

important thing for us, I want to be in the action and to make some new experiences, something that will be surely helpful for future records. Another future dream is to play in other countries. People from England, Canada, Spain and Russia are listening to our music and show their support, it will be fantastic to play for them. We are also starting to work on a new record, something very deep and fresh. Now there are only some ideas but I'm sure that it will another great thing," concludes Alberto, bringing an end to our conversation. 'Physis' has been released on many streaming services like Spotify, Apple Music, Deezer and many others. It is also available in digital stores like Google Play Music, iTunes, Amazon Music. CDs are available, contact the band for more info on how to order through their web links. Check La Stazione Delle Frequenze out at

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Hailing from DeLand, Florida, we find progressive rockers **MAGNATAR**, and this wonderfully expressive quintet have a killer new nine track album out now called 'Parallel Worlds' which runs in at just under fifty-five minutes long and is the band's debut release.



Magnatar are: Glenn Smith - mandolin, Joey Costa - bass, Reed Hayes - drums, Ryan Rivas - guitar, and keyboardist Dave Norton. It is the late afternoon here, a little past 5:00pm in DeLand, Florida. It is already starting to get dark, and it has been cool and rainy all day long. It's forecasted to be this way for the next three days. "We are in late fall with Thanksgiving just a little more than a week away. And of course, every other commercial on television is about Black Friday and Christmas shopping already," says mandolin player Glenn Smith. Today for lunch he has a southwest chicken rollup with chips, a cookie and water to drink, and for dinner he will be having Greek pork tenderloin, scalloped potatoes and green beans, and again with water. The way this whole thing started for Glenn is indeed a bit crazy, and explains how the seeds of the relationships between himself, Joey and his cousin Dave, which really first began back in the early seventies. Joey and Dave were playing together in a local band called Fantasia. They used to practice down in the basement of a half-completed house very near where Glenn was living at the time. "They were writing original prog songs so fast they just numbered them 1, 2, 3 etc. I would come and sit in the corner and just watch and listen to them work. I found it fascinating and inspiring and remember thinking how cool it must be to be able to do

that. This up close and personal experience was bridged to the other life-changing event around this same time. All these years later it still amazes me, but in the winter of 1971 in this small college town that we call home, YES, played a show in a sinkhole with a stage in the bottom of it in the middle of fraternity row. They had just released Fragile two weeks earlier. We were all there though not sitting together. That night shaped and changed everything I had ever thought about music. I have carried that feeling and inspiration with me every day since," he smiles.



The music on Magnatar's new album 'Parallel Worlds' represents both the newest period of songwriting with the current line-up of musicians, along with the earliest period of songwriting, which dates back to the origins of the band going back twelve years or so." As principal songwriter, mandolin player and co-founder, I started the band along with bassist co-founder Joey Costa. Together, we have been the core of the band throughout the various line-ups of musicians that have come and gone, mostly through the first six years. 'Night Changes' is the oldest song on the album and really represents the beginning of the sound and style of music that 'Parallel Worlds' showcases. Others like 'Augmented Reality', 'New Galaxy' and 'Parallel Worlds' were also rooted in the early, formative days of the band. On the other side, 'Five Pieces of Six', 'She Flies' and 'A Walk In The Park' are

three of the newest songs written in collaboration with the current line-up, he enthuses. 'Parallel Worlds' is Magnatar's debut album from the standpoint of a fully produced, manufactured and distributed album. It also represents the collective collaboration of the current line-up of musicians that really brought the music, both the older and newer songs on the album to life. "The original version of the band, which back then was called Buckets and Strings, recorded an album just for fun of some of those early songs. A particularly interesting note about that early group, was that the 'drums' were literally a collection of buckets played with wild abandon by the drummer with quite surprising effectiveness," explains Smith. "It was actually this original iteration that started to attract a loyal following of fans of this really strange but kind of cool music. We knew we were on to something when we received the Songwriters Showcases of America 2010 Band of the Year Music Award as voted on by festival attendees, at the DeLandapalooza Original Music and Art Festival." Bassist Joey Costa, keyboardist Dave Norton and Glenn, all grew up musically in the early seventies when prog was really in its heyday. "We each got bit a little differently, but we all got bit, and the common bite if you will, was YES. Of course there were others as well like ELP, King Crimson, Genesis, and Jethro Tull to name a few, but YES was always the foundation that everything grew from. For the younger guys Reed and Ryan, they also shared that love of the early prog pioneers, but brought their own favourite influences like Rush, Dream Theater and Porcupine Tree that helped to further shape the sound and style of the band." he says with spirit. "So really the inspiration for the

album was very much a shared vision by all of us.



