



The New Roxette

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The New Roxette meets...

John Young, from Lifesigns.

By Peter Brockwell

For those new to your music can you give us a brief history of John Young?

How long have you got...?

*I guess the best place to check it all out is www.johnyoungband.com but in a nutshell I started back in 85 with **Uli Jon Roth**, then worked with **Asia**, **Paul Rodgers**, **Roy Wood**, **Bonnie Tyler**, **Mammoth**, **Greenslade**, **John Wetton**, **Qango**, **Fish**, **The Scorpions**, **The Strawbs** and **Snakecharmer**.*

*During the last 12 years or so I started playing and singing solo and then formed the JYB in 2002 and now finally through to **Lifesigns**.*

As for your latest project Lifesigns let's start off with an easy question. Who are Lifesigns?

John Young (keys, vocals), **Nick Beggs** (bass, chapman stick, vocals) **Frosty Beedle** (drums) and **Steve Rispin** (sound).

Sound engineer Steve Rispin is the silent contributor of Lifesigns.

What do you see as his biggest contribution to the music on Lifesigns?

Steve is as much a part of Lifesigns as any of us. He was there from my earliest composition ready to listen and help transform it into the beast it has become. He's on hand for both audio and musical ideas and without him this CD would never have seen the light of day.

Lifesigns is a slight departure from your previous work with the John Young Band so how did it come around?

Well two fold really. I remember I felt a little under-whelmed by the neo-prog scene and just thought there could be something new that harked back to the halcyon days of prog, but also at the same time something that could bring it into the now. A chap said to me one night in the pub 'well if that's the way you feel about it ...do something!'

I took the idea to the JYB but Robin (gtr) said why don't you try something new without us. Plus I also think everyone was a little scared of the prog word. That said Robin liked it so much he actually had a hand in it anyway!

What has the initial response to the project been like?

Well for us it's been fabulous. You kind of feel that you've made something worth shouting about ...but you really have to wait until other people do the shouting for you.

There are a number of appearances by prog rock luminaries on the album. We know Robin Boulton is part of your live band but how did the other special guests come about?

*Friends really. We approached a number of people but quite a few were not available to help and some others tried but as you can probably tell it's not the easiest of music to get to grips with. **Steve***

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Hackett is a friend of Nick's and **Thijs Van Leer** is a friend of mine so we were really honoured when they agreed to join the project. Again with the other guitars **Jakko Jakszyk** is a friend of Nick's and **Robin Boulton** as you mentioned is an old stalwart of mine.

Lifesigns contains just 5 tracks over its 54 minutes. The shortest is 'At The End Of The World' at just over 8 minutes. Is this not a little short for a prog album?

I don't really know where people get that idea from. If you go back to vinyl all the LP's were generally shorter than Lifesigns. The music dictated its own length ...so it was never really in question.

Is there an overall concept to the album?

Yes and no. It's loosely based on a fairground idea a little similar to Ray Bradbury's 'Something Wicked This Way Comes'. That said it's really up to the listener to make up their own minds as to what the album means to them.

I'm sure you would like everyone to buy Lifesigns but who is the target audience?

Initially the prog fraternity I guess, but we would like to see it cross over to mainstream rock or at least some rock radio. Although it's prog it's inundated with hum-able tunes... so people might say...I don't like prog... but then they find themselves humming the songs.

Can you tell us a little about each of the tracks from the album?

Firstly 'Lighthouse'?

Lighthouse is the first ride and you travel through the beam of light as part of your journey from one Lighthouse to another ...until you end up off world on a slightly alien beach. This last journey features Robin Boulton in a monster guitar solo. Earlier in the song Steve Hackett is also featured.

And 'Telephone'?

Telephone is where Nick and Jakko come to the fore it's a story of a phone box where you can call anyone living or dead ...or for that matter anything!

And probably the strangest title on the (any) CD 'Fridge Full Of Stars'?

Nothing strange here it's about size and dimension. A man has a fridge full of stars just as we probably have entire galaxies under our finger nails! Steve and Thijs are featured in this track with fabulous solos.

'At The End Of The World' seems to be the obvious final track for the album but is followed by 'Carousel' ... Is that a prog thing?

That's just it... the end of the world... just might not be... that's why it's probably the happiest track you will find about the subject and as such a great pre-cursor to probably our most 'proggy' track Carousel.

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And what can you tell us about 'Carousel'?

Carousel is the most obvious ride, those painted horses that you see at the fairground...on these horses you can go backwards and forwards through your own lives past, present and future. Great chapman stick solo from Nick Beggs at the beginning and a fair old cacophony towards the climax at the end.

For the tech heads out there can you tell us a little about the equipment you used on the tracks?

I generally use softsynths with a mac pro for most of the keyboards although I do also have various Korg keyboards and a Roland XV5050 module.

That said I am starting to transfer sounds to the new Korg kronos just in case we get to do some live work.

As with any progressive rock album the artwork adds to the mood of the piece. Who was involved in the sleeve and booklet on Lifesigns?

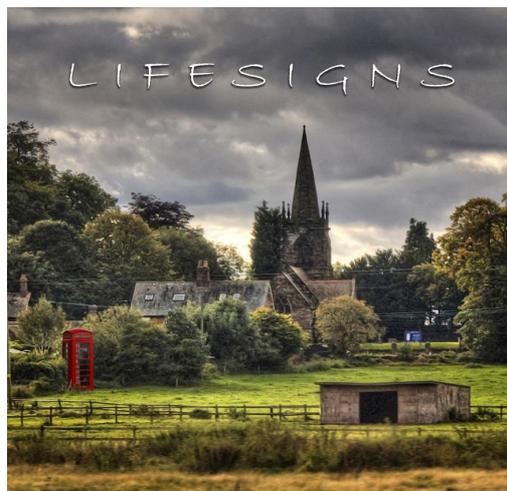
All the artwork was designed by Brett Wilde from his amazing photography and photo shop skills this was then transferred to the Esoteric/ Cherry Red guys who put the booklet together.

Do you see Lifesigns as one off project or can we look forward to live shows and further music in the future?

I'm afraid that's out of my hands... but I really hope so!

And finally ... is Nick Beggs 'Too Shy'?

I refuse to comment on that without my lawyer present!



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