

DAN BARBENEL

(Glasgow/Brussels)

Dan Barbenel is a multifaceted singer-songwriter from Scotland. After a soviet-style musical education in Glasgow, he started writing songs at 15. Since then he has evolved in an eclectic musical world, between classical, pop, tango and theatre, developing a whimsical, dark, but always limpid musical universe. After several lives as mr Diagonal/ Black Light Orchestra/ Red Rabbit, in 2016 he adopted his original name to venture into a new, more intimate repertoire, uniting the hyper-romantic and the quizzical, always with a lightness of touch and a vein of deliciously black humour.

His first solo album ' Little Black Book' was released spring 2016 on homerecords.be

BIOGRAPHY

Dan Barbenel born in Dundee, Scotland, 2 feb 1970.

Studies

music (Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, 1987-8).

social anthropology (MA, Cambridge University 1988-91).

Collaborations with: Momus, La Fabrique Imaginaire, Theatre de Galafonie, Theatre de l'Incendie, Laurence Vielle, Geneviève Voisin, Denis Mpunga, Philippe Tasquin, Monique Gelders, René Bizac, Mathieu Ha, Zahava Seevald, Isabelle Wuillmart; Surnaturel Orchestra (Paris), Kodomokyojin Theatre (Osaka).

Professional Experience:

Singer/Pianist

with Black Light Orchestra (since 2005) and one-man-show mr Diagonal. Concerts in Tokyo, Osaka, Kobe, Kyoto, Nagoya, London, Bath, Glastonbury, Edinburgh, Paris, Montpellier, Marseille, Lyon, Bruxelles, Gent, Liege, Anvers, Thuin, Poznan, Gdansk, Vilnius, Berlin, Vienna, Tel Aviv, Buenos Aires.

Tango pianist with the Bruxelles-Aires Tango Orchestra (Josselin Moinet, Monique Gelders, Lola Bonfanti (depuis 2007)). Creation 'au Café du Port' with Yves Hunstadt and la Fabrique Imaginaire (théâtre Varia Bxl, nov 2012)

Accompanist for Sonja Kristina, Geneviève Voisin, Madiha Figuigui, Joseph Clarke, Noemi Tibergien.

Cave musician for les Amis de Sabartez, Arriège. France (2004-5)

Cocktail pianist at Awashima hotel, on a private island in Japan '92

Costumed guide at Hampton Court Palace, England (1995-97).

Composer

of film music (Isabelle Wuillmart), radiophonic works (Vincent Matyn, Melanie Godins) and musicals (René Bizac)

Co-director and star of psychedelic film (with Isabelle Wuillmart, 2012)

PRESS

Holly Moors <http://www.moorsmagazine.com/muziek/live/homerecords-festival-2016-fraaie-staalkaart-avontuurlijk-label/>

The Scottish singer, composer and multi-instrumentalist Dan Barbenel already has a life behind him as Mr. Diagonal and fronting various bands. With *Little Black Book*, he released a first solo album under his own name, and here he is let loose we show us that he can live up to his reputation. Vaudeville, comedy, black humor, by a more than excellent pianist and outstanding singer with great timing. Nice.

Mattie Poels

<http://www.mixedworldmusic.com/nieuws/newsItem.php?n01ID=17629>

Scottish pianist Ben Barbenel plays excellent piano, with a confident touch. As a singer, he has his qualities. We hear it in the opening song with a timing that is so laid-back it's like listening to two musicians. This is not only pretty, but also refers to him to the popular music of the twenties of the last century, and the vaudeville tradition. In the final song he even sings a kind of musical-like melody. On his own, he takes care of the complete orchestral score with gears, recitatives, modulations etc. Good work for sure.

Holly Moors

Moors Magazine

A man and a piano. Songs that sometimes make you think of English vaudeville. Texts that put the listener on edge. A song about Diana that brings you to the edge of your seat because it is at once an exciting story. A song about himself that begins with a list of the things he likes about himself, but ... a little black humor, with vaudeville mixed with Satie and Schubert, some tango, rock and cabaret and you have Barbenel.

The Scottish singer, composer and pianist Dan Barbenel does not need more than a piano and his voice to address your full attention. There's the intriguing songs, but also the packaging and the urgent way of singing. *Little Black Book* is a fascinating, timeless album. We already know Barbenel from his other incarnations, as Mr. Diagonal example, and Black Light Orchestra, but here solo under his own name, he is at his most intimate and actually perhaps at his best.

