

Rebirth – Review

(by Jerry Jay, remixer)

01 My Angel – Rate 10/10

This song, Stefano, would be definitely a number one choice to pick as a first single (regarding to DM strategy of four singles - mostly - in each album).

Since it is well placed at the beginning of the album, you will possibly make the straight impression to every listener and wow, now - if this is Rebirth about - this is going to be a perfect album. I was quite surprised, first song and it doesn't sound anywhere as same as previous works. All is done - rhythm, music, structure, recording, mixing, lyrics. Looking at the verses of My Angel, this seems to be about burning all things what happened in the past, putting everything aside and finally finding something, what will guide you into future, into something positive - LOVE. It's nice to realise, the friends will be here always, do not forget. Sometimes is very hard to be alone, especially when your heart is broken. I think the lyrics are very contrasting, with symbols, but only you know what it is about.

My Angel has a rather wild start, hellish guitar, chaotic wind-tape effect, like the world is still not restored to be perfect, but that Angel, is waiting. Vocals are one of the best of the record, all is very easily understandable, so technically, You did a nice work with balancing the vocals to be really clear. All the higher parts are - for me - brilliant and Your voice simply sounds there as best. It depends, what frequency range you personally like, but I think, this was very hard to sing it live in the studio, but simply like that - there are no mistakes.

Musically what I have found here interesting are changes within different parts of the song. Sounds like it was built in the different tempos, but in fact, the trick is very clever composition.

From sounds overall - I like violin like synth pad in contrast with hell guitar, which I didn't expect after the song's name My Angel.

Listening again, now for the fifth time while thinking about what to write, I have to admire your vocals once again here.

02 Love Crimes – Rate 8.5/10

After the atmospheric My Angel, here is, what was to be supposed to be a main hit? Love Crimes is definitely catchy with some pop structure which makes this a possible, even commercial, success! And there's something about Marco's statement that in some way, it could have been a nice dance tune. Unfortunately not for club dance floors - in my opinion - with this set up of instruments.

Franco's guitars are a top class here. Possibly the greatest guitar solo is introduced here after the first verse and chorus. It sounds like David Gilmour's up tempo guitar solo from Pink Floyd for me. The over-recording, doubling the guitar makes it very dynamic solo. The song is dynamic overall and I have to mention the very live feel of the drums, have the drums been recorded with the drummer or are these sounds taken from a virtual drum machine? I have to say, this song would be nice performed live somewhere. Just thinking it's great You are not alone for producing music, I would be very pleased to have such a great guitar player like Franco Giaffreda to collaborate with. During my own compositions I have sometimes found, that electronic music and synthesizers are the only instruments I can use, because I know nobody to add at least a simple guitar part. It's very beneficial for you both, guys, to collaborate together, as well, when doing big projects like rebirth certainly is, the composer needs additional feedback and different ideas and that's for good for sure!!!

At the beginning I was very confused first, there's something I have found annoying a bit. There's some synth sequence I have associated with different rebirth song - Blind Memories in particular. It was hard to

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accept that I have a same sound in different song now, which for me was one of the main parts in Blind Memories, the first song I was allowed to listen to from this new Synthesis' Recording. On the other hand, it might have been done on purpose to blend all songs from the album together, for me - however, it didn't work.

Sonically the vocals are not so unique like in My Angel, the background vocals during the choruses make the overall feeling a bit monotoning. Like it all has been sung in the same pitch. Me as a remixer and partial producer would have put that background 'low pitch whispering like vocals' somewhere else in the structure of the song, that's why I like alternate version more than this main version. I believe singing the chorus might have been a little problem, the words needed to be sung faster with nearly no breaks for proper breathing. Very impressive!!!

The highs of this songs are guitar solos of Franco's, catchy rhythm, and something I didn't mention yet. The ending part with string synthesizer sound, only one other synth line exceeded the ending atmosphere. I love the drum composition which has a live feel.

03 Blind Memories – Rate 8.5/10

You are the true INTRO maestro, Synthesis.

And right at the beginning, there's a sequence I have written in my previous song review about! This song - Blind Memories - I know as a promo at the very beginning of finalising whole Rebirth project. So it maybe means, it was finished early and quickly and quite often - regarding to my own experience - what goes quickly is also good. Work on the song simply flows, because you are happy how it sounds and are eager to finish it. And when its ready the others might finally comment and everyone knows how feedback important is sometimes.

