Rick Wakeman - Retro (2006)



1. Just Another Day (11.14) 2. Mr. Lonely (3.47) 3. One In The Eye (5.32) 4. Men In Suits (8.05) 5. Leave The Blindfold (3.02) 6. Waveform (6.01) 7. Retrospective (6.35) 8. Homage To The Doctor (9.04) 9. Can You Smell Burning? (6.30) 10. The Stalker (8.45) - Rick Wakeman: Keyboards - Dave Colquhoun: Acoustic & electric guitars - Lee Pomeroy: Bass - Tony Fernandez: Drums & percussion - Ashley Holt: Vocals - Jemma Wakeman: Vocals and backing vocals

Recommended album for Wakeman fans, but not interesting enough for anyone else. Retro is an album where Rick Wakeman decided to focus solely on 70s vintage instruments like the hammond, the analog synthesizers, and the mellotron. It is a refreshing album full of nostalgia, but some of the keyboard sounds are the hideous ones from his clunker "Rhapsodies" album. Other problems include some mediocre songwriting in places.

Nevertheless, you can't ask for a better opening track as "Just Another Day" takes you back to the 70s and the composition simply shines all the way through. Opening with a bizarre motif (later used in the second half of the song) and leading with the grandiose mellotron, great old-school keyboards and synthesizers, and Ashley Holt giving possibly his best vocal performance since No Earthly Connection's "The Prisoner." Sadly, the best song is followed by the worst one: a weak, noisy, repetitive rocker with distorted vocals and horrid guitars. "One In The Eye" has a weak main synthesizer motif and while the playing is good, the instrumental does not leave a good impression. Fortunately, "Men in Suits" improves things somewhat, with great use of the mellotron and analog synthesizer, but it's still not an excellent tune by any means. "Leave The Blindfold" is a melodic tune sang by Wakeman's daughter. It's not bad, but it is out of place here. While "Waveform's" middle section is good, the rest suffers from a horrible quacking-sounding synth sound and out of place mellotron. A bad song. "Retrospective" rescues the album again, a mellow and more thought out composition with appropriate usage of the old instruments. "Homage To The Doctor" is a tribute to the deceased Robert Moog, the inventor of the synthesizer. I really think that Rick Wakeman should have dropped the cheesy

lyrics and focused on putting a great show by playing loads of synths. He does play the synths well here, but the vocal parts are a bit unnecessary. While this review doesn't look too positive for now, the last two songs are better than anything after 'Just Another Day'. "Can You Smell Burning?" is an instrumental with blazing synthesizer runs, 5/4 rock groove, and fiery Hammond B3. The closer "The Stalker", while having weak lyrics, it is the most epic-sounding track and both Ashley Holt and Jemma provides good vocals. It provides a very good dramatic climax to the album. ---Zitro , progarchives.com

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