Trippin’ With Doctor Faustus – a rock and roll fable by the band Amplifier

The door gave its usual resistant squeak as I pushed and stumbled through it. Friday morning and once again I was the only customer in the last record shop in town. Every week I followed the cobbled back-road trail to Cloven Grooves – number 13, of course – looking for a fix even though I’d rinsed these dusty old racks countless times and the owner’s idea of ‘New In’ was another batch of prehistoric Frank Sinatra LPs.

I was heading for my favourite spot, the well-worn Psychedelic Rock section, when a voice said, “I used to be in a band, you know.” Turning, I saw a small, dark man in an unravelling jumper behind the till where the owner would normally be. “Way down in Manchester. Got a bit of attention, we did…”

“Where’s Bill?” I said. “Oh, er… he’s gone… *away*,” said the man, shifting slightly. “I’m taking over for a while.” He fixed me with a raven’s gaze. “Could I interest you in *my* record?” “Sure,” I shrugged, although I dreaded what this poor wretch could offer. I sauntered over and he produced an album from under the counter. I caught a glimpse of the bright yellow sleeve as I reached to examine it but the man clutched it tightly to himself with grubby fingernails, saying, “Not yet… I have to explain some things.”

“Oh, okay.” I tried not to roll my eyes. It was going to be one of those precious pitches. Go on, then. “This record has a history,” he began. “Do you know Magnum?” I shook my head. “Pity,” he said. “He was our bass player, the Doctor Of Rock. A while ago he got into some trouble and met another Doctor. A Doctor who could fix his life, but whose morals were… shall we say, dubious? Magnum became very rich and important very quickly, but something went horribly wrong…”

Soon I was gripped by the man’s retelling of Magnum’s tale, from his empowerment through the Rainbow Machine to life trapped in a freakzone. His cavalry going to war armed with fuzz guitars and grooves of triumph only to be seduced in some sort of ‘commotion’ and left for dead in the desert. A hero appeared, a Big Daddy, and alongside him a heroine called Beth Zeppelin. Demon after demon emerged, different guises, angles and depths, the politicians, the businessmen and the self-selected cult personalities. Judgement day came as Magnum descended into Hell…

“What happened in the end?” I blurted. “It’s all here,” said the man, handing over the record. “Please play it responsibly.”

Amplifier “ Trippin’ With Dr Faustus” - RD **30th June 2017**

Amplifier return with their 6th and most definitive album to date - the epic TWDF.

Chiselled out between 2014-2016, the album instantly delivers the Amplifier twin calling cards of Massive Riffs with lyrical sentiments that go beyond space/time and the limitations of ones, zeros and polycarbonate manufacturing.

The story of Faust is more relevant than ever in the 21st century.

TWDF was recorded between 2014-2016 at the band’s studio in Manchester, England.

The album was produced by singer Sel Balamir who also designed the now traditional Amplifier packaging and artwork. TWDF is a decidedly European affair -mixed by Spanish mixer/producer Iago Lorenzo in Vigo Spain while the album was mastered by Robin Schmidt at 24:96 in Karlsruhe Germany

Each Amplifier record sounds distinct. In stark contrast to the compact kidney punch that was 2014’s *“Mystoria”* – TWDF, like all epic journeys, is in no rush to let the plot unfold and spill out its secrets. *“Each child is a child of circumstance”* summarises Sel. The genesis of the idea of TWDF lies neatly in the heart of the song *“Silvio”* - originally written in the period around 2011’s *“The Octopus”*. *“Silvio”* didn’t make it onto that behemoth double album *“… it didn’t really fit in with the Album’s universal themes.”* But the ideas lurking in Silvio persisted and soon made their own bed.
“*Who doesn’t want to make a record about our relationship with The Devil? The ultimate baddy*…” *“Silvio”* was very specifically the story of Faust albeit remonikered in reference to Italian Faustian politico Berlusconi and thus became the template for the rest of the album.

