

## ANDY SUSEMIHL 'ELEVATION'

*(SM Noise)*

**ROCK**

'Elevation' is Andy Susemihl's fifth album, and whilst some of you out there may possibly be familiar with the name, I am guessing most you will be in the same boat as me. His name was not one that I was aware of, but after reading his biography I felt truly naive.

His long career as a guitarist, singer, song-writer and record producer started in 1986 with his first band 'Sinner'. In 1987 Udo Dirkschneider (of Accept fame) recruited Susemihl for U.D.O. and their first tour showcasing 'Animal House' before going on to support Guns N' Roses and later Ozzy Osbourne during 1998/99. After this experience and being involved in many other collaborative projects with artists like Steve Vai, Richie Kotzen and Eddie Kramer, he decided to embark on his solo career.

2018 sees Susemihl and his "super-friends" releasing 'Elevation', an album featuring four drummers (including Andre Labelle from The Sky and Vinnie Vincent), three bassists (including Dennis Ward from Pink Cream 69) and Bill Leverty (Firehouse) on guitar. Given Susemihl is German born and raised, you would not have guessed it. Throughout the album, his vocals are smooth and very clear. If I hadn't read the bio, I could have even been fooled into thinking he was American.

Being a guitarist at heart, I thought the album was going to be a guitar-focused affair in the style of Vai etc. However, I was in for a surprise; the relaxed, melodic and mid-tempo tracks flow one after another, easing their way effortlessly into the listener's ear, and style wise they vary from AOR to Funk and Blues. The guitar work is complimentary and not overbearing, thus offering slick melodies.

Opener 'Sick Of The Rain' leads the listener in with its bluesy introduction and is matched once more by 'Centre Of The Universe'. My personal favourites are 'Aeroplane', with its air of a Matchbox Twenty ballad and solid guitar licks, and in much the same vein 'Give Me Some Time' with Leverty's emotive guitar solo. Add to the mix the harder 'Dinosaurs', which picks up the pace with fiery licks that pack a punch, the funky 'Haunt', the quirky 'Melophobia' and then finish with a cover of 'Personal Jesus', and you have a fantastically listenable album.

If you like your AOR or Soft Rock, this is a must. If you aren't aware of Andy Susemihl, you certainly should get acquainted.

Sonia Cavill