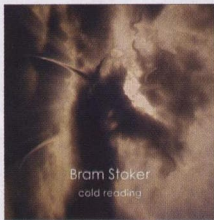


BRAM STOKER

Cold Reading SUNN CREATIVE

The classic British proggers rise from the grave.

Followers of the band named after Dracula's creator would've been forgiven for thinking they were as (un)dead as those halcyon days of '72, when they recorded *Heavy Rock Spectacular*. But Bram Stoker are back, and it's all rather beautiful in a gothic way. Appropriately for a band originally defined by their organ sound, opener *Climbing The Gyroscope* begins with trademark Hammond from founder member Tony Bronsdon before spinning off in a delightfully Camelesque direction, courtesy of Tony Lowe's elegant licks. New member Will Hack's delicate tenor is suitably mysterious,



impressing especially on the sinuous and endlessly evolving *Chasing Red*. Lovers of keyboard-heavy vintage prog will relish the joyously daft instrumental *Joust* (great to hear Bronsdon get medieval on our prog arses here). *Cold Reading* also includes

retreads of old Stoker songs *Fast Decay* and *Fingal's Cave*, the latter's playful Bach-like mood a treat. However they serve to signal how far Stoker have come in 40 years. Hack may make them appear less bombastic, but the new sound – still symphonic but warmer and more assured – suggests they've much to offer the prog revival. **RM**