

Ahh, 'The Phoenix' by Derek Sherinian. A very exciting instrumental (well mostly instrumental) prog rock album with a number of excellent guest musicians, some of which contributed to the writing. Really Mr. Sherinian should have called his project 'Derek and the Bomb-inos' or some other hard-rocking name. Ok, fair enough, that was less rock and more stupid, and even worse, terror-related, but it WAS less self-centred. He should surely call his act Derek and SOMETHING at least. Forget the bombs, just think. Anywho... TP differs from the same artist's album 'Black Utopia', in that Yngwie Malmsteen doesn't feature, here. Good move. Yngwie rarely gives anything substantial to the world of music other than speedy scales and three string sweep arpeggios. (Also speedy). And of course, (speedy) neoclassical riffs, blues shred ideas (shred is speedy pretty much by definition), and speedy acoustic guitar playing, every now and then. Steve Vai actually appears in The Phoenix, which is maybe an even better move, as he IS good. And I don't mean good in that he can get away with playing the same ideas over and over, like Yng, I mean he's musical.

Megadeth's Kiko Loureiro also features in TP. It keeps getting better, doesn't it? You know he's good simply from the fact Dave Mustaine appreciates him. Megadeth is definitely a band with great guitarists. Apart from in the album 'So Far So Good, So What?', that is. The guitar playing is pretty sloppy, there. Then again, everyone was off their faces on drugs. It follows the album 'Peace Sells... but Who's Buying', and in that release, the lead guitarist was soon sacked because HE was on drugs and stole everyone's equipment. It's hard for me to understand the appeal of narcotics, tbh. They clearly drive people mental. I can't really imagine what it would be like to witness a Megadeth recording session. Punch, thief, screw-up, punch, punch, punch, over and over and over. I remember when I was 15 playing Laser Quest and this complete lunatic 8 year old kept charging into me. He was nuts. That's how I picture the band most of the time. So what's all this nonsense The Beatles said about drugs making them more creative? If they were clean, maybe they wouldn't have had the bizarre idea to literally swear in their song 'Hey Jude'. (Youtube 'Hey Jude swear' if you don't believe me - the curse is in there). How is THAT fitting? As in 'Hey Jude, don't make it bad. Take a sad song and make it better. Then (expletive) off', or whatever.

Did you know The Beatles tried to write the heaviest song ever with their 'Helter Skelter'? Lol. They should check out some brutal death metal. It makes HS sound as heavy as 'Yellow Submarine'. (That song's arguably another drug filled mistake. I always hated that, even when I sung it in class at the age of 5. That's saying a lot, when you consider what almost all people of the same age enjoy listening to. Toddlers like REALLY annoying music, they're famous for it. So don't do drugs. I'm not saying do drugs if you like the tune, though). Having said 'Helter Skelter' was pretty tame, it was an idea 'developed' by Charles Mason, and that IS dark. Also, I would have loved to see The Beatles perform some Cannibal Corpse, but it's never going to happen is it? Anyway, back to guest musicians: Zakk Wylde also makes an appearance, along with his crazy vibrato, and Ron 'Bumblefoot' Thal makes an appearance with his crazy name. It's not easy to pull off nicknames, you know? Especially nicknames that are diseases or infections. If I called myself Simon 'Flu' Wiedemann, people would think I was weird.

What's the songwriting here like? It's SO good; it's no wonder Derek tried to hog all the glory. I bet 'The Phoenix' was really him. As in he thinks he's some kind of

amazing mythical creature. Proof of that theory is in the album cover - it's a picture of the keyboardist and nothing else. I certainly don't see any strange birds. I wouldn't say the man is superhuman, BUT he is clearly very talented. So much so, I'm giving this album a solid 9.5/10! That's despite the fact it features a somewhat random cover song, originally performed by Buddy Miles, who played rock, R&B, funk and soul music, NOT prog. Things get even more random when you take into consideration there is nothing soulful about Derek. Rather than him having a nice personality, I've just profiled him as a narcissist, with help from Wikipedia. And on that offensive note... Bye!