Momus

<http://imomus.livejournal.com/324787.html>

Momus' blog

"Let's start with the [Black Light Orchestra](#). From the name, I expected them to be super-trendy electro-disco formalists of some kind, but the reference points that sprang to mind when I played material from their forthcoming album (and a DVD of their appearance on a Japanese TV show called Music Tide) were Brecht and Weill, Noel Coward, Frank Zappa, The Tiger Lilies and The Residents. This is a deranged, wide-ranging theatre music, with song titles like *My Life is a Broken Bicycle*, *Midnight Milkman* and *A Happy Kangaroo Upon the Moon*. It's far too clever and disturbing and creative for pop or dance or fashion audiences but I predict that Black Light Orchestra will have great success (on the scale of the Tiger Lilies, I mean) if they can find a literary property (something like "Under Milk Wood") and adapt it for the musical theatre. At the second Brussels concert I met the Black Light mainman, Mr Diagonal, self-described "last living survivor of the great Scottish-Jewish music hall tradition". He's clearly a genius."

<http://jazzques.skynetblogs.be/post/7411264/mr-diagonal-and-the-black-light-orchestra-au->

"Comment définir la musique du groupe? Humm... pas facile car celui-ci mélange les genres avec un malin plaisir. Mais heureusement, le plaisir est aussi pour nous.

Les compositions, aux propos souvent surréalistes («Sunshine In A Nuclear Power Station» par exemple) sont riches et surprenantes. Ciselées harmoniquement et rythmiquement.

Chacun des musiciens passe d'un instrument à l'autre: le batteur (Yannick Dupont) se fait bassiste; le flûtiste (Quentin Manfroy) s'improvise guitariste électrique; le claviériste (Eric Bribosia) se mue en percussionniste; la joueuse de viole de gambe joue de la paille dans un verre d'eau et le saxophoniste (Grégoire Tirtiaux)

tripote la basse. Ça bouge tout le temps. Et comme si cela ne suffisait pas, tout ce petit monde chante et participe à des chorégraphies farfelues.

Musique, théâtralisation, chorégraphies dérisoires, poèmes surréalistes («La conspiration reptilienne») ou questionnements *philosophico-dadaesque*, («La nature observe-t-elle le sabbat? Que faisait Dieu avant la création?»), tout fait farine au moulin. Et le plus étonnant, c'est que ça fonctionne. Du coup, on passe un trop court moment avec ces excellents musiciens qui se moquent des genres et qui brassent toutes les idées qui flottent dans l'air du temps.

Ce groupe est insaisissable et, à mon avis, il nous réservera encore d'autres belles surprises, drôles, intelligentes et tellement rafraîchissantes. Qu'on se le dise."

Dani Heyvaert - Mazzmusikas 093bis MAZZMUSIKAS HATS OFF

Muzikaal vertaalt zich dat in een cocktail van filmische en aan vaudeville herinnerende songs en fragmenten, drijvend op de piano en de bezwerende stem van Bar-benel, die meer dan eens aan Tindersticks doet denken, maar evengoed beelden oproept uit de ragtime en de Monk-jazz.

De teksten van Mr. Diagonal zijn redelijk ver over de top. Ik verdenk hem ervan opgevoed te zijn op een dieet van Broothaers, Duchamp en Magritte. Op deze plaat is niks wat het lijkt en elke keer je ze beluistert, hoor je weer wat anders. Al met al leidt dat tot een superverrassend blijvende topplaat. Eens je door het pantser van de grilligheid heen bent, ontdek je zuivere muzikale pracht (zoals bvb. in On The Station met zijn heerlijke fluitarrangement) en tekstuele hoogstandjes (zoals in opener My Life Is A Broken Bicycle of A Happy Kangaroo Upon The Moon). Variatie is troef: nu eens wordt er stevig gerockt (Zarrinx), dan weer denk je aan de live begeleiding bij een stomme film (Ri-ver Of Light).

Kijk, ik wéét dat dit een gevaarlijke vergelijking is, maar ik durf hier en nu hardop stellen dat Mr. Diagonal niks minder of niks méér is dan de wettige erfgenaam van Van Dyke Parks. Wie ooit diens Tokyo Hotel of Song Cycle aanschafte, zit met deze prachtplaat aardig in de buurt. Overigens alle lof voor de 'jonge honden': zij laten Mr. Diagonal klinken zoals hij moet klinken: fris, verrassend, excentriek en avontuurlijk.

Maar wel absoluut onmisbaar voor wie oren aan zijn hoofd heeft!

TECHNICAL RIDER

Grand piano (preferably Steinway B with 2 Neumann KM184).
2 vocal mics (sure beta 58)
1 line for acoustic guitar

Lighting requirements on demand.

CONTACTS

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Websites

danbarbenel.com
mrdiagonal.com

Words and music

blacklightorchestra.bandcamp.com

Booking

jerome@homerecords.be
or directly with the artist