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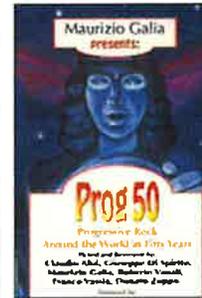
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reviewsbooks

PROG 50: PROGRESSIVE ROCK AROUND THE WORLD IN FIFTY YEARS Maurizio Galia (Editor)

★★★

GAZELLE BOOKSERVICES



This is the latest edition of what appears to be a fairly long-running volume, the valiant attempt by a team of six Italian writers to identify and classify the key (and not so key)

progressive bands and artists from every continent over the past 50 years. It comes in an eminently dippable handbook format with clear, annotated entries, and in true prog style, a ranking system based around Kings, Knights and Troopers - in other words, main players, supporting actors and worthwhile cameos.

One of the most fascinating things about prog is how a genre that began as a quintessentially and eccentrically British phenomenon spread throughout the world and generated a fanbase that remains religiously fervent to this day. To flick through these pages and discover bands you've never heard of with decades' worth of discography is a strangely humbling experience. For musicians from Romania to Argentina, Finland to Indonesia, and every point in

between, prog presented an opportunity to break away from both Anglo-American genre conventions and the English language.

Prog 50 is far from perfect. Most obviously, it was originally written in Italian, and while never unreadable, the sometimes amateurish style and wonky translation leaves a lot to be desired. And for a book that claims to cover 50 years, it barely mentions the past decade, its main focus perhaps inevitably being on the '70s. Yet for all that, it's a gateway into uncharted territories that offers a multitude of new discoveries and changed perceptions about global music.

Joe Banks

Continues over