

ALBUM REVIEW

IT'S JUST A RIDE

ZARIF MASUD

Genre: Progressive rock/metal with psychedelic mixed in**Released:** 2014**My Rating:** 4.5/5 Holy Moley! What is this I don't even...

Rishloo is a prog group from the US, best known for their immersive and technically challenging music and thought-provoking lyrics. The band, formed in 2002, has been consistent with four quality studio albums with *Living As Ghosts With Buildings As Teeth* being the latest instalment. While early Rishloo was often compared to bands like Tool and Fair to Midland, they can be said to have broken out of the labels and are very much their own band now.

With *Living As Ghosts With Buildings As Teeth*, Rishloo gives us an album that is uniquely their own (although reminiscent of The Mars Volta), with above average atmospheric music, great songwriting and some of the best vocals I have come across recently. And they all come together with some quality production.

The highlight of the album has to be its ethereal music, powerful imagery with amazing lyrics and theatrical vocals. The album can be described as dark and eerie and more psychedelic than prog at times. It is perhaps less metal than their previous records but I for one have no complaints as the whole thing works out fine. There are moments in the album where the music draws you in completely. The final part of *Landmines* is a great example of this. The final passage starting from the guitar solo is absolutely

amazing and the only complaint I had was that it didn't last longer. The band accomplishes in creating some amazing tracks, with every member doing their fair share. The music transitions from slow and creepy to soft and melancholic and then to downright hard and heavy, and it does so flawlessly. Andrew Mailloux, the vocalist, in particular deserves credit. While

he may have been good in the band's previous albums, he absolutely nails it here. Everything he does is magic. From slow to heavy, from crooning to singing melodious, soulful choruses and then flat out screaming his lungs out, Mailloux does it all. The quality of production helps their cause to a great extent.

The album runs for around 50

minutes and is consistent throughout. The first track *The Great Rain Beetle* starts strong. It's classic Rishloo mixed with heavy psychedelic elements, borrowing from bands like The Mars Volta. The track is a great starter as it introduces the listener to the sound of the entire album. *Landmines* is one of my favourite tracks. The music starts dark and slow with super-creepy lyrics which then follows into the same rhythm as the previous track. In its last section it transitions to a dramatic guitar solo and finally ends in a heart-thumping finale. The music grows somewhat slow and deliberate from here on. *Dead Rope Machine* pulls off really well with toned down instruments with Mailloux, almost droning, to great effect. *The Dark Charade* is probably my favourite song in the album and is Rishloo's longest track at 10:46 minutes. Not one second of it seems frivolous, however. *Radio* and *Winslow* are both pretty cool. The album ends with a perfect melodic track, *Just A Ride*. After almost 45 minutes of thought-provoking lyrics ridden with metaphors and imagery, the band seems to take a dig at themselves. The song is a lot simpler than the previous tracks and talks about how seriously we seem to take ourselves at times and forget to just laugh and smile.

"It's just a ride..."

Verdict: All said, the album may not be for everyone. The music can take a while to really kick in at times, often demanding more patience from the listener than one might be willing to invest. The eeriness might take some getting used to as well. Nevertheless,

Living As Ghosts With Buildings As Teeth is a great album despite the pretentious title, and is certainly worth checking out.



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