



Rock&Folk n° 416 - April 2002

With their third and perfect album, these British people with alcoholic lyricism maybe lay their last card on the table. While listening to Anthony Reynolds, fallen angel leader and known fine talker, we think that the unknown great English pop band deserves its third chance.

Anthony Reynolds, Jack singer, looks like the way we picture an English musician : outstanding and nasty, destroy and aesthete. He says he loves the actor Rob Steiger, the cats, his wife, women, Henry Miller, John Fante and the countryside. We believe him easily. Always elegantly destroyed - and drunk of course -, our fallen angel is able to declaim whole sections from "King Lear" at 3 a.m., only to be attractive to women...

Met in Brussels, during a gig making the new idyll between his band and the demanding Belgium label Les Disques Du Crépuscule official, Reynolds knows that the third and best Jack album ("The End...") is maybe the last chance record. After the commercial failure of "Pioneer Soundtrack" (1996) and "The Jazz Age" (1998), this lyrical and chaotic band (between Gainsbourg, Bowie, Brel, Scott Walker) has never gone beyond a cult position. Reynolds doesn't worry. Taking another glass every five minutes, he declares with cheek : "That's ended, alcohol belongs to the past". Then he adds, very relaxed : "Tomorrow I'll play in Madrid, I won't drink, I'll take cocaine". A last stuff ? "Just now, the support band went to meet me. The guys are called Starvin'. They only told me : ' Hello we are Starvin.' Of course I gave them the address of the nearest restaurant." The interview can start.

Rock&Folk : Your third album opens with two quite chaotic songs : "The end of the way it's always been" and "Emperor of New London". Why this commercially risky choice ?

Anthony : We wanted this. Our first album "Pioneer Soundtrack" already started with "Of light", a very long song. It's like a way to tell the listener : " If you can bear the beginning of this record, then the following will sound obvious to you." For the albums and the love stories, it's the same : it always starts with difficulty but then all become very natural.

Rock&Folk : The girls ... ?

Anthony : Few years ago, I used to sleep with fans. There's nothing that easy : these chicks idealise the picture of me they get through discs and magazines. After two nights, it's always the same : these girls realise that I'm not that cute and even less spiritual. It's cutting in the

end. To last a relationship, it's better to be obnoxious at the start. From that, all can only get better.

Rock&Folk : Are you married ?

Anthony : Yes but polygamist. I share my life between the 3 women of my life : my wife and my 2 female cats. That's why I record discs, to feed my cats.

Rock&Folk : Few sentences from "The end..." show a great and ironic profundity. For instance, "You know why they call me ugly/ it's because I run faster than beauty".

Anthony : Unfortunately, this is not by me. It's a sentence by Picasso, and old intimate friend. He told Jean Cocteau that the people who found his paintings hideous were wrong : they weren't ugly, they only ran faster than beauty.

Rock&Folk : Don't you feel misunderstood ?

Anthony : a bit, though I don't think our band is hard to access. We have more demand than the average about the tunes and lyrics, that's all.

Rock&Folk : Ain't there a lack of profundity in the current pop music ?

Anthony : Of course. We live in the entertainment culture. The music is not there to entertain us on Saturday night, it has to try and change our lives. Enrique Iglesias can't do that.

Rock&Folk : Have you got life models ?

Anthony : Yes, Gainsbourg, Bukowski and Fante. Characters : at the same time, they're able to accept their animal side - to drink, to eat, to have sex - and also to create very profound works. Lately, I've discovered Houellebecq. I like this guy. He looks like a destroyed Woody Allen. I've been told that he has recorded an album with his poems, that he has filmed a porn movie and that he loves the rock'n'roll way of life. This man seems to be a genius. There is nothing that subversive than being an aesthete hidden in a pig shell.

Rock&Folk : If success ain't coming, could you become a writer ?

Anthony : I don't know. I try to write but I can't draw the boundaries between fiction and autobiography. I'm often told that my lyrics are well written but I feel a songwriter and singer above all. Literature can still wait.

Jean-Vic Chapus

