

BIOGRAPHIE

MARAH



ANGELS OF DESTRUCTION

Munich Records/Nocturne sortie le 24 novembre



« ...ET ILS RAYONNAIENT D'UNE GLOIRE ÉBLOUISSANTE. »

LA PARTIE IMMERGÉE DE L'ICEBERG ET LE FOND DU PUIT, CE SONT LES IMAGES QUI ME VIENNENT IMMÉDIATEMENT À L'ESPRIT À PROPOS DE NOTRE NOUVEL ALBUM ANGELS OF DESTRUCTION !.

PERMETTEZ-MOI DE M'EXPLIQUER...`

6 MOIS AUPARAVANT...

J'avoue avoir été un peu éméché lorsque j'assistais à ma première réunion des Alcooliques Anonymes, six mois plus tôt.

L'expérience de la sobriété allait être une réinvention de moi-même.

Tout allait changer. Je fermerais simplement le livre

sur ce chapitre de ma vie et me donnerais complètement au travail. J'allais me concentrer sur mon groupe (que j'aime profondément et que je considère comme l'un des meilleurs du monde) et je passerais chaque seconde à créer plus, d'une meilleure musique, comme un bourreau de travail (en Anglais workaholic NDT) avec le même acharnement que je consacrais à m'alcooliser. (Note : ceci n'est pas conseillé dans le manuel en 12 étapes diffusé par les A.A.).

Notre nouvel album a COMMENCE sa vie en tant que DOUBLE album. J'ai écrit des chansons, mon frère Serge les a écrites aussi.

J'ai exploité nos précédents travaux et je me suis même couché tôt quelquefois rêvant à de superbes « jams » que nous n'avions pas encore écrites mais qui le seraient assurément dans quelques années. Les

BIOGRAPHIE

chansons commençaient à s'amonceler, il y en avait de bonnes, quelques-unes étaient géniales ! Angels Of Destruction ! devint rapidement un TRIPLE album. Cette nouvelle musique c'était du Rock & Roll, elle était folk, elle était punk, elle était intelligente, elle était triste, elle était drôle et parfaite à tous points de vue. Elle happerait non seulement nos fans, mais volerait les fans de tous les groupes existants (Plus tard aux Grammy's nous devrions nous excuser auprès de milliers de groupes !) Quelques répétitions après cette révélation et l'affaire était dans le sac. Nous allions sauver le Rock & Roll et nous allions rayonner d'une gloire éblouissante !

20 JOURS PLUS TÔT...

Il y a vingt jours, j'esquivais les appels téléphoniques, j'évitais les membres du groupe et signais des chèques sans provisions.

La date à laquelle nous devons livrer l'album se rapprochait, je reprenais prise avec la réalité. Oh mon Dieu, j'étais finalement devenu sobre !

35 CHANSONS ? UN TRIPLE ALBUM ? ? ? Pour qui était ce que je m'étais pris, putain ? Et à côté de ça, comment allait faire notre label Yep Roc pour établir un tarif pour l'album, sans compter le packaging classe, genre hologramme qui joue du piano de saloon lorsqu'on l'ouvre. Vont-ils avoir les moyens de le sortir ? Les aura-t-on ? Vont-ils être éblouis par notre ingéniosité, ou leur humble structure de Caroline du Nord prendra-t-elle feu ? En fait ça n'avait plus vraiment d'importance, il était trop tard pour tout ça maintenant. Le lancer de balle a été maladroit, nous perdions du terrain, et l'équipe Marah était désespérée.

IL Y A SEPT JOURS...

Marah contrôlait de nouveau le jeu. Les tubas jouent, les cymbales se percutent et bien que notre casque de foot nous soit tombés devant les yeux, nous nous acheminons vers la fin de la zone du Rock.

LA PARTIE IMMERGÉE DE L'ICEBERG...

Angels Of Destruction! compte maintenant 12 titres. Bien que ce ne soit qu'une infime partie de ce que nous avons enregistré, nous ne pouvons nous empêcher de ressentir un enthousiasme vertigineux à propos de l'avenir. Nous avons non seulement livré notre sixième disque à nos bons amis de Yep Roc, de plus nous nous sentons à l'orée d'un futur impétueux et passionnant, bien qu'incertain. Peut-être, n'y aura-t-il bientôt plus de disques compacts. Peut-être, très vite, frappez-vous sur votre barre d'espace pour voir apparaître Chris Martin dans votre salle de séjour

chantant "The Yellow Song" dans un falsetto agaçant. Qu'importe. Nous serons prêts.

