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[Michael Schenker Group: *In the Midst of Beauty*](#)

Posted on 09.23.08 by R. David Smola @ 12:00 am



In the Midst of Beauty should be a better record. Michael Schenker stocks his band with solid pros, including Toto drummer Simon Phillips, current Deep Purple and former Rainbow keyboardist Don Airey, and former Whitesnake bassist Neil Murray. That is an impressive lineup considering they are supporting one of the most iconic six-stringers in the genre. As part of the UFO, Schenker produced some of the most memorable licks in classic rock history through his contributions to *Lights Out*, *Force It*, and *Obsession*. The weak link on the record and one from which the album can't recover is the vocals of Gary Barden, back again with MSG. His vocals sound like what the Cult's Ian Astbury will be able to deliver when his voice blows out. Barden's range is limited and he just doesn't have any pop. Sure, it is fun to hear Schenker blast into one of his 7,000 solos on this record, but the pace of the material is set to coast. Nothing takes off and rips like the best Michael Schenker stuff does. There is no edge or motor, and Phillips sounds bored simply keeping time to these light metal grooves. Most of the record is listenable except for the dreadful balladry of "Summerdays," which further exposes the limitations of Barden's voice. With the excellent talent around him, Schenker wastes the opportunity to return to form. It's not bad - it just isn't Schenker good. (**Inakustik**)

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