

Budgie – Budgie (1971)

Written by bluesever

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1 Guts 4:20 2 Everthing in My Heart 0:52 3 The Author 6:28 4 Nude Disintegrating Parachutist Woman 8:41 5 Rape of the Locks 6:12 6 All Night Petrol 5:57 7 You and I 1:41 8 Homicidal Suicidal 6:41 - Tony Bourge / Guitar, Vocals - Ray Phillips / Percussion, Drums - Burke Shelley / Bass, Guitar (Bass), Vocals, Mellotron

While Welsh heavy rock band Budgie were formed in 1967 (under the name Hills Contemporary Grass), it took until 1971 for the band to release their first album. The line up indicates that the trio add mellotron to their basic guitar/bass/drums set up, but do not be fooled by this; this is an album of guitar driven rock. Produced by Rodger Bain there is a distinct relationship with the sound with Black Sabbath, who he also produced. Other bands who have clearly influenced or been influenced by Budgie are the likes of Led Zeppelin and Rush. In the case of the latter, the vocals of Burke Shelley bear a passing resemblance with those of Geddy Lee.

"Budgie" was recorded on 8 track tape in only four days, and while some overdubbing was subsequently added, this is essentially a live in the studio affair. The sleeve notes advise us that the band are "not particularly subtle", and that "They're not progressive (whatever you understand that to mean)", but the track arrangements can belie such statements.

The album is essentially a succession of blues rock numbers with the occasional softer counterpoint. The opening "Guts" is a heavy riff infested song which sets the scene well for both this and future albums. We are though caught off guard by the delicate acoustic "Everything in my heart" which follows, even if it does run for just a minute. The mood appears to continue on "The author", but the initial reflective nature of the track is soon replaced by a more orthodox heavy rock number.

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It is though "Nude disintegrating parachutist woman" (what a wonderful title, it does actually feature in the lyrics!) which offers the first taste of the real Budgie. This superb 8½ minute romp takes us through an altogether more adventurous arrangement. The lead guitar here is the highlight of the track, but the driving nature of the song combined with a genuine raw excitement, make for a compelling piece of early metal.

"Rape of the locks" is the first of three 6 minute pieces which make up side 2, the song featuring another interesting arrangement of what is essentially a basic blues rock number. "All night petrol" slows things down slightly, sounding a bit like Led Zeppelin's "Lemon song" at times. The track features another fine lead guitar break, this time with some upfront complementary bass.

"You and I" is another brief acoustic number which sounds distinctly like a John Lennon demo. The album closes with "Homicidal suicidal", another Sabbs like riff infested blues rock piece.

Budgie's relationship with prog comes not from their raw guitar based sound, but from the relative complexity of the arrangements of songs such as "Nude disintegrating parachutist woman". This, combined with their willingness to occasionally reveal their softer side, offers an appealing diversity to what would otherwise be a straightforward guitar rock album. No one for the prog purists by any means, but those interested in discovering the roots of prog metal and those looking for some good old fashioned lead guitar magic should find much to enjoy here. Great sleeve too! --- Easy Livin, progarchives.com

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