LE FOND DU Puits...

Sur fond de Folk Punk technicolor, voilà un album à thèmes... Religion, destruction, rédemption et joie. Nous avons enregistré la musique, tous les six debout dans une pièce (on a joué aussi fort et aussi puissamment que l'on a pu !). Comme nous l'avons toujours fait (de la première chanson sur notre premier album à la dernière chanson sur celui -ci.) On a tout mis dans ce putain de truc... Nos thunes, nos animaux domestiques, nos relations. Tout est dedans, et quoi qu'il arrive, le sort de cet album n'est plus entre nos mains. Notre seau racle le fond du puits, et nous prions pour qu'il ramène de l'eau !

CE SOIR...

À 18h30 Kirk "The Barber" Henderson, Christine Smith à l'immense talent (notre dernière recrue) et moi-même nous rendrons à Manhattan par le Train L. Nous allons masteriser "Angels Of Destruction!". Si le disque comportait le moindre défaut, j'en prendrais la responsabilité auprès d'eux et je leur ferais mes excuses, mais je sais qu'ils n'en auront cure, ce ne sera pas nécessaire. Ce sera parfait. Nous sommes liés par l'amour, l'âme, la sueur et le sang... Cela se perçoit à la surface (Comment en serait-il autrement ?) Et il sera bientôt temps de revenir à notre mentalité de gang et de trimballer notre ENORME Rock & Roll Show « On the road again ». Ensemble nous allons ébranler les murs des salles de concert et amener Angels Of Destruction ! à la vie.

« Je suis une comète... Je suis un flash- David Bielanko

PS : Cher Monsieur le Rock Journaliste, j'ai tenté d'écrire cette bio le plus précisément possible, j'étais forcé de rendre compte de ma sobriété afin d'illustrer la méchante tempête de neige d'évènements qui est tombée dans le coin dernièrement. Au nom du groupe, j'espère que mon « histoire » ne deviendra pas « notre histoire » mais simplement une partie d'une image plus large, qui est notre musique.

« Je suis un flocon de neige... Je suis une colombe ! »
- D.B.

P.P.S. – Les concerts seront mega !

ANGELS OF DESTRUCTION

Munich Records / Nocturne sortie le 24 novembre 2008

NICK HORNBY parle de MARAH

May 21, 2004

OP-ED CONTRIBUTOR

Rock of Ages

By NICK HORNBY

LONDON

It's just before Christmas last year, and the Philadelphia rock 'n' roll band Marah is halfway through a typically ferocious, chaotic and inspirational set when the doors to the right of the stage burst open and a young man staggers in, carrying most of a drum kit. My friends and I have the best seats in the house, a couple of feet away from Marah's frontmen, Serge and Dave Bielanko, but when the drummer arrives we have to move our table back to make room for him. He's not Marah's drummer (the band is temporarily without) but he's a drummer, and he owns most of a drum kit, and his appearance allows the band to make an even more glorious and urgent racket than they had managed hitherto. The show ends triumphantly, as Marah shows tend to do, with Serge lying on the floor amid the feet of his public, wailing away on his harmonica.

This gig happens to be taking place in a pub called the Fiddler's Elbow, in Kentish Town, north London, but doubtless scenes like it are being played out throughout the world: a bar band, a pickup drummer from an earlier gig, probably even the table-shifting. It's just that three or four months earlier, Bruce Springsteen, a fan of the band, invited the Bielanko brothers to share the stage with him at Giants Stadium for an encore, and Marah will shortly release what would, in a world with ears, be one of 2004's most-loved straight-ahead rock albums, "20,000 Streets Under the Sky." These guys shouldn't be playing in the Fiddler's Elbow with a pickup drummer. And they shouldn't be passing a hat around at the end of the gig, surely? How many people have passed around the hat in the same year that they appeared at Giants Stadium? Thirty years ago, almost to the day, Jon Landau published his influential, exciting, career-changing, and subsequently much derided and parodied article about Bruce Springsteen in *The Real Paper*, an alternative weekly ó the article that included the line "I saw rock 'n' roll future and its name is Bruce Springsteen." I had never read the rest of it until recently, and it remains a lovely piece of writing. It begins, heart-breakingly: "It's four in the morning and raining. I'm 27 today, feeling old, listening to my records and remembering that things were different a decade ago." I'm only guessing here, but I can imagine there are a number of you reading this who can remember what it was like to feel old at 27, and how it bears no resemblance to feeling old at 37, or 47. And you probably miss records almost as much as you miss being 27. It's hard not to think about one's age and how it relates to rock music. I just turned 47, and with each passing year it becomes harder not to wonder whether I should be listening to something that is still thought of as more age appropriate ó jazz, folk, classical, opera, funeral marches, the usual suspects. You've heard the arguments a million times: most rock music is made by the young, for the young, about being young, and if you're not young and you still listen to it, then you should be ashamed of yourself. And finally I've worked out my response to all that: I mostly agree with the description, even though it's crude, and makes no effort to address the recent, mainly excellent work of Neil Young, Bob Dylan, Robert Plant, Mr. Springsteen et al. The conclusion, however, makes no sense to me any more.

