

NEKTAR Bio 2006

An Introduction to Nektar:

Nektar's contribution over the last 35 years has quite rightly earned them their place in any 'Progressive Rock Hall of Fame'. But the band is much more than a 'Prog Legend', the Nektar brand of innovative composition, performance and visuals is simply unique.

Nektar's history appeared to have been written when they finally split in the early eighties. Despite attempts to re-ignite the flame, the Nektar light, it seemed, was out . . . until that is, the year 2000.

The new millennium saw the long awaited reunion tour of the classic line up, to rave reviews and fantastic receptions. The light we thought was out, had in fact been kept aglow - by loyal fans across the globe.

Six years on and the family has grown a little, but the classic Nektar spirit is still very much alive, building on the band's rediscovered popularity. In fact, the whole extended Nektar family has never been happier, and more importantly the band can still take Nektar's music where it belongs . . . to the fans, around the world.

The Early Years 1970 to 1973:

The story of Nektar is a remarkable one. A British rock band that found stardom and major success in Germany and the USA. With three gold albums under their belt ("Remember the Future", "Down to Earth" and "Recycled"), Nektar produced some of the most original work of the seventies.

In virtuoso guitarist Roye Albrighton Nektar had a charismatic front man who had shared a stage with Jimi Hendrix, in Allan "Taff" Freeman a unique keyboard player, in Derek "Mo" Moore a bass playing powerhouse and in Ron Howden a fluidity rarely found in a drummer. Fifth member Mick Brockett was not a musician, but was responsible for one of the most stunning light and visual shows ever to grace the rock stage.

The roots of Nektar lay in Hamburg in 1970. The band Prophecy, (featuring Freeman, Moore and Howden), were performing in the legendary Star Club. It was here that Prophecy met an extremely talented guitarist Roye Albrighton, also playing the German club circuit. Disillusioned with his own outfit, Albrighton was approached by Prophecy to join them as a guitar player. Light technician Mick Brockett (who had worked with Pink Floyd in the late sixties), had been providing visual backdrops for Prophecy in Germany and was invited to become a permanent fixture in the new band. Opting for a name change, Nektar was born.

Signing to German label Bellaphon later that year, Nektar quickly made an impact with their space rock classic "Journey to the Centre of the Eye". This was followed in 1972 by the conceptual album, "A Tab in the Ocean" which featured the songs "Desolation Valley" and "King of Twilight", (later covered in 1984 by Iron Maiden), all of which were to become staples of Nektar's live show over the next few years. 1973 saw the release of the double album "Sounds Like This". Recorded "live" in the recording studio, (and described by Elton John as "an extraordinary album"), the set became the bands first release in Britain and resulted in two appearances on "The Old Grey Whistle Test" TV show.

Remember The Future 1973 to 1980:

It was with the 1973 album "Remember the Future" that Nektar's real breakthrough came. Another concept, the album became Nektar's first American release and entered the Billboard album chart in 1974, attaining Gold status without the band ever having visited the USA! An American tour was swiftly booked, with Nektar becoming a major concert attraction.

For 1974's "Down to Earth" the band enlisted the services of Hawkwind poet Robert Calvert to provide humorous links between songs for their Circus-style concept, earning another Gold disc. "Recycled", released in 1975, was recorded in France and London and was engineered by ex-Beatles technician Geoff Emerick. The album featured a full choir and the guest appearance of American synthesiser whizz-kid Larry Fast, (from the group Synergy and later a member of Peter Gabriel's band), and earned yet another Gold disc in Germany and the USA. By now Nektar were firmly established in America, undertaking a rigorous touring schedule, with the most impressive show yet-staged necessitating the hire of a Jumbo jet to transport the band's lighting and sound equipment.

Hectic touring and an increasingly busy schedule eventually took its toll however, leading to the departure of Roye Albrighton in December 1976. He was replaced briefly by American Dave Nelson, the new line up recording "Magic is a Child" (featuring a young Brooke Shields on the sleeve), in 1977.

