-oriented music, so be aware. Fans of Curved Air, jazzy prog rock, and fusiony prog metal fans will dig this music. Thanks to Lion Music and Lars Eric Mattson :o)

[www.lionmusic.com](http://www.lionmusic.com)

[www.condition-red.com](http://www.condition-red.com)

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### Copernicus - Disappearance

Moonjune Records/Nevermore  
(2009)

Until I got my hands on the cd entitled 'Disappearance' by Copernicus, I'd had no idea what I could expect from this musical format. Copernicus itself has a long music history, but I do not mention the whole history of an enigmatic band led by **Joseph Smalkowski** in detail this time. As long as you see this latest album been distributed from **Moonjune Records**, you'd assume that they are one of impressive jazz rock/fusion groups with progressive tendencies. In some way, the music of Copernicus may have a bit similar musical traits of what other Moonjune Records bands would do in their original ways. But the approach of Copernicus is very different from these bands to my ears. Okay, where should I start from here? It's a bit nonsense to categorize their musical style, but I try to do my best to figure out as many as possible. The music of Copernicus band is based on the lyrical themes and poetic ideas written by the central figure **Joseph Smalkowski**. He has been exploring physics and his own interpretation about universe over many years. At the same time, his views of twelve subatomic particles, etc. are not too easy to intrigue many of us while spinning the cd most time. Nevertheless, some music listeners, who are interested in the thoughts of existence/non-existence and philosophical studies, could find new understanding and discovery toward such category and its topic.

Besides such his poetic themes and deep thoughts about universe and sub-atomic particles, somewhat I could rather find interesting sparks and unique moments throughout the music itself on this cd. I admit that some artists on the Moonjune Records catalog are very forward thinking musicians and performers (let's say **Boris Savoldelli & Elliot Sharp** for example), it took several spins to digest and fully enjoy the materials for sure. In the case of Copernicus - 'Disappearance' cd, the music that Copernicus performs does sound somewhat very spontaneous and improvisational based instrumentals with strong beat poetry of **Joseph Smalkowski**. The entire ensemble sounds relatively solid and controlled. A length of each track is very long; average length of each number clocks in more than 7 minutes and 8 minutes. I could find some varied musical numbers: Delta blues style, somewhat jazzier/rounge music, laid-back folkly rock in a bit

contemporary manner, atmospheric progressive rock number reminding me a bit of **Pink Floyd** (but stylistically, it's not following the elements of Pink Floyd, per se), and so forth. Even though the nature of **Copernicus** music can be considered as avant-jazz or avant rock in short, this is not a kind of too complex music to get into if you listen to it diligently. There is no conventional rock singing and jazz vocal-oriented music, so you can not expect melody-oriented vocal tracks. Instead, **Joseph Smalkowski** speaks up and preaches his own scientific belief; his agitating tone is sometimes somber and forlorn. In other times, he tends to strongly rant his philosophical and poetic views.

The production of this cd sounds crisp and professionally done, that's for sure to find out. It's really remarkable to hear many various musical instruments are used in a relatively good manner: for instance, keyboards, organ, piano, electric guitars, steel guitar, violin, trombone, violin, drums, percussion, tuba, contrabass, and some others. The arrangements and all musicians' performance with melancholic and spacy atmospheric flavors on this album are not very hard to enjoy, but you'd say the music of New York-based **Copernicus** is not definitely friendly or accessible type jazz or rock genre for some. In my honest opinion, I can not pinpoint any similar style musicians or bands. If **Carl Sagan**, **Bob Dylan** and **Pink Floyd** had collaborated together with some helps from earthy New Orleans groups and N.Y. based avant-rock/jazz professional musicians, it would have sounded closer to '**Disappearance**' cd. It takes some time to fully absorb this mystical avant-free rock/jazz world, but this kind of free-form avant-garde music would surely capture the keen listeners who are into challenging and forward-thinking music and lyrical contents.

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**Crises - Broken Glass**  
Angular Records  
(1998)

Don't be fooled by the cover art that give you an impression of typical power metal. Actually, hearing this album was a fresh surprise for me back then. **Crises** are a first rate German prog metal group with some influences of neo-prog sounds. I got to hear a great praise from some prog metal fans, so I tried to check out their music. Indeed, it was a right purchase for me. As other quality German prog metal group do, this German group makes an exciting prog metal music with quite nice instrumentation. There are lots of nice interplays and strong musicianships everywhere. They know how to handle the music and song quite well. The craftsmanship of prog metal by Crises is quite impressive on this first full-length album. In the beginning, I did not expect how they would sound very good. Thanks to their great efforts to make this album exciting and interesting. Everything presented here on this album satisfies me quite a lot. Stylistically, the fans of **Dream Theater** style prog metal would get into '**Broken Glass**' quite easily. The performance of this group is very good and exciting to me. It's a really winner to my ears. It's too bad that Angular Records seems to be defunct nowadays; if you are curious about the music of Crises, better to grab the cd as early as you can before it's gone from the online vendor. Definitely, German prog metal fans need to pay attention to what they do in the future.

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**Crotalo - Nel Cuore Del Mondo**  
WMMS

The music of CROTALO reminds me of early sounds of ENCHANT and neo-progressiveness of EVERON blending together with some instrumental sections which are influenced by early DREAM THEATER. In other words, I would say that CROTALO is safely classified under the file of heavy neo-prog/prog metal. CROTALO - Nel Cuore Del Mondo has been distributed by mainly WMMS. WMMS seems to be responsible for releases of some notable progressive metal/rock bands, such as ZEN, LAST WARNING, MARATHON, BLACK JESTER, MYSTRE DE NORTRE DAME, and IVANHOE to name just a few (I just wonder WMMS is still very active or not. Currently, I start digging the music of WMMS). Entirely sung in all Italian (I guess), so I hardly understand what they are singing. The booklet and inner sleeves of Nel Cuore Del Mondo are featuring computer generated animation and illustrations of landscapes, volcano, rocks, sky, ocean, and such images. I have no idea what they do mean the cat-like huge eye ball within the earth image on the cover art (I really want to know what it is). Anyway, instrumental sections and music entertain me overall. At least, the fans of early Enchant/Everon and SI Music will be interested in this band. I do not say this band is superb, but they did very good job in their own way.

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