Youth is a quality not unlike health: it's found in greater abundance among the young, but we all need access to it. (And not all young people are lucky enough to be young. Think of those people at your college who wanted to be politicians or corporate lawyers, for example.) I'm not talking about the accoutrements of youth: the unlined faces, the washboard stomachs, the hair. The young are welcome to all that ó what would we do with it anyway? I'm talking about the energy, the wistful yearning, the inexplicable exhilaration, the sporadic sense of invincibility, the hope that stings like chlorine. When I was younger, rock music articulated these feelings, and now that I'm older it stimulates them, but either way, rock 'n' roll was and remains necessary because: who doesn't need exhilaration and a sense of invincibility, even if it's only now and again?

When I say that I have found these feelings harder and harder to detect these last few years, I understand that I run the risk of being seen as yet another nostalgic old codger complaining about the state of contemporary music. And though it's true that I'm an old codger, and that I'm complaining about the state of contemporary music, I hope that I can wriggle out of the hole I'm digging for myself by moaning that, to me, contemporary rock music no longer sounds young ó or at least, not young in that kind of joyous, uninhibited way. In some ways, it became way too grown-up and full of itself. You can find plenty that's angry, or weird, or perverse, or melancholy and world-weary; but that loud, sometimes dumb celebration of being alive has got lost somewhere along the way. Of course we want to hear songs about Iraq, and child prostitution, and heroin addiction. And if bands see the need to use electric drills instead of guitars in order to give vent to their rage, well, bring it on. But is there any chance we could have the Righteous Brothers' "Little Latin Lupe Lu" ó or, better still, a modern-day equivalent ó for an encore? In his introduction to the Modern

Library edition of "David Copperfield," the novelist David Gates talks about literature hitting "that high-low fork in the road, leading on the one hand toward 'Ulysses' and on the other toward 'Gone With The Wind,'" and maybe rock music has experienced its own version. You can either chase the Britney dollar, or choose the high-minded cult-rock route that leads to great reviews and commercial oblivion. I buy that arty stuff all the time, and a lot of it is great.

But part of the point of it is that its creators don't want to engage with the mainstream, or no longer think that it's possible to do so, and as a consequence cult status is preordained rather than accidental. In this sense, the squeaks and bleeps scattered all over the lovely songs on the last Wilco album sound less like experimentation, and more like a despairing audio suicide note. Maybe this split is inevitable in any medium where there is real money to be made: it has certainly happened in film, for example, and even literature was a form of pop culture, once upon a time. It takes big business a couple of decades to work out how best to exploit a cultural form; once that has happened, "that high-low fork in the road" is unavoidable, and the middle way begins to look impossibly daunting. It now requires more bravery than one would ever have thought necessary to try and march straight on, to choose neither the high road nor the low. Who has the nerve to pick up where Dickens or John Ford left off? In other words, who wants to make art that is committed and authentic and intelligent, but that sets out to include, rather than exclude? To do so would run the risk of seeming not only sincere and uncool ó a stranger to all notions of postmodernism ó but arrogant and vaultingly ambitious as well.

Marah may well be headed for commercial oblivion anyway, of course. "20,000 Streets Under the Sky" is their fourth album, and they're by no means famous yet, as the passing of the hat in the Fiddler's Elbow indicates. But what I love about them is that I can hear everything I ever loved about rock music in their recordings and in their live shows. Indeed, in the shows you can often hear their love for the rock canon uninflected ó they play covers of the Replacements' "Can't Hardly Wait," or the Jam's "In the City," and they usually end with a riffed-up version of the O'Jays' "Love Train." They play an original called "The Catfisherman" with a great big Bo Diddley beat, and they quote the Beatles' "Tomorrow Never Knows" and the Who's "Magic Bus." And they do this not because they're a bar band and people expect cover versions, but because they are unafraid of showing where their music comes from, and unafraid of the comparisons that will ensue ó just as Bruce Springsteen (who really did play "Little Latin Lupe Lu" for an encore, sometimes) was unafraid.