Meanwhile following the release of 2014’s *“Mystoria”* on the Thomas Weber’s Superball label, a relationship that the band had been very happy with, Sony Music swooped in to acquire Superball’s parent company Century Media, moving the ownership of the label from independent hands to corporate control. This was a position that the band were not comfortable with. In 2004 exactly the same thing had happened around the release of debut Album *“Amplifier”*. In this incident BMG raided MFN parent company Zomba dissolved the label and stripped it – before in turn being cannibalised by Sony (once again) a few months later.

*“It always ends up with the little guys getting lost down the cracks…that’s why we decided to bail while we could – for better or worse”*

Following the sad but amicable parting from Superball, the band were left in dire financial straits following the sudden removal of future advances – but were none the less buoyant about the prospects for the next record.

Much of the sound of TWDF is owed to the chance acquisition and the ensuing slow, tedious and loving rebuild of an old 2” Otari Tape Machine, which had been left to them in a bequeathment following the untimely death of an old and much missed colleague. This retro piece of gear lead to a new and more intricate studio based focus on the record – compared to the previous approach to “*Mystoria* “ of rehearsing the record for several months and then recording the whole thing live in a few days. TWDF evolved slowly but gradually over 18 months as the tape machine repeatedly died and was each time reanimated with components scavenged from the internet from other old and dead machines scattered around the globe.

Meanwhile Rock Idols also died and Empires collapsed. A random stage appearance with Manchester singing legend Beth Zeppelin at a Christies Hospital fund raiser in 2016 after the sudden passing of The Starman lead to an invitation for her to feature on TWDF on a collaboration called “*Big Daddy”. “…When we hear Beth singing we go weak at the knees…”*

Beth featured on a few songs, most notably “*Rainbow Machine*” and other tracks destined to be released later in 2017.

In the meantime Balamir decided that following the experience of self releasing “*The Octopus”* in 2011 and its relative success (receiving Impala Silver Status) that it would make sense to gather some investors and make his own Artist focused label – Rockosmos – to release TWDF on and work with some other bands at the same time inorder to tie everything all together. Promptly he “signed” Sheffield Spacerock Titans “Awooga” and London artrockers “Thumpermonkey” to be the core of his new eclectic rock stables.

Already the Faustian coincidences of power, success, fame and money are beginning to heap up one on top the other. Contracts, signatures, debts and obligations…..

Meanwhile back on Planet Earth, fact and fiction, reality and fantasy began to merge into one, human civilisation began to take on the appearance of a synthesis between David LaChapelle and Hieronymus Bosch, the polar ice caps melted and the likelihood that The Sith as a concept was more than just an idea became increasingly plausible. Greed, Ego, Dominance, Fear, Seduction suddenly became the defining trends of the 21st Century….

Enjoy the trip.

And as Magger’s says:

“Caveat Emptor…”



“*Trippin’ With Dr Faustus”* is the 6th full length Studio Album by Amplifier which follows on from their previous albums

*“Mystoria”* – 2014

*“Echo Street”* – 2013

*“The Octopus”* – 2011

*“Insider”* – 2006

*“Amplifier”* – 2004

**“*Trippin’ With Dr Faustus”*** **is released on Rockosmos on 30th June 2017**

It will be available via **all digital distributors** and in the following physical formats:

* **Double 180g Gatefold Transparent Vinyl**
* **Collectors Edition Mediabook CD**
* **Standard Jewelcase CD**

Track listing

1 Rainbow Machine

2 Freakzone

3 Kosmos(Grooves Of Triumph)

4 The Commotion (Big Time Party Maker)

5 Big Daddy

6 Horse

7 Anubis

8 Supernova

9 Silvio

10 Old Blue Eyes

Total Time – 1 hour

**LineUp**

Sel Balamir - Guitar and Vocals

Matt Brobin - Drums

Steve Dursoe - Guitar and Vocals

Alex Redhead - Bass and Vocals

Produced by Sel Balamir

Recorded in Mystoria – assistance Rui Feio

Mixed by Iago Lorenzo at Planta Sonica, Vigo, Spain
Mastered by Robin Schmidt at 24:96 Karlsruhe Germany

Artwork by Sel Balamir for Rockosmos

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