

# PROG RADAR

Life is a journey long taken and, along the way, events will happen that will have differing impacts on you and the way you live that life. The world around us provides many things to aid you on that quest, things that may make the journey easier.

My life's journey started nearly 48 years ago and has been one of numerous ups and many downs, the one thing that has been a constant is music. I have loved music from a very early age and it has aided my celebrations and comforted and consoled me in times of sadness and negativity.

For the last two years I have been fortunate to put down my thoughts about music in digital print form. For the first 18 months I served my apprenticeship at **Lady Obscure Music Magazine**, a sometimes steep learning curve where I was helped a hell of a lot by my fellow writers and editors.

Since February of this year I have been able (thanks to my friend **David Elliott**) to run my own website where this very review will be published, **Progradar**. I have often likened myself to a musical treasure hunter, searching in the more obscure areas of music for songs and albums that will surprise and delight and maybe become the soundtrack to someone else's life.

The music I generally write about isn't written for profit or acclaim, it is written from the heart because that particular artist had a dream or a need to put their music out there for everyone to hear. I find that this type of music has more originality and soul than anything you can hear in the mainstream arena, it makes you stop and think and can move me nearly to tears.

These artists deserve to be listened to by a much bigger audience and I hope that, in some little way, my words can contribute to their wider recognition.

So what new album inspired my soliloquy above? Well, social media is a place I will trawl for new music and it was on a well known site that I met **Patric Farrell** and learned of his musical project **Built for the Future**. I liked what Patric was telling me and, without further ado, an offer of review was given and accepted, the rest, as they say, is history.....

**Built for the Future** is a crossover prog/alternative band from San Antonio, Texas. The band consists of **Patric Farrell** (backing vocals, guitars, bass, keyboards, drums and programming.) and **Kenny Bissett** (lead vocals) and 'Chasing Light' is their debut album. The record also features **Dave Peña** and **Chris Benjamin** (guitars) and **Imaya Farrell** (violin, viola and cello). The band combines the dynamics of progressive music with the accessibility of melodic songwriting to give far more emphasis on arrangement than dexterous shredding.

**Built for the Future** is influenced by **Rush**, **Yes** (the Rabin years) and latter day **Genesis** as well as **Tears for Fears**, **The Fixx** and, of course, **The Beatles**. Recent bands that are guiding lights also include **Spocks Beard**, **The Flower Kings** and **Porcupine Tree**.

Having known each other for 25 years, it wasn't until 2013 that they got together musically when Patric asked Kenny to sing on one song from an album he was working on that the two connected. Once the result of the first few songs was realized, it was clear from that point on that this was going to be a productive relationship.

'Chasing Light' is the first complete release that either of them have been a part of in all their years of playing music and is the beginning a series of albums about a protagonist who is seeking to change life and worlds to find 'light'.

Not holding anything back, **Arrive** is a most powerful opening track with an intro that smacks of 'Live and Let Die' by **Wings**, emotionally smouldering. The evocative vocal and delicate piano give a real feel of heartfelt hope and anticipation. The piano note hangs in the air before the song opens up with a compelling guitar arrangement, giving you a feeling of real connection with the music.

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The thumping riff that follows really hits you hard and pulls you along with a pure force of will as this elegant track runs to a quite impressive close, what a great start! More commercial but no less effective, **Radiowave** begins with a quite funky guitar and bass line driving the song along, the vocals have a sort of **Beatles** type of harmonising going on and the whole track begins to take on a whole Madchester vibe of the 1990's, as if the **Happy Mondays** had unwittingly stumbled upon a new progressive sound. Happily shunting along at a steady pace, it has a real upbeat vibe with that expressive bass thumping along and a few fiery guitar breaks and intricate keyboard runs. Interest well and truly piqued!

An elegant guitar note introduces **Lightchaser** before a jazzy 80's synth inspired track then opens up before you. The vocals are deliberate and monotone and give it an early **Ultravox** feel of sharp suits and sharper moustaches. Being a child of the 80's this track really connects with me, **Kraftwerk** synth notes and a real melancholy atmosphere spark memories long forgotten and a happy reverie. The feeling of pathos and poignance is really acute as you lose yourself and travel back three decades for five minutes. We stay in the immediate vicinity of that decade for **Speed of the Climb** which literally screams new romantics and **Korg** synthesizers right in your face. The drum note and edgy vocal are completely in fitting with the era and the bass notes could have come straight from the rule book of **Mark King**. Me? I'm having a whale of a time, this music sits perfectly in my purview, wonderfully judged and the song rises, with some impressive guitar work, to a full-on close. Ominous and full of portent, **Build for the Future** opens with a real laconic feel. The keyboards and drum beat are measured and determined before Kenny's restrained vocal adds another layer of intensity and complexity. Almost funereal in tempo yet very addictive to listen to, it almost seems like a lament for a time gone by and an unknown future, "*Build for the future, break with the past...*". An intensely thoughtful and emblematic song with an enigmatic ending. **Burning Daylight** is another track with a more commercial feel to it and a rhythm section that could have come straight from an early **Rush** album. The laid back, monotone vocal adds a synthetic feel to the song and the irascible drums leave a mysterious note hanging over everything. The fine guitar play ties everything together to deliver a competent track that doesn't quite live up to the high standard of what has gone before.