It was this kind of celebration that Jon Landau had in mind when he said in his review that "I saw my rock 'n' roll past flash before my eyes." For Mr. Landau, the overbearing self-importance of rock music of the late 60's and early 70's had left him feeling jaded; for me, it's the overbearing self-consciousness of the 90's. The Darkness know that we might laugh at them, so they laugh at themselves first; the White Stripes may be a blues band, but their need to exude cool is every bit as strong as their desire to emit heat, and the calculations have been made accordingly: there's as much artfulness as there is art. In truth, I don't care whether the music sounds new or old: I just want it to have ambition and exuberance, a lack of self-consciousness, a recognition of the redemptive power of noise, an acknowledgment that emotional intelligence is sometimes best articulated through a great chord change, rather than a furrowed brow. Outkast's brilliant "Hey Ya!," a song that for a few brief months last year united races and critics and teenagers and nostalgic geezers, had all that and more; you could hear Prince in there, and the Beatles, and yet the song belonged absolutely in and to the here and now, or at least the there and then of 2003.

Both "Hey Ya!" and Marah's new album are roots records, not in the sense that they were made by men with beards who play the fiddle and sing with a finger in an ear, but in the sense that they have recognizable influences ó influences that are not only embedded in pop history, but that have been properly digested. In the suffocatingly airless contemporary pop-culture climate, you can usually trace influences back only as far as Radiohead, or Boyz II Men, or the Farrelly Brothers, and regurgitation rather than digestion would be the more accurate gastric metaphor.

The pop music critic of *The Guardian* recently reviewed a British band that reminded him ó pleasantly, I should add ó of "the hammering drum machine and guitar of controversial 80's trio Big Black and the murky noise of early Throbbing Gristle." I have no doubt whatsoever that the band he was writing about (a band with a name too confrontational and cutting-edge to be repeated here) will prove to be one of the most significant cultural forces of the decade, nor that it will produce music that forces us to confront the evil and horror that resides within us all. However, there is still a part of me that persists in thinking that rock music, and indeed all art, has an occasional role to play in the increasingly tricky art of making us glad we're alive. I'm not sure that Throbbing Gristle and its descendants will ever pull that off, but the members of Marah do, often. I hope they won't be passing around the hat by the end of this year, but if they are, please give generously.

NICK HORNBY IS THE AUTHOR, MOST RECENTLY, OF "SONGBOOK."

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MARAH, EXTRAITS DE PRESSE

".....recalls Bright Eyes on the bluegrass hootenanny "Santos De Madera", and occasionally, when invested with a little old-time bon-homie courtesy of the bassoon, clarinet and horn accompaniment on tracks like 'Songbirdz', the sepia-tint vignettes of The Band. Dread, guilt and death haunt these songs, along with the lurking biblical imagery that culminates in the mountaintop epiphany of 'Wilderness'

4/5 THE INDEPENDENT

"Angels of Destruction! continues a rich tradition forged in the bars of their hometown. Roiling rockers like the Stones sounding "Wasteland" or the quietly contemplative heartbreaker "Blue But Cool" showcase a band familiar with life's highs and lows.

4/5 MOJO

".....sounds like one almighty road trip, barrelling along to piano, blustery guitars and the odd honk of E Street sax.....best of all is 'Can't Take It With You' a bleary saloon song with a killer banjo run.

4/5 UN CUT

"Brawny blues riffs jostle with bagpipes and dog whistles....there are plenty of high-velocity thrills....including 'Jesus In The Temple', a stumbling bar-room boogie"

THE OBSERVER

"There is something endearingly shambolic about Philadelphia's Marah. ...Typical is the wry world-weariness of the honky-tonking title track, the best song The Stones didn't write for Exile On Main Street"

4/5 THE SUN

"If there's one thing that 'Angels of Destruction' reinforces, it's that Marah have re-imagined classic songwriting, storytelling, and old fashioned rock 'n' rollit's hard not to be charmed by their eclectic and authentic approach. Long may it last.

