

**Interview with Succession Co-ordinator Michael Legg conducted by Mike Lomlondjian, webmaster of the Argentinian “Kissteria” web site - <http://kissteria.wordpress.com/>**

**Tell me about the origin of this project. How many people were involved in it? Is there any previous tribute albums that you made?**

A. The seeds of this project were planted in early 2008 when Matt Walters, guitarist for Roxy Swain and a member of the KissFAQ forum, suggested that since many of the forum members were musicians, we should make our own Kiss tribute album. Even though that project (which became known as “Music From the FAQ”) was just an amateur, fun kind of thing, it was obvious that many of the contributors had real talent and I immediately thought - “We’ve got to do a professional Kiss tribute album some day.”

I kept throwing around ideas with other musicians and producers who had been involved with Kiss cover’s projects and finally decided on 2 things – (1) Since there have been so many Kiss tribute albums released over the years we would have to do something unique to make ours stand out and (2) we would release it as a digital download album and avoid the hassles and expenses of manufacturing and distributing physical CDs.

**Why did you produce a tribute to Dynasty?**

Graeme Hill (Beeblesaurus) and I came to the conclusion that instead of just performing random Kiss songs, there should be a theme to the album. We thought about many concepts ... a tribute to an individual member, a tribute based on a certain decade in Kisstory, but in the end the idea of re-creating an entire Kiss album seemed to be the most interesting.

We ruled out Unmasked and Creatures of the Night because these had already been done, and started thinking along the lines of Hotter Than Hell, Asylum ... even the unreleased Wicked Lester album. But then it occurred to us that 2009 is the 30th anniversary of the release of Dynasty so the timing would be good for a Dynasty tribute. More importantly, Dynasty is Kiss’ most popular and widely recognized album world-wide, so it stands a greater chance of attracting the interest of a broad audience. Additionally, most of the songs on Dynasty have not been covered extensively in the past, so it meant the track list would vary from the usual Love Gun/Detroit Rock City/Rock and Roll All Night type of tunes that have already been done to death.

**Is there gonna be more?**

We would love to release more Kiss tributes, we’ve only scratched the surface of the talent that is out there in the world of “Kiss fandom”, but I guess it all depends if people want more, so we’ll have to wait and see how Succession is received.

**Dynasty is often labeled as a Disco Music album but many songs rocked. How do you describe the sound of the album and what did you look for with Succession?**

The only actual disco songs on Dynasty are “I Was Made for Lovin You” and arguably “Dirty Livin”, so it’s actually a misconception that Dynasty is a disco music album. But Dynasty did have a more polished sound than any of the Kiss albums prior to it’s release, so it was departure for the band production-wise.

To me, Dynasty was a controversial Kiss album – at the time I was a bit dissatisfied that the hard rock edge that I had enjoyed on previous Kiss albums was missing, but conversely it gave the band their biggest hit single and album in many countries, so without it Kisstory would have turned out very differently.

When approaching Succession, I wanted to maintain that controversial aspect of Dynasty. Some fans may want to hear heavy metal versions of these songs, but my brief to all the

artists was basically - "don't limit yourself to a hard rock audience, make your song appeal to the same broad audience that made the original Dynasty album so successful."

That doesn't mean that there are no rockers on Succession (Shawn Fox's sleazy glam take on Charisma really tears it up!), but the album contains a wide variety of musical styles – so all lovers of good music should be able to find something that appeals to them.

Without giving too much away, the styles range from simple acoustic guitar arrangements to psychedelic rock, euro pop, and some things that are just too hard to categorize!

**The project headquarters are in Australia, right? But you have artists from other places. How did you select the artists that participate on the tribute?**

The internet has changed the way the world works and is a big factor in this project becoming a reality. Through my contacts with people such as Jelle Jansen at Kiss Related Recordings and Kiss forums such as KissFAQ I've been able to get to know musicians that I would never had opportunity to come in contact with in pre-internet times.

All of the artists on Succession were selected because they had already demonstrated their ability to put their own stamp on Kiss cover tunes - whether it was through Kiss community projects such as Music From The FAQ or through their own releases such as Anthony Tyler's cover of Hard Luck Woman from his "Senza Voce" album.

**Could you send me a little review track by track and artist by artist?**

**I Was Made for Lovin You – The Wildflowers**

The intense and slightly punk techo/rock arrangement of this iconic song is complimented by a superb vocal performance.

**2000 Man – Andy Samford**

Lay back, close your eyes and enjoy this trip through space.