I do not remember what I have written before, but because I've heard this song so many times I can also spot the differences between the promo and final mix. There's no change in the basic structure and choice of equipment which is great news because I enjoyed the song how it was before. There is a new recording of the vocals, which you can hear just when the first verse kicks-in. I considered the demo vocals very good - I think Francesco Sacchi - was behind the recording that time - I simply have to mention his collaboration here. I don't know what have you changed since then, that your voice did another step forward. Singing lessons with approved vocalist, maybe the differences in the studio equipment and the way you now record vocals. These things are probably very important and in your case, although you had to change things you normally do, it worked very well. Certain words are now processed thru sound processors like delay and reverb, something what I have used in my latest remix recently.

MEMORIES, LAST MISTAKES, those words explains what are the lyrics about. Very dramatic transition arises after the second chorus and then at the end Synthesis simply tells 'nothing to save', 'nothing to like' - referring to the past, it's over and forgotten. I have minor issues in the lyrics and articulation, but nothing to criticise, really. But emphasis on 'V' in word save and 'K' in word like appear to me comic is some way, when listening. I can't prevent it, but I have nearly always smile on my face nevertheless how serious theme the song is based on. And second thing, it's not a fault, neither grammatical mistake, but in my language - Czech - it doesn't make a clear sense - 'I am just forgetting my lost memories' - How can I forget something which is already lost? (possibly gone and forgotten before). Translation to Czech simply doesn't logically sound right, but I don't think it's wrong here. Synthesis is a great storyteller, he can put lots about himself and the past into short sentences and everybody must to say, it DOES have a sense and evenly experienced people will say, yes - it is true!

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Precise guitar strumming, fantastic Italian feel during the intro, transitions between the parts, musical effects like after the lyric part: 'I am reaching the sky with my mind' make all the hard job how to achieve atmosphere like from the dreamland.

04 Lost – Rate 8.5/10

After what sounds like a rather pop style beginning, Lost is the first one of the darker songs on your new record.

Maybe it not so catchy like first three songs, but everything is balanced with psycho-hypnotic atmosphere of the vocals, very sad, but frank, heart-whole and painful lyrics.

I wonder, if the person, who is responsible for your state of mind during writing this song, will ever have a chance to listen to this. I know, it's late, but it's a good way have to put anger out of yourself. Very impressive part of the lyrics is when You sing 'I gave you everything - receiving nothing' , this stands on its own what your feelings were about at the time. In life and relationships there will be always UPs and DOWNS , but I am really sorry for somebody to find that they even lost themselves. What is positive though, is the fact you still have some hope and will to 'find the light'.

The idea of doubling the vocals here, with very high pitch notes, is definitely working here. Atmosphere of a choir singing in the church is something I adore, because it is so creative and I do not remember something like this in your works before! The bass during ' Give me some more time' sounds a little distorted to me, but that it possibly because of the power how that part was played.

From sounds I have to distinguish the bass synth line which appears right in the intro and with some imagination it sounds like weeping water. This song is very personal, dark, with some awesome atmosphere. Likeness with ' The Sinner In Me' , although I love this song because of its originality, it's not recommended for continuous repeating, it can swallow you quite negatively.

For measures I have applied, it's not neither better nor worst song than tracks nr 2 and 3.

05 Rebirth – Rate 8/10

This is going to be harder to write about 'Rebirth' , first of all, it is one of the songs Synthesis has previously composed for his single 'Ragazzo' in 2006.

Now it is three years ago, but I can see from the promo photos from your website, that you have already been together with Alex Lavecchia - the man who stands behind the wonderful inlay paintings from Rebirth artwork. It seems it is your own Anton Corbijn :D.

There must be something about the 'Dance of Synthesis' if you have chosen this track to be completely reworked. Or maybe you just needed an instrumental bridge between two halves of the Rebirth album. The inspiration from a former work is clearly there, same construction and main bass line, which I think is very electronic and techno based.

But there are so many parts different now. Compared to the 'old' version, the sound have changed completely and the final mix is out of the universe. Mix down is very well balanced, everything sounds how it should be - and again, this instrumental song let excel Franco and his guitar art.

There is a pace in the tempo, some nice changes in drums and the power of hardware synthesizer is obvious, I simply wouldn't achieved the same with soft synths only, which is - unfortunately - my case. It's so easier to tweak your KORGs to achieve such Sfx and background surround to create an atmosphere. Although it is an instrumental and the reworked one I know from the past it is still much above average.