Guitar, drums and keys combine to deliver a 80's synth tinged prog note to **Walls**, almost as if Patric and Kenny had spent the afternoon listening to **New Order** before writing this song. It has real sense of sophistication running through the centre, the creamy production values are much in evidence on this stylish track with a catchy chorus and modish beat which, added to the slick guitar riff that is heard in undertones is really quite inventive. A nod in a definitive progressive direction, **Running Man** is a homage to Canada's finest prog pioneers with a bass line that Geddy would approve of and a complex and tricky drum beat. The expansive guitar note gives a really wide soundscape to the whole song and Kenny's vocals fills that wide open space perfectly, the harmonies are pretty good too! The guitar break brings everything full circle and a fine track is made whole, addictive and transfixing with the baroque brilliance of the guitar solo which just leaves you slack-jawed in appreciation.

A quiet complex and striking introduction launches **The Siren Will** with a muted dirty guitar riff followed by a chiming guitar run and heavy bass note, think **Muse** and **U2** merged and you're on the right track. The vocal has that pared back yet incisive feel and you gradually feel yourself drawn into this capable and involving song. You can feel influences abounding everywhere but this band are moulding them into their very own, precise identity and it is one that really resonates with me on discerning tracks like this that leave you wanting to hear more. The polished, urbane guitar solo that closes out the song is a case in point, sheer quality. Seriously psychedelic and funky as you like,

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**Staring at the Sun** has a California dreaming kind of feel to the Hammond organ introduction before the vocals break out and we are off into **RPWL** territory, especially on the seriously addictive chorus.

I really like the upbeat and inspirational feel to the song and you can't help be uplifted onto a higher plane by the open hearted ambience it endues. The chugging riff, colourful keyboards and chanting vocal combine to cover everything with a filmy coat of the 1970's (touched by a little of that Madchester vibe again) and leave you with a wide grin on your face.

A halting acoustic guitar opens **Samsara** and note of seriousness returns. Neo-prog in its origins but alternative rock in its delivery, it is a fast paced track that keeps you on your toes, the ever present urgent drum beat galvanising you into action. The impelling bass beat backs up the drums with a dynamic energy and the keyboards do add a slight tint of psychedelia to the mix. A good track that happens to be sandwiched between two great ones, it does seem to suffer for that. The way the track changes just after half way, becoming more imposing and forceful, gives it added gravitas and an energising injection, enough so that it still leaves its mark on you. Saving the best until last? That would be difficult on an album as impressive as this but lets see what the near thirteen minutes of **The Great Escape** delivers. The opening is quite profound as the track begins to tie the whole album together, influential and vitalising. There is a brooding ebullience deep at the heart of the song as it continues to forge forcibly ahead before a well judged break delivers a lighter note and any ominous undertone is lifted. This is a track to envelop yourself in and let it wash over you, seeping into your deepest soul. Don't resist, leave yourself open to the joy and beauty and you will be well rewarded. The song runs like an overview of what has gone before yet never becomes repetitive. Hope and freedom are the message here, a musical mantra for a better world. As it unfurls before you, the mosaic is opened and all becomes clear. An ardent guitar solo breaks loose and fires into the ether, illuminating all around and the final journey begins. I love the way this song plays out to the close, titillating and engrossing, you dare not leave and yet, as the song finally ends, you do feel an emptiness begin to open up inside you. Dear friend, it is up to you what you fill that void with.....

Damn, blast and buggeration, it has happened again, my own search for the moving and motivational has thrown up another diamond. 'Chasing Light' is one of those rare albums that grabs you immediately AND keeps on getting better with every listen. **Built for the Future's** debut release is a thing of rare wonder that resonates with me on a personal level, their commitment to delivering music that connects deeply with the listener has produced a record that shines brighter than most I have heard this year.

Released 28th July 2015 (digital)

[Buy Chasing Light from bandcamp](#)