My goal and ambition with the music and this album, was always to let those driving influences guide the writing, but to somehow find a sound and style that was in its own way original, fresh and unique." In his down time outside of music Glenn is a rancher. "I am a lover of the land in all ways. Not a day goes by that I don't find something on the property that just leaves me awestruck. Some days it is the sunset, others the sunrise, and I am known for taking some pretty spectacular pictures of both which I routinely post for friends on Facebook. Many days it is the wildlife. I have a dozen or more head of cattle that bring new calves into the world on a regular basis. I have a variety of water birds that call the pond in my front yard home. Quite frankly I just never know what I will see from one day to the next. I also do mixed media abstract art, which I greatly enjoy. I have a small little studio at my house, and I play around with this when the mood strikes me. I use oils and water in a flat pan, along with the secret ingredient, dish detergent. I mix and stir until I get a look that I like and then I take a picture from a camera mounted directly above. Some very interesting designs have come from this process," he enthuses. "I name each one and again, share them with friends on Facebook. Still, at the end of the day, it is the music that is my driving passion." One of

the most interesting aspects of Magnatar is how its roots can be traced back almost forty years. "I touched on bits and pieces earlier in the interview, but there just isn't enough time to tell the whole story. I will just say that to us, it is rather remarkable on how we all got to this point together. Beyond the history aspect, and while certainly not alone in this regard, doing prog music without any vocals whatsoever makes for its own special challenge," expresses Smith. "We are definitely not a prog 'jam' band. I try to write songs that even without words still tell a story.



Each song has very distinct and discreet parts that weave in and out of each other, often finding their way back at the end to where they started. Some of the music comes off as pure rock in parts, while others play around with different rhythms and phrases, while still others introduce some very pretty and melodic elements. Perhaps the most distinguishing difference, however, is the inclusion of the mandolin as a central component of a prog rock band. All of the songs on this album except Solara and A Walk In The Park were written and arranged on the mandolin. Now you got to admit, that is a bit different," he tells me. The highlight of 'Parallel Worlds' is to finally see a dream from way back in Smith's mind over many years finally come to fruition. "That would not be entirely wrong, but in the early days

of the band, quite honestly, I never really looked at it then as something that would ever yield a real, professional album that would be manufactured and released worldwide. It really was just for the fun of writing and making original music with friends. As time went on however, and the songs started to evolve and get more interesting, and different players along the way brought their own style and influence on the songs, I started thinking a little differently and began to wonder just how far might we be able to take this," he explains to me. "This is where I have to stop and say what the real highlight of 'Parallel Worlds' is. While it didn't happen all at once, in fact it was over a period of years, it is the band that brought Parallel Worlds to life. Joey Costa on bass, Reed Hayes on drums, Ryan Rivas on guitar, and Dave Norton on keys. Therein lies the true magic, motivation and inspiration for me. Without each and every one of them, there is no Parallel Worlds. I write these, shall we say, "interesting" little ditties on the mandolin, that all by itself, is just that. I still go back and listen to the album and come away amazed at what this group of good friends and talented musicians can do with my mandolin compositions. Beyond the music, Ryan is our recording engineer. Reed handles the videos, Joey is the sound guy and can build anything, and Dave is the organizer in chief, the lighting guy, and single handily managed the entire CDBaby process from start to finish, including the layout and design of the CD booklet. It is an unbelievable collection of people and talent, and that for me, is the highlight of 'Parallel Worlds'."



Magnatar are based in the small central Florida college town of DeLand, about forty miles northeast of Orlando. It is not much of a stretch to say that this entire area is for the most part a prog desert. There has been very little opportunity for the guys to play out live to this point with only a few exceptions here and there. The band are very fortunate to have their own permanent rehearsal and recording studio at Smith's ranch. As the band grew and evolved in personnel, creativity, style and sound, so too did the studio. In the beginning they literally practiced under a tent. "As a rancher, I am pretty handy fixing things and putting things together, and Joey is essentially a master craftsman. So we got together and thought we could do better than a tent and built the first small enclosure. It was well built and weatherproof, but just had a dirt floor. After an Armadillo burrowed its way in one day, we decided we better build a floor. Fast forward a few years and the studio has undergone four significant expansions, including one that added the control room for recording equipment, and one for storage. Even as this is being written, a major addition is being built on the outside to allow even more room for live shows and a permanent enclosure for the sound system. We call it Studio 44 at the Music Box (because the ranch is located just off highway 44. The album took around two years to complete, and is 100% independently produced and engineered by guitarist Ryan

Rivas. Reed, Joey and Dave all assisted in the mixing process. The only aspect of the album that we went outside for was for mastering," he explains to me. For the future, Magnatar are already in the early stages of recording some scratch tracks and developing concepts for the next album. "What comes next will likely depend on the attention and interest the album and press promotion drives. We would love to get the opportunity to open for some shows or festivals at least in the Florida area just to get our music out there to a live audience. At a minimum however, I talked about our studio at the ranch. The other aspect of that is that the layout of the property there provides us with the real estate to conduct our own shows. We have in excess of 3 acres dedicated to a parking lot. We can open and remove the entire front of the studio, which then opens onto deck where the band can pull forward and play to the audience in the "yard", which can accommodate several hundred people. The moral of the story is we are going to play our music to somebody somewhere, even if it is our own backyard," concludes Glenn, bringing an end to our conversation. 'Parallel Worlds' was manufactured by CDBaby, and is available worldwide through the CDBaby store as a jewel case CD with an eight-page colour booklet, full album download, or individual track download. It is also available worldwide as a download through virtually every music service platform such as iTunes, Spotify, Amazon, Pandora etc. Check Magnatar out at [www.facebook.com/Magnatar](https://www.facebook.com/Magnatar)

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