

Mp3 Tony Garone - The Epic Of Gilgamesh

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A musical interpretation combining elements of World Music, Avante Folk and Progressive Rock. 16 MP3 Songs WORLD: World Fusion, ROCK: Progressive Rock Details: The Epic of Gilgamesh - a unique work... I believe you'll find "The Epic of Gilgamesh" to be a unique work. Over the past two years I have taken this six thousand year old story and put it to music, employing a variety of musicians from around the world. I hope to tell the story of Gilgamesh in a refreshing way - through song and verse, while exploring the rich culture of Mesopotamia, and the deep philosophical meaning of the epic. A "Musical Quilt" The method of recording this Compact Disc was interesting. It is comprised of musicians from around the world - most of whom have never met or spoken - who are "playing" together on the same songs. Using the Internet and MP3 technology, I managed to employ the talents of sixteen musicians from three different countries to create what I call a "musical quilt". This "musical quilt", was sent from person to person around the world, with each individual adding his or her talents to complete the project.

The Gilgamesh "Web Companion" The Epic of Gilgamesh Compact Disc is just a component of a much larger work. In order to fully appreciate "The Epic of Gilgamesh", you must access the "Gilgamesh Web Companion" located here: garone.net/tony/gilgamesh.html The "Web Companion" will help you get the complete picture. Included are the lyrics, methods of recording, explanations of the events in the story, and the original cuneiform rendering of the song titles with definitions by a Ph.D. from UCLA.

REVIEWS:
Reviewed by: Progressive World : Stephanie Sollow, August 2001 This is one of those kind of releases that is so epic in scope (no pun intended) that you know you can't hope to capture every essence of it in the space of a review. But, as you can see by the length of this one, I give it the old "college try," so to speak. While it may fall at the edges of the progressive spectrum, there is no question that many progressive music fans will find much to enjoy here. What I kept thinking of as I listened was of some of the many recent musical productions -- stage plays -- which have been touring of late. The Lion King, Joseph And His Technicolor Dreamcoat, and other big productions. This could easily be listed among them, if it were a stage production. It is multi-media, as you get the CD of music, the lyrics, and, on the official website, supporting material such as background information on Gilgamesh and Sumeria, a "who's

who" of characters, a translation of the story itself, as well as a production journal, links to related sites, and more. But the other thing I kept thinking is that, despite the use of Eastern scales, there is something that feels very late 60s-early 70s psychedelic about it. Perhaps it the use of Eastern scales and instruments in much of the music of that period and style -- or as it seems to me. But Tony Garone has a very purposeful way of singing that many artists, especially pop artists, don't have these days. While in tone one can compare Garone to Wetton and Lake, where he sounds like a cross between the two, I also hear something ... an earnestness in the delivery; this isn't just an epic in terms of the subject matter, but Garone sings as if its an epic. It is an approach that does what Garone said he wanted to do in an interview with Paul Gilbert of Above Ground Testing. "I tried to create that 'campfire' feeling with the vocal arrangements," Garone said. "[E]specially the first song. I wanted to draw people into the story - that's why I spent so much time working on the eastern scales and authentic instrumentation." Tony Garone has put a great deal of work into The Epic Of Gilgamesh, Gilgamesh being the king of Uruk, a city in Sumeria (in an area between the Euphrates and Tigris rivers in what is now Iraq and Iran). As Garone explains it, the method for putting this package together was fairly unique in that "it is comprised of musicians from around the world - most of whom have never met or spoken - who are 'playing' together on the same songs." I know off the top of my head of only one similar method of recording and that is Djam Karet's Collaborator. Nonetheless, listening to this disk, you'd hardly guess. He has put more than two years into the project, and the companion website provides background details, a "who's who" of characters, the story itself, and related links. For the purposes of this review, I will focus mainly on the music contained on the CD, leaving the website for you to explore on your own. But, I will tell you, by way of Garone's site, that "The Epic of Gilgamesh is the oldest story known to us. It is known as a folk tale, because it contains many individual stories which comprise the whole. It was originally written on Sumerian clay tablets, circa 2700 BC using a type of script called 'Cuneiform' which when translated means 'wedge-shaped.' The story began as five individual narrative poems, and by the old Babylonian period, many additional stories and poems were compiled. It was later reconstructed by Sin-leqe-unninni of Babylon (circa 2000 BC) into the twelve tablets we have today. Scholars believe that the events surrounding the Epic occurred somewhere around 3500 BC." The Epic Of Gilgamesh is a family affair, as Garone's children also take part in this production. His son Anthony plays guitar on four tracks, his daughters Jennifer and Ann Marie each sing on one track, his son Steven plays keyboards on one track,

