

If you're talking about modern progressive rock and don't bring up Haken, you're doing it wrong. Since the south English sextet started jamming together in 2004, they've been one of their genre's most loyal yet, simultaneously, adventurous forces. Every album they've released is distinct from all the rest, but they're all tied together by their incalculable time signatures, fearless songwriting and majestic vocals - and, of course, their critical acclaim.

Haken's 2010 debut, *Aquarius*, gave British prog a sorely needed lifeline. In establishing the band's balance of mighty hooks, off-kilter riffs and flamboyant keyboard lines, it made them the most exciting and experimental sons of the genre's homeland since Porcupine Tree emerged almost two decades prior. The next year's *Visions* somehow pushed the melodies and scope even further, setting the stage for breakthrough *The Mountain*: an avant-garde behemoth that united the best traits of Gentle Giant, Metallica and Soft Machine in one swipe.

Since then, Haken have gleefully dabbled in '80s synths on 2016's *Affinity*, before the conceptual duo of *Vector* and *Virus* aggravated their heavy metal leanings to invigorating levels. How do you honour such an eclectic, unpredictable career? You make *Fauna*: Haken's most genre-busting and conceptually fascinating album to date.