

Copernicus - 1985/2012 - "Nothing Exists"

(37:38, Moonjune Records)

★★★★★

TRACK LIST:

1. I Won't Hurt You 4:13
2. Blood 5:32
3. I Know What I Think 3:05
4. Quasimodo 4:19
5. Let Me Rest 11:12
6. Nagasaki 5:08
7. Atomic Nevermore 4:14

LINEUP:

Copernicus - vocals
Pierce Turner - keyboards; vocals
Larry Kirwan - guitars; keyboards; vocals
Jeffrey Ladd - flute; keyboards
Andi Leahy - violin; vocals
Thomas Hamlin - drums
Peter Collins - bass
Chris Katris - guitars
Fred Parcells - trombone
Paddy Higgins - bodhrans
Steve Menasche - marimba
Jimmy Zhivago - guitars; piano

Proclusion. The US project COPERNICUS was formed in the late 70's, initially with Copernicus himself as the creator of improvised poetry recited over musical constellations crafted by Larry Kirwan and Pierce Turner. Since then 13 albums and a live DVD of Copernicus particular creations have seen the light of day, of which "Nothing Exists" from 1985 is the first (and "Cipher and Decipher" from 2011 is the most recent).

Analysis. Copernicus' debut album is a fascinating journey into a very personal and emotional universe, a world revolving around Copernicus himself, his fear and his anger, his doubts and revelations. His spoken words, finely and carefully spoken, powerfully recited, angst-filled shouting or tortured and painfully driven from his mind to his vocal chords always the main and dominant part of the musical landscape created, the prophet and the preacher on a journey to discover the world and the universe outside and inside himself, finding the words to describe what he discovers along the way and investing all of this with untamed raw emotion. His accompanying musicians underscore and support him, emphasizing the power of his words and reflecting the emotions and the discoveries revealed in a myriad of different manners, calmly improvising when the mood is set for that, harshly and at times aggressively thundering when there's a need for that, which occurs pretty often, as Copernicus' journeys and discoveries frequently lead to anger. From the gentle but subtly zany art pop of opening feature *I Won't Hurt You* to the bleak despair of final piece *Atomic Nevermore*, the latter more of a free form gentle exploration settling in marching rhythms, to the conclusive phase, the musical support is just as tantalizing and intriguing as the spoken poetry itself. The fragmented instrumentation and angelic backing vocals of *Blood* settling into a brief harmonic construction prior to erupting into a cacophonous dramatic climax from which thundering rhythms and dissonant effects arise for the final phase, the blend of crunchy dark toned guitar riffs and subtly atonal keyboard textures as the main instrumental features of *I Know What You Think*. Then there's *Quasimodo*, again with twisted dark toned guitars, now supported with sickly keyboards and hammering impact piano details, complete with a noise-driven guitar solo perfectly suited to Copernicus angst-ridden spoken words for this particular feature. A tortured highlight of a dark and driven production that have passed the test of time very well, making a strong impact even close to 30 years after its conception.

Conclusion. "Nothing Exists" is the first recorded chapter of Copernicus journey of discovery, a dark and twisted construction with words and music alike meriting a description as experimental and probably avant-garde at that. Lyrics and music alike are, as I understand it, improvised constructions. Perhaps due to that very fact there's a strong nerve running through this material that has a compelling effect, at least for those who have a

tendency to be drawn to material of a darker nature. An album well worth exploring by those who appreciate and enjoy innovative productions, in particular if material with a high degree of angst and anger tends to be regarded in a favorable light.

OMB=Olav M Bjornsen: March 3, 2012
The Rating Room

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