

ZU JHATOR

HOM 009

Stubbornly free from genre classification, Italian trio Zu have been proud to follow their own musical pathways for some twenty years now. Throughout their highly diverse career the band has cultivated the art of collaboration, joining forces with luminaries such as Mike Patton, Damo Suzuki, Mats Gustafsson and Nobukazu Takemura. Their new album – and first on House of Mythology – is no exception, featuring guest musicians such as Jessica Moss of Thee Silver Mt. Zion Memorial Orchestra and Kristoffer Lo of Norwegian pop sensations Highasakite, among others.

JHATOR is perhaps their most ethereal venture yet, and a bold new trajectory for musicians and label alike – a pensive, mind-expanding foray into abstraction and wonder, rich in cinematic ambience and transcendent, transformational power. Consisting of two extended pieces, this is a work that connects Zu to their antecedents both spiritual and musical, whilst forging forward in the manner of no-one but themselves.

The album takes its starting point inspiration-wise from an ancient Tibetan funeral practice, the sky burial. With this in mind, the two lengthy tracks herein chronicle a journey from the earthly to the sacred realm. The band themselves clarify their position thus: “In making this album we have tried to affirm life, beauty and mystery. We refocus the vision in another direction, far from the Western point of view.” True to this approach, this album’s journey is a psychotropic mission through trance states and transcendence,

with the soul taking flight in the sweeping soundscapes and otherworldly ambience evoked by this unique act.

It is certainly possible to hear the echoes of Coil in the sonic experimentation and transgressive approach of these two pieces; the band have also taken to heart some of the central precepts of one of that outfit’s creative minds, Peter Christopher, which runs thus: “As long as I can remember, I’ve approached music from a visual point of view. Any technique that you can apply to a film, you can also apply to a piece of music.” Moreover, some of these slips into the ether could be compared to the fanciful flights of expression that Pink Floyd undertook around their epiphanies at Pompeii, but this is perhaps more to do with the general aura and panoramic reveries that occurred visually in tandem with the ’71 concert-film.

Above and beyond any creative footing found in a rock music lineage, this is also an album inspired by the ancient Egyptian texts discussed in Susan Brind Morrow’s *THE DAWNING MOON OF THE MIND* and the Sufi poetry of Farid ud-Din Attar. On JHATOR Zu traverse beyond everyday concerns to reflect a broader existential life that unites the primal and the metaphysical, relaying a series of vivid aural atmospheres with immense scope and luminous intensity. There may be few bands we’d trust with such matter of life and death, but on the evidence of this record Zu stand beyond compare, a visionary force whose horizons seem ever-expanding.

– Jimmy Martin



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