

Brainwashed - A Brief Exchange with Benoît Pioulard

Written by Lucas Schleicher

Saturday, 31 October 2009 15:00 - Last Updated Tuesday, 03 November 2009 03:41

With a brief tour of Europe and England just over the horizon, Thomas Meluch took some time to answer a few questions for Brainwashed about the state of Benoît Pioulard. In addition to discussing his plans for this tour and the evolution of his live set, Thomas also talks a little about his love for Terrence Malick, his photography, and the new music he's been working on with Windy Weber and Adam Forkner.



Lucas Schleicher: Tell us a little bit about your upcoming tour. How did it come to be?

Thomas Meluch: Sylvia (the agent/promoter in Paris who is handling everything) first approached me about some French dates a couple of years ago, at which point I wasn't nearly confident enough in the live aspect of my music to dive in. Earlier this year, though, I had what I consider a very successful tour in the US with Windy & Carl, by which time I was using vocals and doing things about which I was much happier. After that I heard from Sylvia again and was feeling ready to do a lot more live playing, so we began planning and have been sewing things up for the last 5 months or so.

LS: Have you ever been to Europe before? Do you have any expectations for what it will be like performing there? Any goals?

TM: As with the previous tour, I am allowing myself not to have any expectations about how things will go down. I have indeed been to Europe on a few occasions before - two weeks in France, a summer studying in England, and so on - and am definitely excited to be back there. My primary goal is to play all my songs (most of which are new) correctly and hopefully match the energy in the room at each performance.

LS: Last time I saw you perform your music was a bit more improvisational and noisy than I expected. At the very least I think it is fair to say your live performance emphasized very

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different musical elements than the ones on your records. Can you explain why your performances are so different?

TM: The easiest explanation would be the difference in tools I use to create recorded and live pieces - at home I have several guitars, various other instruments and some software to deal with what I'm making, but live I'll be using a single guitar, vocals, tapes and a set of pedals that all run in real-time. That aspect makes me feel more at ease with improvisation, though the set I've been developing is guided/anchored by 6 or 7 proper songs in between which anything else might happen.



LS“: “Alaskan Lashes” (from the *Flocks 7*“ EP on Blue Flea) shocked me a little bit, but reminded me of your live set, too. Textured sound and noise play significant roles on your records, but not to the same degree found on that song. Can you talk a little bit about “Alaskan Lashes” and how it came about? What motivated you to release an

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all-noise piece?

TM: Knowing that it'd be on Blue Flea (run by Windy & Carl) gave me the sense that something a little noisier might be appropriate to balance out the comparatively straightforward A-side, and that one was a pretty organic creation from what I recall. In a sense it's a documentation of the house in which I was living at the time, since most of the sounds (apart from the guitar & cello drones) are taken from its environs, albeit heavily treated and EQ'd to sound like the tundra.

LS: Can we expect more songs like that from you in the future?

TM: I wouldn't rule it out, certainly.

LS: Can you talk a little more about the live setup you will be using in Europe? Is there anything you're actively working to change about it?

TM: As I briefly mentioned, I'll be using a single guitar, four effects pedals, vocals and some base layer tape recordings collected over the past months - after years of switching tunings for almost every song, I've managed to arrive at a single tuning in which I can play all the songs I've arranged, which makes things easier. I'll primarily be taking the train between dates, so I aimed to keep the setup as minimal as possible for this jaunt while still allowing room for a palette of improv and treatment options. I prefer not to stop in between songs so the set list (such as it is) is ordered by ease of transition, like at the end of one song I can harmonize with the final chord and lead into the next piece, for example.

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Photo courtesy of [Benoît Pioulard](#) from [Froggymon](#) Europe and [England](#) celebrating Halloween