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06 Another Day – Rate 9.5/10

This - Another Day - is huge! When I've heard it for the first time I knew, this is a CRACKER. You were explaining, that the initial build-up around 4 similar notes were only as a consequence of the lack of ideas, but sometimes - simplicity is the best thing how to achieve the great sounding hit single (from Depeche Mode 'Behind The Wheel' is same principle).

This is my number three choice - just to remind. I have picked 'My Angel' and now 'Another Day' as third - so still two songs I really love to be reviewed!!!

As you now scraping the idea of intros and outros, here it is great! Job was probably done by one of your Korg again. Voices of ancient warriors and the rhythm create an imagination of walking masses of troops into the fight - only the typical drums are missed here to complete the idea. So this 'marching song' is a real surprise comparing to the concept of other songs from the beginning of the album. I like the different approach and when talking about the differences in vocals, something same should have been done in Love Crimes. Let you just whisper and slowly speak couple of words just like that and sing only one at the end and then - Lella's Dark voice appeared there from the shadow like nothing. She really must be a nice person, her voice is somehow - I can't describe it better and don't know any other idea how to compare it to something, but that voice is so sexy there. Hat down, you stepped forward and decide to include a real female voice in your recording!!!

Another right choice with collaboration was that you included a pianist. Although I am not a big supporter of classical instruments, piano parts by Francesco Sacchi - who I didn't mention before - belongs to the main melody additions in this songs. And it is another thing which I'll remember as a sign of identification for 'Another Day'. Some other interesting thing is that after you let listeners to taste those piano melodies , it has been modulated in pitch and slightly detuned to create a real atmospheric effect. So that was 'another day to kill the pain' , but not a black one... The only 'kick-in-the-teeth' is a synth sequence which appears somewhere else on this album - where I think it is better placed - and the same sounds You used at least in one of your Depeche Mode remixes - Easy Tiger - although remixes might be forgotten - I simply wouldn't put same sounds on two different songs on the same album. Rebirth didn't deserve this, I think - considered it was pressed in 500 copies. But it doesn't matter at the end - this song is along my favourites - therefore.

And that I didn't mention Franco's solo at the finish line of this track!

07 Lost (Reprise) – Rate 6.5/10

If I were responsible for the final playlist of the album, I would have put it as one of the latest track on the album.

One simple reason for that is the fact, that two different versions of the song called 'Lost' are too close to each other. But there's nothing to worry about, everybody has a different taste and approach to music. This track is pretty amazing, considering it was done in two hours, that is maybe why, this 'Reprise' version of Lost is the shortest track on the record.

I was just surprised that Synthesis decided to make this song as additional remix, in my opinion, there are couple of other songs which maybe deserved it too! Musically it is a very good remix. Imagine, not only it was remixed, but also bass guitar is probably recorded live in the studio. And did everything to achieve this result by himself, possibly attending some lessons of playing the bass guitar. Now you are an universal musician, Stefano and this is a big achievement already. Some 'musicians' even can't play any of those

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instruments - like me and when you count singing as another skill, Synthesis is reliable in any part of music creativity.

Flutes at the start suggest better Stefano's frame of mind and overall mood of the remix, although the song is very sad and aggressive lyrically. Choice of instruments and the way how are played is very relaxing against it. And like artist said himself: he intended to create a 'Gregorian' like version.

That is certainly why Synthesis is concentrating only on some vocal parts of his original version. For me however - a disappointment. Everyone can easily see how Stefano improved his voice, he wasn't able to achieve such a high pitch without proper training, so technically, I have no prompts. Where's the problem for me then??? Reverb Sfx! I wasn't simply able to catch all the words and needed always the booklet or written lyrics to clearly understand what is Synthesis singing. If I only had this track, I would be confused so much - it's not a problem when you know an original version and after the time you are familiar with lyrics as well.

For me, as I always loved the drum sounds I admire how the drum kit sounds here again. The Korg - possibly 'M3' did its work perfectly and it reminds me the live drums from Depeche Mode's Devotional Tour - World In My Eyes in particular.

Overall, it is sadly one of my least favourite tracks which I tend to skip sometimes. Sorry. It's not a style of music I prefer.

08 A Pain That I'm Used To – Rate 7/10

Now I see the point...when you mentioned how you created intros and outros for this project, after several songs with the same concept, it all starting to be a little bit same and anticipated. This is the only cover version of Rebirth. Is this the testament of Performing The Angel? After a bunch of cover remixes, there's once again a step back and nice walkthrough on the footsteps of the penultimate album. I am glad that you didn't forget to remind everyone that you are a huge Depeche Mode fan! So am I and every time is the pleasure to have DM on my ears.

