



SM Noise Records [Release date 05.02.18]

Andy who? Now and again, a guitarist who essentially has made a career of “backroom” and “sideman” comes to the fore. In this case, with his fifth solo album. Andy Susemihl first found his grooves in 1986 with German band Sinner, then joining the Accept vocalist’s ‘U.D.O.’ project. Since that time he’s been engaged in any number of projects, re-locating from Germany to LA in 1994.

‘Elevation’ includes contributions from melodic metal stalwart and go-to producer Dennis Ward (Pink Cream 69, bass), Andre Labelle (Vinnie Vincent, drums) and Bill Leverty (Firehouse, guitar) but, really, Susmihl doesn’t need any “name” assistance. The album is filled with a clutch of great tunes, that never outstay their welcome and – given his guitarist credentials – the guitar is never over-played and remains tasty but tasteful throughout.

The opener ‘Sick Of The Rain’ has a great rolling bluesy rock riff emphasising another album highlight: Susemihl’s vocals. ‘Afterworld’ is an excellent mid-tempo romp and brings to mind the AOR sheen of Little River Band whilst ‘Give Me Some Time’ even allows Susemihl to make a topical lyrical statement whilst maintaining the melodic flow.

But the track ‘Dinosaurs’ is the “killer” and worth your undivided attention alone. Again, a relevant lyric with an irresistible urgency that Luke would be proud of. Absolutely wonderful.

The high consistency continues with ‘Back To The Stars’ and the funky ‘Haunt’ which – together with ‘Something On The Way’ and ‘The Golden Coast’ – reveals a jazzy underbelly that could also align Susemihl with the likes of Eric Johnson and Richie Kotzen.

Susemihl even manages a cynical swipe at “pop idols superstars/Jingling like a chain of farts” as a reflection of the modern scene on ‘Melophobia’. More power to him, we say.

This is an album that grabs you from the start and engages until the last note. It must surely “elevate” Susemihl amongst his peers, and – frankly - not before time. \*\*\*\*\*

## **Review by David Randall**

*David Randall presents ‘Assume The Position’ on Get Ready to ROCK! Radio every Sunday at 22:00 GMT.*

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