

At the beginning of the year, this album was advised in the review of *The Riddle*, since the band was already working on it. Now it is time to take a closer look at the new output of the project around mastermind Martin Springett. Since a magnifying glass is usually used to see better, we are right there with the visual.

As is well known, Martin Springett is not only a musician, he writes and draws and his visual art is always part of his musical works. This can be seen on the one hand in the booklet, in which suitable graphics are always printed. Illustrated maps are also included with his CDs and a 27-page booklet can be downloaded from his website for *"Boy On A Bike"*, in which the artist has published a lot of pictures.

These pictures accompany the music listener who takes part in the boy's ride on a bicycle. This journey leads through nothing less than through life itself. Many stations and paths are traveled and each documented musically. Martin Springett and his congenial partner Norm Macpherson move stylistically in the wide landscapes of the Prog. In addition to the musicians who were also in the line-up for the previous album *"The Riddle"*, there are also six special guests on the new record, who expand the gardening club cosmos with their instruments.

The electric bass from Peter Dowse is allowed to open the album with a strong, funky sequence before the prognostic landscape opens before Martin's pleasant voice. His voice is somewhere between Paul McCartney, Mike Batt, Al Stewart and Gerry Rafferty. 'Somewhere between' means that Martin is now vocal to me as Martin

has become recognizable. This also applies to the entire Gardening Club, as this line-up moves musically in its own way.

On the one hand there is of course the mother Prog Rock. However, not in the usual bombastic or academic versions, but rather - and the Prog Rock mother has many children - rather a way of playing that looks towards Canterbury. With Sean Drabbit and Wayne Kozak, two jazz musicians are on board and the two of them contribute this note from their profession. Embedded in Martin's songwriting (the only exception is *"Wolfgate"*, which comes from James Macpherson's pen), this light jazz is pleasantly quietly included with many pieces. One example is *"For A Moment"*, which lives from the contrast between Wayne's saxophone playing and acoustic guitar as well as Denise's siren-like vocals.

In addition, there are also many smaller excursions into classic areas, mainly due to piano, violin and acoustic string playing. But everything

always stays in the frame and under the wide coat Prog. "Boy On A Bike" is one of those pearls that grow with every pass.

If the music seems like a calm lake at the beginning, in which some waves ripple gently, you will immediately recognize new currents, eddies and movements on and below the water surface. This way of composing and making music - I said it already - reveals the Gardening Club's signature. I hope that this line-up will continue to exist and I am already looking forward to new material. Truly a musical pearl.