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**"We can still push the envelope extraordinary" Says Steve
the release of 4½**





Steven Wilson

NO one likes half measures.

Not at the bar and not on a record either.

But not all half measures are created equal.

Take Steven Wilson's 4½. The unassuming yet grandiosely labelled Progfather has crafted a reputation for sprawling, neo-Floydian concept albums but this is NOT one of those.

The short album has been put out as a halfway house between recent fourth solo album Hand. Cannot. Erase. and a future fifth — hence the name.

Steven, best known for his work with Porcupine Tree, explains: "The idea of

this album is to do justice to some of the songs I had left over from my two previous albums.

“But it’s very important to me they’re not somehow considered inferior to the other tracks.”

So what kept these tracks off the albums?

Steven says: “Those albums were very much driven by the story and musical journey. These songs just didn’t quite fit into that narrative. This is their time to shine.”

The album is richly loaded with stalwart contributors, including Guthrie Govan, Dave Kilminster and Theo Travis.

But Steven has found someone special in Israeli female vocalist Ninet Tayeb, who excels in the emotional, jazzy reworking of The Porcupine Tree’s Don’t Hate Me. He says: “I’m really enjoying working with Ninet. I’ve always wanted to get Kate Bush or Liz Fraser to feature on my records but in Ninet I’ve finally found the voice I was looking for.

“A bit quirky but with a powerful emotive quality.”



Steven rounded off 2015 playing a double-header at the Royal Albert Hall.

It is his favourite place to play in England, yet he has never filmed his shows there.

He says: “I want to do a performance film in an extraordinary location. This year is when I’m finally going to do it but that’s all I can say right now.” Visual

storytelling artistry goes hand-in-hand with Steven's recent releases and he tells how whenever he writes a song, he gets a "visualisation of that song".

But video is not a medium that comes naturally to him: "I can't take a capture to save my life.

"It's incredible people such as Jess Cope and Lasse Hoile that intensify the mood of my music."

Steven was arguably born in the wrong era for huge-selling guitar-based progressive rock and his influences naturally take you back in time.

"It's cliché to name check The Beatles, Led Zeppelin and Pink Floyd," he says.

"But I have many less obvious ones too.

"Miles Davis and Neil Young for example. But the point is, all those people were coming out of this musical crucible of the late Sixties, when experimentation in music was celebrated. It was what the audience wanted and it was selling.

"We forget so quickly that it was positively encouraged to be self-indulgent — to experiment and to reach for something so high and risk falling flat on your face. And it wasn't just confined to rock music either.

But prog is still progressing. Steven explains: "One of the great things about the internet is that it has taken away some of the obstacles to get music heard.

"So there are a lot of kids out there making deeply experimental music. And then there are the older generations.

"The late great David Bowie just released an extraordinary song. Scott Walker and Neil Young still surprise too.

"And at 48 I guess I'm entering that world too now. We can still push the envelope. We can be extraordinary."



So while *4½* rediscovers and refreshes tracks, when can we expect a full-blown fifth album?

"I've started writing and developing it but it's always hard going back to the beginning of the process.

"One of the things I'm really proud of with my solo records, including *4½*, is that they're all pretty different.

"I wouldn't want to just make another *Hand. Cannot. Erase.*

"It's a struggle to find the new direction but I'm not going to rush things. Hopefully you'll hear about it early 2017."

STEVEN WILSON *4½* IS OUT NOW



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