

# Art of Illusion

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Published on 2021-01-26



Anders Rydholm and Lars Säfsund is the duo hiding behind the moniker Art of Illusion that gives us the debut album "X Marks the Spot", an album that marks where to find a really good album that was praised by our reviewer. You might be able to guess where the band name comes from and that sort of things, but to know more we have asked Anders Rydholm a few questions.

Many bands have poor names, names without idea and imagination. It isn't easy with the name and Anders explains that they had gone through several suggestions where none came out really good, so they were looking backwards towards earlier bands. - We thought that this could be a good compromise, to celebrate our past and our previous bands with a small tribute. We could have used our names as well,

but that didn't feel right and the band name should say something about what you can expect to hear.

Lars Säfsund and Anders Rydholm, like Anders & Lars might not quite fit the style it is like something else, perhaps for the old people, but why did Anders want to work with Lars?

- Why not? Lars is one of the absolute best singers in the world and probably everyone want to

work with the best singers or musicians. He has a great voice/ expression, and besides that he is a nice guy. Super musician and a nice guy makes the job easy.

That Rydholm and Säfsund take their music in a melodic direction might not be unexpected, and Anders explains that the melodies are in focus and that it is difficult to describe the own music as everyone interprets it their own way. But they don't

only go for the melodies, they also want to take the music in an own direction and do their own thing.

- To dare to let the songs start softly and carefully, and then end in something different. Also trying to add some unexpected twists and turns, to have an own expression. The lyrics also have an own expression. Some humour and twists here, everything doesn't need to be dead serious

in my opinion. I am also tired of so many songs about love in the melodic music, everything is already done, so why not try some different lyrics.

In my review I wrote that there was some similarities to progressive Swedish band A.C.T. but the thought of that being an inspiration was not correct as Anders doesn't listen to them. Bands like Queen, Vasa. Big Money on the other hand, and of



course touches of his own band **Grand Illusion** are influences according to Anders.

- It is music focused on melodies and good vocals. I have tried to tone down the progressive and focus more on melodic and catchy songs. For some reason there were many fast songs with a tempo of around 160 BPM this time. I don't know why, it is not a tempo I have used as much earlier as I have done on this album.

### **X Marks the Spot**

X Marks where the treasure is, it even does so in some films about archaeologists. It is the thought of the treasure map and to point out that they are there that led to the title "X Marks the Spot" for the debut album by **Art of Illusion**.

- We had no song titles that was suitable as the album title, so we had to find another one. I think that "X Marks the Spot" is a title that is assertive.

On the theme of song titles, is

there a favourite song for you?

- I tend to like the songs I am working with last. It might be something of a defence mechanism to focus on what is relevant here and now. I think we have many strong songs here and it is very difficult to choose a favourite. It requires more time and distance to be objective over one's own songs. For me it usually take a few years since a release before I can feel relatively objective.

The title "X Marks the Spot" is distinctive, another distinctive detail is the really attractive artwork. Anders explains that it was cover was difficult this time.

- I and Carl André Beckston, who made the cover, was tossing ideas back and forth quite a lot. Carl André was looking for a mix of art and an illusion to connect with the band name. We went through at least 25 different suggestions before landing in this one.

We here at Hallowed were positive to "X Marks the Spot" and Anders likes that the overall reactions were positive with many liking the songs, Lars' vocals and so on. But according to Anders the reactions from others aren't the most important.

- We have to like our own music, but it is always fun if others think the same, but I will not change anything due to opinions of others. To be pleased with the music is the most important and

becomes more important with every passing year. I got stuck in that trap with **Grand Illusion** where I tried to satisfy many different people's opinions rather than listen to my own, and that is something I regret today. Follow your own heart, and that is what we have done on this album. We didn't play it for any label before it was more or less finished. The most important thing was that I and Lars were happy with the album.

### Futures and ending

One challenge for bands today can be to be noticed, positive reviews and opinions is one thing, another thing is to go out and play to the audiences. The latter can be a bit difficult these days and Anders doesn't have a good answer to the question if they hope to go out and play. As we don't really know how the live scen will look and what

possibilities there are to take the stage

- We will have to wait and see what is possible or not.

Otherwise the Corona situation has led to more creative time for some when the live time has been taken away so more time could be spend on creating new music. But for Anders there has been less time for the music.

- I work as a teacher on the

university and for me it has been much additional work there due to the Corona situation, so I haven't had much time for music. It has rather been less active last year, the Art of Illusion album was more or less finish when the Covid took off.

With the first Art of Illusion album out there, Anders is hoping that there will be more from this project, but he also wants to make

more music in other projects as well.

- Neither Lars nor I want to rush anything, it can take the time it requires. I also hope to do some different new music later this year. There will be more on that later when there is a schedule. I have been laying low for some year but have gotten the spark back lately.

It should be mentioned that

we at Hallowed has written positively about Rydholm's music in the past and if there is more from him it would make the reviewers of Hallowed interested. "X Marks the Spot" is released on January 29 2021 and is a somewhat different spice in the melodic rock cookie.

- I hope many takes the time to check out Art of Illusion. We are a slightly different spice in the

melodic jungle. There are also many great musicians appearing, like Jay Graydon, Muris Varajic, Kristian Larsen, Pelle Holmberg, Frank Nillson, Tony Paoletta and Daniel Rydholm.

Read our Hallowed review of X Marks the Spot here

