

CLUB REVIEWS

Syzygy

*The Winchester Tavern
and Music Hall
Lakewood, OH*

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The Players: Carl Baldassarre,
guitars, vocals; Paul Fayrewether,
vocals, flute; Sam Giunta,
keyboards; Paul Mihacevich,
drums; Al Rolik, bass, acoustic
guitar, vocals.

Material: Drawing from a progressive rock tradition that, to a great extent, has its roots in Great Britain with bands like Yes, Genesis and Gentle Giant, the Cleveland, OH-based band Syzygy put a contemporary Midwestern spin on the genre. The lion's share of material they perform is taken from their three independently released albums *Cosmos and Chaos*, *The Allegory of Light* and the latest, *Realms of Eternity*. "Strange Loop" and "Mount Ethereal" possess an arc that builds with dramatic intensity taking the listener on a multi-dimensional journey. Other songs, like the acoustic-tinged "Circadian Rhythm" display the depth and breadth of this band's superior repertoire.

Musicianship: Each member of the ensemble is simply a master of his



Eric A. Harabadian

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craft. Carl Baldassarre is equally adept on electric and acoustic guitar, with a strong and robust vocal tenor range that is versatile and always serves the song. Guest frontman and vocalist Paul Fayrewether is a musical chameleon able to morph his voice into any characterization, with impressive woodwind chops to match. Keyboardist Giunta mans the front line, providing expressive chordal punctuations and lush orchestral and textural soundscapes. Mihacevich is an exquisite balance of power and finesse, while bassist Rolik plays melodic lines that flawlessly anchor and support as well as highlight each tune.

Performance: Perhaps a common misconception of progressive rock is that, quite often, the emphasis is on instrumental prowess accompanied by a staid or stoic demeanor. With Syzygy it is quite the opposite. At this show, aided by Fayrewether's dramatic flair and clever "everyman" attire of work clothes and casual dress, he accentuated the spiritual and societal commentary of the lyrics with Peter Gabriel meets Alex Harvey aplomb. Smiles flashed all around as each participant in the band physically bobbed and weaved in time to the music. And with the addition of a video screen backdrop, custom designed by audio engineer

Chris Keffler, the songs were illustrated in a most unique manner. They also played covers of Jethro Tull, U.K. and Deep Purple that were nothing short of outstanding. However, the band allowed plenty of space in the show for improvisation and audience interaction.

Summary: Syzygy is a top notch progressive act that has the potential to lead and transcend that market. From the songwriting, playing and vocals to the overall presentation, everything is exceptional and nothing is left to chance. Don't miss this group.

—Eric A. Harabadian