7/10 ROCKSOUND

"....tracks like 'Angels on A Passing Train' swoon with religious imagery and elevating choruses, nodding unashamedly to Dylan and Springsteen, 'Jesus In The Temple' meanwhile, is a BRMC mosey into the sunset, delivered with adventurous gusto that's matched by everything else here"

6/10 NME

".. ...'Old Time Tickin' Away' has an almost glam stomp to its momentum, and the woozy, Beatlesy 'Jesus In The Temple' is superbly crepuscular. Good stuff"

3* SUNDAY TIMES

"Superior Americana from Philadelphia sextet ...elsewhere 'Santos de Madera' echoes the woozy psychedelia of The Sleepy Jackson and 'Wilderness' manages to include bagpipes to charming effect"

3* Q

"...I would not be surprised if before 2008 is out we see Marah appearing on the likes of Jonathan Ross and Later With Jools Hollandpotentially an album that could have mass appeal"

8/10 HARDROCKHOUSE.COM

"Stand out tracks include 'Angels on a Passing Train' which sounds like Gogol bordello fighting Arcade Fire with it's Eastern European accordion and wild strings...Refreshing"

BASE.AD

"Marah blow the roof off with their barely contained energy. It's street music, soul music, music to walk off a skyscraper to...[y]ou're left with your hair standing on end, shaken up,

down-to-earth rock reality that made your head bang and your heart pump. Clearly the band...doesn't need a star to hitch its wagon to. The music was loose, updating the classic rock sonics of vintage Stones with hints of Rockpile and E Street echoes. Marah's chops are solid, but what separates these guys...is their united-we-stand intimacy...their rock anthems are like skyrockets...The same could be said of Marah itself. It's just a rumor, but this little band from Philly is gonna be huge...Springsteen might show up for a gig, but if he doesn't, it doesn't matter."

DAN AQUILANTE, NEW YORK POST

"...they capture an elusive essence of rock 'n' roll truth that is brash, vulnerable, intense and above all, committed to the cause."

DAVID SINLAIR, THE TIMES

"Marah is intense...Dave and Serge Bielanko offer an innocence and heart that is too rare in the coolness of contemporary rock." – Robert Hilburn, LA Times

"Rock 'n' Roll perfection" JONATHAN TAKIFF, PHILADELPHIA DAILY NEWS

"Top 10 songs I can't live without: #3 My Heart Is The Bums On The Street", and...

"Ok, all-time top five gigs:

- *The Who, Charlton Football Ground, 1974
- *Southside Johnny and Dave Edmunds, The Nashville, London, 1977
- *The Clash, Lyceum, London 1980
- *Springsteen, Wembley, 1981
- *Marah, The Borderline, London, 2001"

NICK HORNBY, AUTHOR OF HIGH FIDELITY, ABOUT A BOY, VIA EMAIL

"Their performances are raucous, ramshackle, soulful and utterly committed to the magical notion that rock is a vehicle for a higher power...Last week, at Dingwalls, they played one of the most exciting shows I have witnessed in a life of gig going...here was melody, emotion, exuberance, passion. To see them live is to understand: Marah have got the music...the Bielanko brothers are among the most gifted and intelligent young songwriters to have emerged from America in recent years"

NEIL MCCORMICK, THE DAILY TELEGRAPH

"You hardly stand a chance of resisting this music. It gets you deep down where you live. If you have yet to hear, Marah is the hottest thing shaking in rock & roll. I defy anyone to present another band more representative of the genre's ambitions, spirit and energy"

KANDIA CRAZY HORSE, POP MATTERS

In 2005, "If You Didn't Laugh, You'd Cry" was voted album of the year by



exhilarated, that hole in your heart temporarily fixed, which is all you can ask of great rock 'n' roll. And God knows, this is great rock 'n' roll."

UNCUT

"...Marah combines sex, soul and unstoppable energy...catch them before "next" is dropped from the "Next Big Thing"

TIME OUT, NY

"Passionate as youthful rock 'n' roll is meant to be"

NO DEPRESSION

"Gig of the year!"

TIME OUT, LONDON

"****Their set was compact, intense and incredibly loud...with waves of raw voltage...Darned entertaining."

ADAM SWEETING, THE GUARDIAN, UK

"...these boys have guitars and aren't afraid to use them. Ramshackle, sweaty rock 'n' roll – just the way we like it..."

CLASSIC ROCK

"Marah turned sky-high expectation into