and his brother Ken plays bass on one track. The rest of the performers on Gilgamesh are not familial, but are friends or friends of friends. The album opens gently with "Gilgamesh," which sounds very intimate, with harmonized voices, acoustic guitars, and tight percussion. The credits also list Mesopotamian stomp and African voices. Think of a world music version of America or some of Ian Anderson's solo work (sans flute). "Uruk" begins with harp and percussion of various types including deep toned drums, light accents, a warmed toned violin, and keys. The rhythm is of a slow march, as if one is walking through the streets of Uruk, admiring the city. Here is where I thought of Garone as a Wetton/Lake hybrid, but there are other colourings in his voice that given a slightly different character. In contrast "We Are All One" is very energetic, mainly due to the various bits of percussion, including Arabian percussion. While it might put an unintended amusing spin on the track for you, it has a rhythm one can shake their hips, too. The context precludes that, as it is here that Gilgamesh is asserting his authority over Uruk, and it doesn't undercut that in any way, but there is a instrument here that has the sound of voices "whooping," which I would have associated with some wind instrument, but none is listed. "The Fallen Star," in contrast to both, has keys up front, giving the track an 80's pop feel with far more texture than almost anything the pop of the 80s produced, except maybe for Tears For Fears (among a few others). Vocals are split between Garone himself and daughter Jennifer, who has a voice that is here quite rich, though light. "Enkidu" is a lively acoustic based track, with Garone strumming and picking at a frenetic pace along side Philip Griffin on a (what I think is the) Turkish saz. Garone also plays flute here, which provides a subtle added texture. If this we western music (as in country and western), this would have been played on a banjo, dueling with a guitar. Percussion is up front again in "Huwawa The Terrible," explosive right at the beginning, but leveling off for the rest of the track. If we're making comparisons, think first of the mid-period Moody Blues and then a little bit of latter day Hollies (vocals in this case mainly), if each were a drums and guitar only band. Garone's son Anthony plays lead electric guitar here. Here Gilgamesh and his friend Enkidu have fought and defeated Huwawa. "Inanna/Ishtar" is another acoustic guitar based track with Marcie Schreier on vocals along with Garone (I thought of ELP's "Footsteps In The Snow" from the little regarded Black Moon). Schreier is another female vocalist with a high and light voice, but by the end of the track, there is a much darker quality to it that makes the contrasts within the context of the track vivid. She has, at the start, fallen in love with Gilgamesh, who wants nothing to do with her. There ain't nothing like a woman scorned, as she calls to her father to

"Unleash the Bull of Heaven!" Oddly, it is Schreier who sings lyrics assigned to Gilgamesh, as it seems it is he who should be "speaking," given what is "said." At any rate, as a result of her anger, the duo of Gilgamesh and Enkidu must fight against the Bull of Heaven. Percussion is at the forefront again, playing an energetic war-like beat, deep and rumbling. Crashing percussion punctuates the song, white electric guitar (Anthony) and bass add texture and danger to the rhythm. Having defeated the Bull, Inanna seeks revenge and kills Enkidu. It is a despondent Gilgamesh we hear from in "Gilgamesh Laments For Enkidu," which is another acoustic piece. Water drop-like percussion, flute-like keys, plucked acoustic guitar, and wind-like effects provide the backdrop to Garone's sparse vocals. The arrangement builds towards the middle, such that you think it's going to explode, but instead it peaks at a point other than expected, and then falls back. "The Journey" is an instrumental piece composed by Anthony and performed on classical guitar, along with Daniel Shin on keyboards; though the guitar is the center of the piece. Anthony's tone is warm, tinged a bit with sadness. Gilgamesh is off to seek immortality (he doesn't want to join Enkidu in death) and Utnapishtim whom he believes will give it to him. Along the way he meets "Siduri," here voiced by Ann Marie Garone, who has a childlike voice...oh not that squeaky, cherubic kind of voice, but she sounds quite young, in her teens. It is a voice you expect from young adults who sing in a manner of older adults. She owns an inn where Gilgamesh rests a bit. She tried to convince him that being mortal isn't all that bad, is a gift and should be cherished. But he pressed on, and finds Utnapishtim who relates his story of the flood and his survival. Voice is the lead instrument, strummed guitar, tin whistles, and bass provide the necessary atmosphere. "The Far Away," is very light and bright in contrast, lots of keyboard textures, light digital percussion. There is an undercurrent rhythm that makes me think of Enya's Orinoco Flow (famous as the "Sail away, sail away..." section has been used in commercials, in the US at least). But, structurally, this very well could be a John Wetton song, mainly in the way Garone sings. "The Flower Of Life" includes the distinctive sound of a didgeridoo (Garone again), along with plucked percussion and big pounding drums. Mike Carr handles the bulk of the vocals and sounds a bit like Richard Page of Mr. Mister at times. Billy Brown plays a throaty guitar, while keys swell and undulate till the fade. Again we get an 80s pop sound, here more like dance music, with "Lost In The Temple Of Anu." Though the featured instruments are temple bells and Gamelan chimes they are mixed just a little to high in the mix I think, though they are otherwise very nice and add a nice texture. This is a track that alone would have get Garone played on a top 40 station of old, as it is a

little light in comparison to most of the rest of the material. Robert John, whose hit was "Sad Eyes", comes to mind, though not that particular song. Overall this is a very good release; very very good, and entertaining. Given the story of it's recording, it's amazing how connected the arrangements are, as you'd expect some "disjointedness," some spot where things didn't quite come to together. There's none of that here. I was intrigued when Garone asked if I was interested, and I wasn't disappointed. I have had a copy of The Epic Of Gilgamesh text for some time, but has never been read. That will change. This musical Gilgamesh is recommended.

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