

COPERNICUS

UNDERGROUNDOVÝ FENOMÉN Z BROOKLYNU

(17. 6., hala stadiónu Slávie, 9000 diváků)

Dlouhovlasý démonický devětadvacátýkář Joe Smalkowski, zvaný Copernicus, založil asi před 10 lety skupinu téhož jména. Domovskou scénou se stal Cat Club v New Yorku. První album *Nothing Exist* vyšlo 1. ledna 1985 (Ski Music). Prodalo se i do Kanady, Francie, Švédské, Švýcarska a NSR. Copernikova šokující hudba a hlavně svérázná filozofie neexistence (*nothing exist*) upoutala pozornost alternativního tisku a rozhlasu. New Music Report pětiroznavával Copernikovu zufitost k projevu Henry Rollinse (Black Flag), Object Magazine v Kalifornii psal jen v otázkách: „Jaký je to druh hudby? Je Copernicus beatník-punk-básník osmdesátych let? Poslouchejte!“

Tak tedy posloucháme: klavíry, akustické piano, kytary, flétny, bicí, perkuse a nad vším se nese Copernikův hlas. Zpívá o Hirošimě a Nagasaki, o Quasimodovi, o krvi, ale všechny texty mají totéž jádro — atom. Copernicus: „Vidím ve své poezii vliv atomu, má to



hodně co dělat s mým chápáním reality. Jádro filozofie Coperniků (často mluví ve třetí osobě) je, že neexistujeme, že jsme neskuteční. Proto jsem své první album nazval *Nothing Exist*. Pravda skutečnosti je v atomové a podatomové rovině.“ Joe Smalkowski dodává, že před 2000 lety si lidé mysleli, že Země je sted a Slunce obíhá kolem ní. Z omylu je vvedení Copernik svým revolučním myšlením (proto tedy Copernicus).

COPERNICUS UNDERGROUND PHENOMENON FROM BROOKLYN

(Translation of above)

(June 17, 1989 Slávie Stadium, Prague 9000 people.)

The long haired demonic man, Joe Smalkowski, (49 years old) called Copernicus formed a musical group ten years ago by the same name. Their homo scene is the Cat Club in New York. Their first album, "Nothing Exists", was released on February 1, 1985 (Ski Music). The surprising music of Copernicus and especially his philosophy interested alternative radio stations and press. The New Music Report compared Copernicus to the rage of Henry Rollins (Black Flag). Object Magazine in California wrote in questions only. "What kind of music...? Just listen!"

So we're listening: keyboards, piano, guitars, flutes, drums, percussion and Copernicus' voice. He's singing about Hiroshima and Nagasaki, about Quasimodo, about Blood, but every song has the same core - the atom. Copernicus: "I see the atomic and subatomic level." Two thousand years ago people believed that the sun was revolving around the earth and the first Copernicus showed them they were wrong. (Joe Smalkowski believes his philosophy that "nothing exists" is of equal importance and that is why he renamed himself "Copernicus".)

In 1986 Ski Music released the second LP of Copernicus called "Victim Of The Sky". The first album contained fourteen musicians; this second album now had nineteen musicians. The sound and lyrics are more depressing, more exacting, more urgent: "I have no time, I have no.... Free of so many lies!" The third album, "Deeper", (1987) contained twenty-eight musicians. Tom Hamlin and Larry Kirwan are original Copernicus musicians, but the order of the group in Prague included Mike Fazio and David Conrad.

The concert in Eden began with the song, "The Authorities". At once you realize you're about to see something very avant-garde. On the following song, Copernicus is dressed in a poncho with a large hat and is hiding his face. The song that follows is "White From Black". The song deals with the times when all people were black but the snow and cold changed the black into white, but their blood stayed red. With a movement of agony this shaman mixes sex and the sun - the sun which thaws the snow - the snow which cools the sun but especially the sun which is boiling, boiling the snow.... He is falling on the floor and laying there. A young black man appears on stage, points demonstratively to his black skin for the public and then helps the old man to get up and go. In the next song Larry Kirwan is beginning to sing, "Don't let me measure my life in terms of money." Copernicus reappears on stage dressed in a beautiful commercial jacket and sings about his hatred for money. He's now pulling money from his pockets, tearing it into little bits and throwing them to the public. "Money! Money! Penize! Penize!" he's calling. The people are energized at once and coins go flying onto the stage while from the stage bits of banknotes are flying. The next song is "From Bacteria". Humanity evolved from bacteria (and George Washington, Jesus Christ, Michael Jackson... etc.) Another song was "Oh God" - "O Boze". After, Copernicus played another song in Eden from "Nothing Exists" called "Blood". In "Son Of A Bitch From The North", Copernicus' bell is ringing in alarm. At the end of the rhythmic song "Chicken-Itza Elvis" Copernicus is ecstatic. He's calling Elvis! Elvis! and the entire hall of nine thousand people return his call, "Elvis! Elvis!". The hall was filled with underground fans and they were satisfied. Thanks a lot to Copernicus and to Pulnoc for a wonderful concert.

"life". Copernicus se vraci ve snobsky blémaku a zpívá o své nenávisti k penězům. Tahá z kapes bankovky, trhá je a kousky hází do publiku (na Chmeinici o den později trhal dolarovky). „Money! Money! Penize! Penize!“, křičí. Publikum okamžitě reaguje. Na pódiu padají mince a z pódia lezáta kousky bankovek. Následuje Bacteria, skladba potvrzující osobitou Copernikovu filozofii: „Lidé vznikli z bakterie“ (včetně George Washingtona, Ježíše Krista, fády dnešních politiků, atd.) Po písni — sloganu Oh God! (O Bože), následuje kmenová Nothing Exist. Z prvního alba hrál Copernicus ještě skladbu Blood, a Son Of A Bitch From The North, při níž se rozvonil na poplach Copernikův zvon. Závěr patřil rytmické skladbě Chicken-Itza Elvis. Copernicus je v extázi, opírá se do klavíru, kope do činelu. „Elvis, Elvis“, zpívá hala. „Elvis, Elvis“. Ještě přídavek a koncert končí. Hala nacpaná undergroundovými fanoušky je společná (kdo by řekl, že jich je v Praze trolik?). Už před Copernikem byly všechny nařadené křatickým vystoupením Přínoči, díky které tento Američan v Praze vystoupil.

PETR BERGMANN

Foto: Petr Bergmann