



THE BREATH OF LIFE

'A True Watchmaker work'

19/08/2017, Stef COLDHEART

Belgian formation The Breath Of Life became veterans of the goth-rock scene. The band can look back on a successful career and numerous essential albums. They played at the biggest festivals, sometimes as the top act. They no longer release new work on a regular basis but that makes every new opus a bit special. The new work "Under The Falling Stars" released on their own label Magic Language Records together with Wool-E Discs is probably their best work to date. Enough reasons to get in touch with this great band which, in my opinion, remain not well enough recognised in their homeland...

You guys don't exactly compose new albums on a regular basis so I can imagine a new work must be always something special... and "Under The Falling Stars" even more special as Philippe Mauroy joined the band again?

Isabelle: Phil's comeback is one of the most important things that happened in the band. We are all very pleased about it. We composed this album within about 30 months. All the ideas came very naturally like in the old days. We still have such a great time all working together.

Phil: Following my return to the group and after the departure of Marc Haerden, who had held the drums for some years, it took us some time to find our guidelines again but we absolutely never discussed among ourselves what musical direction to take. That direction had to be found rehearsal after rehearsal, each one of us bringing his ideas and personality. An album is influenced by many factors and this one benefited from a perfect alignment of the planets.

I'm not suggesting that you reinvented your own sound but this album is characterised by a perfect balance between all instruments revealing genius guitar playing, dreamy violin parts, deep vibrating bass playing and of course the magic of the vocals! Did I forget something? Seriously, what's your perception of this album?

Phil: Thank you... I wanted to keep the guitar from "Under The Falling Stars" turning into a cliché. I used all the influences without asking myself questions and I believe that the whole group did the same. Time will tell but as I see it this is our best album, although there is a sentimental tie with some of the old ones which this one evidently cannot have today. And of course we must not forget our producer Gilles Martin who did a wonderful job on this album.

Didier: We took time to compose the songs. All of them have been played many times in our rehearsal room. To be

sure to find, as you rightly said, the most perfect balance between the instruments. All the tracks were ready to be played ‘live’ before the recording. This album is made with a lot of rich orchestrations, so, it needs to be really precise... a true watchmaker work!

Isabelle: Thank you. I really like how the songs are built and also the atmosphere you can feel through the songs. I guess Gilles Martin did also affect the songs with his sublime touch.

I guess the writing of every new album is always kind of an experience... a kind of sonic voyage so what do you keep in mind from this work and what have been the main difficulties you encountered in the global process?

Phil: For me, the first song was the most difficult one to find. It is not on the album but it made it possible to define the colour scheme that we were going to use. A bit like a painter who has his blue or green period, we have our “Under The Falling Stars” period.

Didier: I had a real problem on the first day of the recording session but it was only technical. While I was changing the strings of my bass guitar, I broke a screw on the top of the head of the guitar. It made it impossible to put the first string in place! With Phil, we lost hours on the internet to find a shop having this fucking ‘special Fender’ screw in store but no way! We tried with others types of screws, a nail, glue... I almost lost a finger! And at last ... I took Philippe’s bass guitar. A real suspense, isn’t it?

What does the title of the album “Under The Falling Stars” reflect exactly and what does it say about the lyrical content and eventually commitment?

Isabelle: “Under The Falling Stars” is a mix of different ideas. I could add the words ‘here we are’. It’s about all what’s left from great people, artists we have lost through the past years.

I also consider that a star is a dream or a state you would like to reach. For different reasons, it works, takes time or fails. Keep dreaming helps me to go ahead. Dreaming is essential for me. I love daydreaming. It’s a way to reconnect with myself.

More specifically, “A New Reality” speaks about the interaction between how you feel, how you think and your actions. We are free to think in a different way and be different. This can open new perspectives in life. Dreaming can bring you to new realities.

“Crime Passionnel” is about someone who doesn’t feel anything anymore for his passion. This happened to one of my friends. It must be something very strange to decide to stop what you have loved and done for more than 30 years because you don’t feel anything about it anymore and it gets too heavy to keep going. Oh, yes, “Crime Passionnel” is also a wonderful Belgian beer that we discovered the day we created this song so I thought it was a good title for a song :-)

“Blackout” is based on the life of Malala Yousufzai, this extraordinary teenage girl who got shot in her face because she wanted to go to school to learn and express herself. Now she is a persona non grata in her country. Malala wants peace, freedom and the right of education for every child.