**Sure Know Something – Tim McPhate**

Imagine what would happen if Eric Johnson or Steve Vai joined Kiss ... this is one for the guitar enthusiasts.

**Dirty Livin – Coal Bin Bros.**

The song starts off with kazoos and ends with a solo piano ... need I say more?

**Charisma – Shawn Fox**

Fast and nasty ... mmmmm.

**Magic Touch – Anthony Tyler**

Atmospheric and haunting. I don't want to oversell it, but I do love it when a cover is better than the original!

**Hard Times – Roxy Swain**

Stripped down to it's nuts and bolts, Roxy Swain's minimalist approach to this song showcases her own talents as well as the quality of Ace's songwriting.

**X-Ray Eyes – Das Fark**

I just can't stop tapping my feet when I listen to this groovy pop rendition of Gene's ode to another of his super powers.

### **Beeblesaurus – Save Your Love**

And now for something completely different ...

### **It looks like the album has an experimental vibe regarding the original songs. Was it planned or just happened?**

We didn't plan to be experimental, but we also didn't restrict ourselves in any way, so the songs just went off in whatever direction the artists took them.

### **Did you look for a fan-kind-of-vision for each cover? Almost every Succession artist claim to be a Kiss fan since childhood...**

This is very important distinction between Succession and some other tribute albums. All of the artists involved are Kiss fans. This is not a case where a producer employs a bunch of performers to play covers of a particular artist in the hope of generating profit.

There is a sincere desire on the part of all involved to pay respect to these songs and to show the influence that Kiss has had in their artistic development.

### **Many local musicians from Argentina discovered Kiss (and rock) thanks to Dynasty. And I know Australia experienced the same thing. What do you think about the impact of this album in a global level? What about Australia?**

I think there is potential for it to touch a nerve with the people who were also touched by Dynasty 30 years ago. Our hope is that people will enjoy the fresh angles that we've taken on the songs and the same time evoke their memories of the original versions.

### **For years, I was made for lovin' you was a song that Kiss fans used to hate. Now, everybody like it. What do you think of the song and what do you think about The Wildflowers version?**

Not everybody enjoys disco, but just because a song is of a particular genre doesn't make it good or bad. There are good disco songs and bad disco songs, the bottom line is that "I Was Made For Lovin' You" is a good song.

The Wildflowers version tries to capture the same balance of dance and rock that the original version had, but in a more modern way.

### **Do you agree that the Kiss version of 2000 Man is better than the Rolling Stones' original? How does a third generation song sounds like?**

I don't think it's a case of the Kiss version being better or worse than the Stones version, I think Ace interpreted the song differently to the Stones and made it his own. Andy Samford has done the same thing, taking Ace's version as a starting point and putting his own trademark style on it.

### **Did you have any kind of contact with Kiss management or any of the musicians that played on Dynasty?**

Well, you know the whole "six degrees of separation" theory ... everybody on the planet knows everybody else via six intermediate steps. Based on that concept we do have a connection to the Kiss organisation, but we haven't used that connection in any way ... so far.

**Is there gonna be any kind of shows or tour to promote the album?**

That would be awesome, but realistically I don't see it happening.

**Is there gonna be a full album streaming on Succession My Space? I have just send you a request from mine...**

There will be samples of the songs on MySpace and our own website and a YouTube video sampler.

**Michael, tell me some things about you. Where do you live? What were your tasks as a coordinator of the project? Tell me about your life in and out the Kiss experience...**

I live in Brisbane, Australia. I first discovered Kiss in 1975 when I saw the film clip (as they were called in those days) for Rock and Roll All Nite. I went out the next day and bought "Alive!".

In the 1980's I was bass player for an Australian Glam Metal band called "Vice". We were all big Kiss fans and usually performed Cold Gin or Rock and Roll All Nite in our encores.

My job as co-ordinator of this project entailed, inviting all of the artists, working with the artists to determine which song each would do, tracking finances, keeping everyone up to date with the progress of the project, building and maintaining the web site and a ton of other boring stuff.

I also had assistance from Anthony Tyler who designed the album cover, organised the licencing of the songs and has just finished mastering the recordings.

Tim McPhate is currently working on the YouTube video and will be handling out official press releases.

So as you can see, there are a lot of people involved in making all of this happen, my job mainly is to co-ordinate everyone's efforts and provide a channel of communication between the various parties.

When all is said and done we just hope that people enjoy listening to Succession as much as we enjoyed making it.