This line-up was short lived, leaving a gap of two years before Nektar regrouped with Roye Albrighton and Taff Freeman at the helm. With musicians Carmine Rojas and David Prater the superb "Man in the Moon" (released on CD for the first time by Voiceprint Records) was released in Europe, with the band touring to great acclaim. By now though, Freeman had opted to remain in the USA and Albrighton went on to form the band Grand Alliance with ex-Climax Blues Band member Derek Holt.

The Nektar story finally appeared to be over by the birth of the 1980's.

Nektar Recycled 2000 onwards:

In 1999, following a potentially fatal liver infection, guitarist and Nektar front man Roye Albrighton was given only weeks to live. At the last minute he is given the precious gift of life when a suitable liver donor is found. The situation was touch and go for a while, but thanks to the expertise of medical staff he pulls through. Determined to live life to the full, Roye Albrighton resurrects the band that made him a household name in Germany and America. That band is Nektar and a new album; "The Prodigal Son" is released by Bellaphon records. So opened a new chapter for Albrighton and also for the Nektar legacy - a chapter that led to the triumphant reformation of this legendary band.

A worthy successor to the previous Nektar catalogue, TPS has received five star reviews in German and American magazines and heralds a new dawn for Nektar.

2002 saw the remastering of the Nektar classic album "Remember the Future" and the release of the entire London Roundhouse Concert from 1973 with previously unreleased bonus material, and amazingly, a full reunion of Albrighton, Freeman, Moore and Howden, along with Mick Brickett's light show for a concert at the annual NearFest event at The Patriot's Theater, Trenton, New Jersey on June 29th with guest musician Larry Fast, and a further triumphant live show at The Town Hall in New York City in October 2002 and two US shows in late May and early June 2003. This was followed in July 2003 by the first Nektar concert in London since 1976 and two German concerts (at the Herzberg Festival and at The Centralstation in Darmstadt). These European concerts were unqualified successes.

In October 2003 Nektar negotiated full rights for their back catalogue outside of Germany and have begun a full remastering campaign on their entire catalogue. April 2004 saw the release of the classic albums "Journey to the Centre of the Eye", "A Tab in the Ocean", and "Recycled" (all with previously unreleased bonus material). Also released that month was a special remixed CD Boxed set of the bands entire concert at The Academy of Music in New York City recorded in August 1974 on the bands own "Dream Nebula" imprint. All these, and future releases include remastering to the highest standard from the original tapes.

In October 2004, original bass player Derek "Mo" Moore announced his intention to leave Nektar. Citing other commitments, unable to tour on a large scale and generously not wishing to impede a revitalised Nektar, Mo stepped aside to welcome fellow Rickenbacker user Randy Dembo. A fan of Nektar since the 70's, Randy proved a worthy successor to Mo Moore. 2004 saw an extensive European tour including concerts in Germany, Switzerland, Belgium and the Netherlands - equally importantly it saw the release of a superb new studio album from the band, the magnificent "Evolution". With stand out tracks such as "Camouflage to White", "Phased by the Storm", "Always" and "Child of Mine", the album is regarded as a true return to form by critics in both Europe and the USA.

An American tour in September 2004 saw Taff Freeman depart the band for personal reasons with his successor, Hammond virtuoso Tom Hughes, instantly earning a place in the hearts of the Nektar faithful. With continued concert dates, along with the remastering of the remainder of the Nektar back catalogue on CD, this legendary band has become once more a proud force to be reckoned with in the world of Progressive music.

2005 saw management changes for NEKTAR and a shift towards the band taking greater control of its output - product and careers. Entering into uncharted territory the band toured Brazil to incredible audiences and critical acclaim. Now about to embark on major global touring in 2006 with significant product releases, it has never been a better time to be NEKTAR or for that matter a Nektar fan. The longevity of the band was realised in 2006 by headlining the superb BajaProg festival in Mexicali in March 2006.

Now with a superb new Studio album "Book of Days" about to launch and an expanded live line-up Nektar are about to launch themselves onto the global live circuit. An incredible show of pure Nektar music staged in two parts is sure to wow audiences everywhere. With distribution expansion into new and old territories alike causing a huge groundswell of interest the 2006 - 2007 concert season will be a major event for Nektar fans old and new.

Yes the story is far from over yet, there is much still yet to be written,

Nektar 2006.

