



**Album** – Silence

**Artist** – JoNo

**Year** – 2015

**Label** – Self released

**Serial** – JON OCD1

**Line up:**

Johann Norrby - Lead Vocals, Guitars, Keyboards, Background Vocals

Johan Carlgren – Pianos, Keyboards, Background Vocals

Stefan Helleblad – Guitars, Background Vocals

Nicka Hellenberg – Drums & Percussion

Janne Henriksson – Bass, Background Vocals

**Track Listing:**

1. Man of Misery
2. Wasting Time
3. Can We Make it
4. Turn Around
5. Your Bread
6. In My Life
7. Clear
8. The One to Blame
9. Opus
10. Josefina

**Country of Origin** – Sweden



Web links - <http://jonotheband.se/index.html> <https://www.facebook.com/jonotheband>

## Background

Silence is the 3<sup>rd</sup> album to bear the name of JoNo, the first being essentially a solo album from head honcho Johann Norrby which is full of the clever pop/rock which the likes of **Mika** was so adept at a few years back. The second which is reviewed here at Glorydaze is the first real group effort and as George alluded to in his review of "Requiem" is maybe a little over full of piano led ballads. So has this new album seen a real progression on the promise that was so in evidence on the previous releases?...in a word YES.

## Songs

I'll start by saying this album has barely been out of the CD player or off the iPod since getting my mitts on this little beauty a few weeks back. The whole album oozes class and is crammed full of ideas, lavish, inventive arrangements and top notch playing. The band that Johann has assembled around him really impresses, giving all the songs on show an energy and robustness. Johann Norrby's musical template is without doubt the 70's output of **Queen** with a smattering of the likes of **Robby Valentine** and **Incubus** thrown in for good measure. His voice lends itself a little to the operatic side but without going OTT, it's clear he has studied **Mr Mercury's** vocal style, but still leaves his own individual mark on his songs.

Opener "Man Of Misery" has a glorious staccato guitar riff, while the lyrics tumble out somewhat breathlessly from Norrby and it's topped off with some wonderfully overblown harmonies. "Wasting Time" starts deceptively with a sweet piano/vocal before leaping into a head rush of a song, complete with its "Don't stop me now"isms, down to a delightful pretty much note for note **Brian May** Style guitar break, with these openers both clocking in at under 3 minutes each, it's hard for the listener to catch their breath. "Can We Make It" sees piano and guitars blend perfectly with a suitably swooping vocal performance giving the whole song a real pompous vibe. "Turn Around" turns down the tempo being a lovely ballad; I can see the lighters in the air from here! The strangely titled "Your Bread" bounces along with real vim and vigour with a cracking guitar break to help out proceedings. "In My Life" starts with **Supertramp** like keyboards, and then settles into a tidy groove with, again some **Brian May** flashy fretwork to set it above the ordinary. "Clear" demonstrates the vocal department of the band, with a dazzling and darting vocal performance. What I will say at this juncture, is that one could well be put off by the vocal style on offer. I personally think it lends perfectly to JoNo's blend of grandiose rock/pop, but I can see others not taking to it at all. "The One To Blame" swaggers like something off the last couple of **Robby Valentine's** albums, no bad thing for this scribe of course. We now come to the album's centrepiece, the appropriately titled "Opus" and at over 7 minutes in length it easily outstrips everything else in terms of scope and vision. I'm loathe to mention it but I will, this song has the "Feel" of Bohemian Rhapsody, now I'm not saying it sounds like it but it meanders slowly through different movements, and its structure bears all the hallmarks of said iconic song. Of course it's overblown, pompous and has a guitar solo to die for. I'm an absolute sucker for this type of music, and here it's done to perfection. The album closer is the all too brief "Josefina" a delicate flower of a song and an uncharacteristically stark piece of music for what has preceded it. Throughout, the production of the album is big and fat befitting of the music contained within. What the Swedes are putting in the water these past few years is anyone's guess as the music coming out of that country in recent times is excellent, with the likes of **A.C.T** ploughing a similar fertile furrow to JoNo all the way to the sublime AOR of **Work of Art** and **W.E.T.**

## In Summary

As I said before I'm a sucker for this type of material and anyone who uses early **Queen** as a starting point is alright with me. The album is available as a download but has also recently been made available as (I understand it) a limited run on CD. I would really like to catch these guys live to see them pull this album off. If the band carry on progressing in this fashion I can see a healthy career being forged, as

long as they don't over reach themselves. A little early in the year to say so, but this album will take some beating if it's not to make my top spot..... Pomp Rock lives!, Run for the hills!! © Geoff Barton