“From The Storms” is about the need to reach our own secret place where we feel fine to reconnect with ourselves after stress due to different things.

“Stolen Dreams” speaks about weird creatures stealing your dreams. They feed themselves with all the dreams we don’t remember once we wake up.

“Hide” is about mental manipulation. When a relationship between people seems to be fine at first but, after a

while, gets harmful, sick.

"Higher" expresses the importance to step back to have an overview of a situation.

Didier: In fact, "Under The Falling Stars" has an optimistic value to me. Would you prefer to stand under falling stars or falling bombs? To be crushed by a falling star is more elegant, really.

I noticed you recently get featured on a compilation "Macadam Tribute" as attribute to the legendary French punk formation Bérurier Noir. What does this band mean to you and how did the cover of the song happen?

Phil: In a bar in Arras, France, we were chatting with people from the young North Shadows label who talked to us about that compilation. We already felt somewhat connected to the Bérurier Noir from having played with them during the nineties, so we got the idea that we could participate. Our universes being very different after all, we had to find a piece that would stick. The music was not the most difficult part but the words were. Because Isabelle does not approach the words in the same manner, a point of convergence had to be found. The choice fell on "Tzigane", a little known title but I believe that we did not do too badly after all.

Isabelle: It took us 3 seconds to agree to take part in it. We grew up with 'Les Béruriers Noirs' and it's going to be a nice compilation.

After nearly 30 years of existence, I can imagine The Breath Of Life became an essential part of your life. What does it really mean to you and what has been the impact on your lives and the 'people' hiding behind the 'artists'?

Isabelle: I keep thinking making music is a wonderful outlet where you can express your feelings. It's also a great human experience between the The Breath Of Life musicians but also with people from everywhere. It's great to have the opportunity to share and give emotion to people.

Phil: Through my guitar, the group allows me to externalise my thoughts, without the words, but through the vibrations of the strings and shaping of the sounds. It's a little bit as if I were telling my story to a psychiatrist; in fact, I should be the one to pay the audience.

Didier: Making and playing music in general is a kind of cure. I think that it keeps me alive. It began when I was an adolescent in the attic of my dad's house: with a toy 'Casio' keyboard and a tape recorder. And since then, I've never stopped. But now, I've better material and instruments. When I play music, I feel as if I were a better person, a 'real human' (and when I was younger, I felt even more handsome with a guitar, don't laugh, please). I don't know if my team mates share this opinion? Maybe, I'm just more stupid really... Well, I hope not ...

Stef COLDHEART

19/08/2017

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THE BREATH OF LIFE • We don't make this type of music for business but because it comes from deep in our hearts

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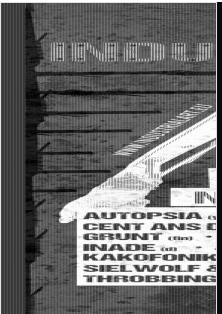


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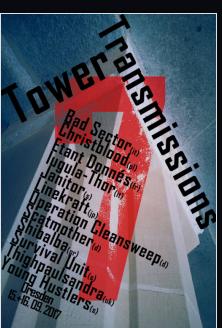


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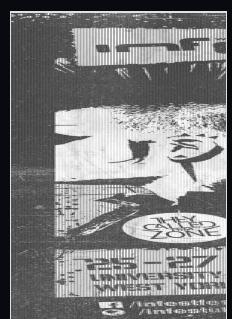
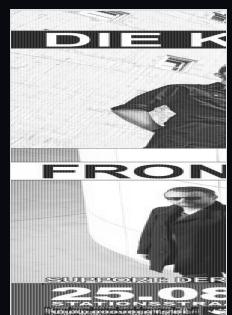
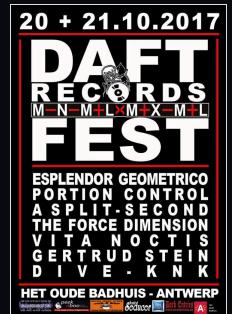
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NIEUWENOR presents:

A black and white photograph of the band Front Line Assembly, consisting of four members wearing sunglasses and dark clothing. Below the photo is the text 'Front Line Assembly (CAN)' and 'za. 12 augustus 2017'. Further down, there is a 'coming up:' section listing dates for The Wedding Present, Kong + Stakbabber, Moss, and Götterdämmerung + No More.