

Line-up / Musicians:- Patric Grandpierre / guitars, vocal - William Lawday / bass, violin - Bernard Darsh / percussion, vocal, flute - Guy Printemps / keyboards

Asgard's Tradition & Renouveau is really a fitting title for this great folk-rock album. France had quite a few excellent groups in the late 70's that picked up on Fairport Convention, Steeleye Span and Pentangle had left on English traditional folk music. In France, mainly Malicorne and Alan Stivell & Dan Ars Braz (but the last two were definitely more Celtic) were the main attraction. Malicorne was never really into Keltia and concentrated more on older material going back even to mediaval times and did a few re-worked and rocked-up classics from "Rondes, Gigues et Danses De France" and were followed by a few groups who did not manage quite the same commercial success. Among these were Ripaille (one fabulous album) and Asgard. Right from the first track Le Branconnier (The Poacher), you are swung into a different century so much that only some of the instrumentation can remind you that this was 78. All of the tracks are acoustic and are about regional folklore (beit Normandy or Britany) but relaying the ever same concern of the times, the hardship of life in those times but also the nature around the backcountry. On the second side however (except for the opening Francois Villon), the tracks seem to be a little less "historical" and a little more personal relaying more fantasy themes. Most progheads looking for a little more than faithful medieval music reproduction (such as the first two or three Gryphon albums) will appreciate this second side best. Although not quite as progressive as one might wish it, this album remains a very enjoyable listen for folk-minded progheads but clearly this does not reach the level of Ripaille's "La Vieille Que L'On Brula".

An extremely ethereal approach on electric Folk Rock, led by excellent mono- and multi-vocal parts and a sweet touch on guitars with a bit of lovely keyboard lines. The tracks are full of melodious textures, romantic flutes, some light violin doses and an almost constant electric/acoustic environment. The addition of Guy Printemps has only made good to the band and his discreet piano and synth lines complete a mellow, but still pretty attractive musical background. Traditional, reworked Folk tunes meet with the sharper edges of Rock instrumentation and the album contains very nice instrumental combinations between keys, guitars, flute and violin. The best is saved for the flipside, where the band makes a slight turn towards more dramatic pieces. "Ce soir Francois Villon" is a bit like ANGE in its theatrical approach, featuring dark electric backgrounds, GENESIS-like synths and majestic Mellotron choirs over a poetic singing performance.