

# Flame Dream – Silent Transition

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## Flame Dream – Silent Transition

**3VE Records (2024)**

**(6 tracks, 62:46 minutes playing time)**



Flame Dream is a band from Switzerland that has its roots in the late 70s. Flame Dream released six albums between 1979 and 1986. After that, there was a break until May 2024, when the seventh album 'SILENT TRANSITION' was released, an impressive sign of life from the Swiss band. The album, which contains six tracks, features a good 63 minutes of new music.

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Pit Furrer (drums, percussion), Roland Ruckstuhl (piano, organ, keyboards, percussion), Peter Wolf (voice, flute, saxophones) and Urs Hochuli (bass, design) are still part of the 80s line-up. The only new musician in the band is Alex Hutchings from the U.K. (6-string nylon, 12-string guitar, electric guitars). In 2022, when band members met up about a possible re-release of their earlier albums on CD, Roland Ruckstuhl and Peter Wolf began writing new compositions and lyrics, which led to intensive work on the album 'SILENT TRANSITION' in 2023. The band describes the creation process on their homepage as follows:

*Our new compositions, lyrics and instrumental arrangements are a reflection on the state of things. As we work as independent producers, there are no compromises. We are integrating our many musical experiences as well as lessons learned from our lives in cultural and theatre projects we have been involved in, to an expanded form in this new album 'SILENT TRANSITION.' We have known the brilliant guitarist Alex Hutchings for some time. The guitar parts formed an integral part during the creative process of composing the new pieces as well as the complex arrangements and fitting into the soundscape. Rehearsals took place in Bristol/U.K. in the summer of 2023.*

The band has revealed the theme of the new songs: *The poetic lyrics of 'SILENT TRANSITION' are about the passing of time, loneliness in the digital age and as a result of COVID-19, global polarisation, the loss of biodiversity and the fact that we are living in a very tense and fragile world right now. The lyrics also make a connection to our fourth album 'Supervision'. However, the perspective has changed to a contemporary string: NOW.*

The new CD, which is the band's first album to be released on compact disc, comes in a four-page digipak with a 20-page booklet. Customers will also receive a card signed by the band with the cover artwork. There are also plans to re-release the back catalogue on CD from summer 2025 on.

The new album starts with the 11:22-minute track 'No Comfort Zone'. At the beginning, the sound can be heard slowly from the off. Atmospheric sounds and a striking fretless bass shape a mysterious start. Then, after a good minute, the band kicks in with powerful drums and a proggy rock track develops. After just over two minutes, when a marvellous 70s-style organ motif emerges, Peter Wolf's vocals kick in, which come across as somewhat timid and sometimes fragile, but this suits the music well. Now we have arrived in the rock of the 70's/80's and the sound of the 2000's. The piece is interspersed with brilliant solos/instrumental passages, which are sometimes atmospheric, sometimes rocking.

The 12:24-minute title-track 'Silent Transition' continues with another long composition. Rocky guitar riffs open this track and continue with keyboard sounds that are somewhat reminiscent of Supertramp. However, the band does not copy this but uses nuances as a stylistic device. Peter Wolf's dreamy voice then comes to the fore in the vocal passages. Keyboards and a percussive samba rhythm add a further nuance. And Alex Hutchings embellishes the whole track with a guitar solo reminiscent of Santana. Additionally there is also a jazzy piano solo in this varied piece.

And yet another long track follows with the 10:25-minute 'Velvet Clouds', which starts with chimes and pads. After a good minute, drums and the electric guitar kick in, which come across as quite proggy. As soon as the vocals kick in, it becomes very melodic. A song that quickly sticks in the ear and has a neo-prog flavour. In the instrumental middle section, the band takes a very atmospheric and sometimes delicate approach. Piano and bass, together with the drums, offer a grandiose instrumental part, into which the acoustic guitar then joins in with a partly Mediterranean feel, while the rest of the band starts progging.

The 6:21-minute 'Out From The Sky' is the first of two shorter tracks. The song is a piano-driven ballad with a very beautiful melody. This is followed by the 6:55-minute instrumental 'Signal On The Shores'. Here the band offers a gentle track with sacred traits, which are mainly expressed through monk-like chants. The first three minutes are very symphonic and soundtrack-like. Then the drums and guitar kick in and offer an irresistible rock part with a symphonic flavour.

The album concludes with the fourth, 14:40-minute long track 'Winding Paths'. Neo-prog elements can also be found here. A very proggy track with symphonic elements and sprawling instrumental passages with solos.

It was a surprise that the Swiss band Flame Dream, who released their last album 38 years ago, would reappear with new material. Fortunately, four of the former musicians have reunited and recorded new material with Alex Hutchings on guitar. 'SILENT TRANSITION' is an excellent progressive rock album and makes you hungry for the re-releases of their early works.

***Stephan Schelle, October 2024***