This is completely re-worked cover version with no DM samples with some melodies and sounds from previous version and other songs. I talked about it before and I don't want to be repetitive. This DM song is very difficult to replicate. Once I have received some info about the tempo values (when submitting one of my remixes back to Stefano) I was amazed how many changes there are in the song. BPM is not very stable during the changes between verses and choruses. That's maybe because this cover is unusual and bit strange and the parts are not so well incorporated together. Obvious differences can be heard between the vocals, like if they are recorded from two independent takes. Someone might doubt if the drums aren't synchronised for purpose, but it somehow damages my pleasure from the music I know the most. Franco (Giaffreda) did everything to replicate all original parts which he is very successful in and adding even new guitar riffs. I wonder, if it is only experimentation and recorded everything live after the initial synth recording or if you talk together and have some notes ready in hand before the take. Although some vocal parts sound different I have to fully agree with your statement, Synthesis. You're quite right about the fact, that your voice in high values sounds like Martin's - especially during the second chorus part I can hardly spot a difference, it's incredible!

It's not the same like in previous track that it wasn't my favourite because of musical taste, here are some major sync problems for me which will squash a score down, although it is a Depeche Mode song. I believe it was good and necessary to include this on the album.

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09 Love Crimes (Alternate) – Rate 10/10

I am against +150 people now. There's no doubt Love Crimes belongs to one of the hit of 'Rebirth'. For me, this is number two single from the total amount of four. However, I picked this, ex-original, now alternate version of two 'Love Crimes' songs. Although it has a lack of complexity than it's bigger sister - now track #2 which has a huge success amongst the all fans. But You have said this was preferred version in the very beginning and I am just about to write down how this version impressed me and why. This is really strange, that I am not same like the others - the majority!

First of all, this type of music is exactly my taste. A little bit minimalistic with less instruments, but very with very strong sounds which are unique and easy to remember. Bass line and the melody is remarkable and it fits into my own electronic set of instruments I really like to use. And there are other tiny effects, all it is very well blended together, so the balance between the low and high sounds is more than a dream comes true. Those little bells and chimes create pleasant and mellow atmosphere what partly replaces any slower ballad or acoustic song I am missing in 'Rebirth'. Just to remind how great and successful You was with acoustic version of 'I Want It All'.

You are really good in this kind of interpretation. That is why your voice is so strong and emphatic. I simply think imitativeness and melodiousness of the vocals is superior compared to favourite version of yours. The main difference I can spot during choruses, where the voice is stripped off the background vocals so it follows the melody of other instruments.

Piano parts and violin pad underline everything what has been said about the atmosphere. Although 'My Angel' is more complex and distinctive composition this is nothing but another 10.

10 Broken – Rate 9/10

To complete all four single choices, here is the recapitulation:

1st - My Angel

2nd - Love Crimes (Alternate)

3rd - Another Day

4th - BROKEN!!!

Yes, unexpectedly the last track is in this list. You were aware and doubted the quality of this song and wasn't really sure if include the track on the album and although all the hesitation this must be a real satisfaction for you. There is something great in this song - you have written - and you're not alone behind this statement. I will firmly stand and fight for this song with you.

Again, there are some used parts and sounds, but I think here was the placed for that sequence and it fits with the rhythm. Previously I've heard it in Another Day so it is maybe symbolic there are same words in the lyrics. Lyrically the song is easy to remember because of the shorter verses and I even found myself singing it during the song. There I realised how extremely hard is to sing along and have to say, that the depth of your vocals is wide!

The song itself consist of two parts, the text of the lyrics on the booklet are split into two columns and it is the second part which brings this song into the higher level, into the sky, where everything is clear and peaceful. The mission you're singing about is accomplished and filling the last spot with 'Broken' is golden choice. The final part is highlight of Rebirth, emphasized words like 'Feeling - Inside Me - You And Me' with the melody of the vocals + longer reverb and coherence with the synth pad convinced me about unquestionable depth of the last song of 'Rebirth'. Plenty of people, who did have that luck to hear the

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whole record will maybe disagree. Same is expected from the author, but it only reflects my opinions. Feedback is very important in the connection between the fan and the artist and for me as a remixer it is one of the powers to get the best out of me. It's definitely the key to move forward and finding a sense of creating music, although I do music because I simply like it.