



Jaz Coleman, Killing Joke.

ging him off about doing the Rolling Stones and really taking the piss out of him, he admitted he really loved our music. He likes working with live music essentially. To be quite frank, we thought the association with Chris Kimsey would be to our advantage in so far as marketing our sound in America. And he thought that working with us would be to his advantage — he'd be associating himself with more contemporary music — and it would enhance his credibility. We call Chris a slag, and he is, but a very talented slag. He can balance the sound and he stops us from all fighting when we're in the studio. Because the sound is so full and there's so much going on at any one time, the mix is a very difficult thing with Killing Joke. Our sound is a very unbalanced sound. I'm very happy with all our productions, because for me they capture the time that we were living in then and the environment we were subjected to. When I hear each album I remember that time vividly — and I believe we've been as honest as we can. Once we've finished I don't like to touch it. It's sacred. It evokes that particular period for us and the thoughts that were going through our heads. I love everything we've done, sadly, I'm Killing Joke's number one fan! I'd like all sorts of people to listen to our music — I think it's very beautiful and moving music. Of course, I believe in it. For me, it portrays all the insanity and all the madness of this decade."

Why did you record in Berlin?

"Berlin was a calculated location to record *Night Time*. It's a place where you can see the absolute insanity of humanity. It's a place where we as a band recognised our European creative values. On one side of the wall there's a very dull, mediocre atmosphere — no other adverts but pro-State ones. On the other side there's prostitution of everything I hold sacred, like creative values, blatant consumerism taken to the extreme. We felt aligned with neither of those sides. Berlin's an incredible place. It's a place where we could reflect and it would automatically reflect in the music and the production."

On *Night Time*. "Tabazan" stood out to me as an anti-rape song — anti rape in the widest sense. What's the philosophy behind the song?

"I worship the earth. I believe it's right for a man to perceive the divine in the opposite sex and for a woman to also perceive the divine in the opposite sex accordingly. I believe in the very simple thesis of equilibrium. Sun, Moon, Man, Woman. It's quite simple. It goes back to the pre-literate times before the Christians came, when we had a Sky Father and Earth Mother. The Christians replaced the fertile Earth Mother with a barren virgin, they never even copulated, and then a father, son and holy ghost. The masculine imbalance started when Christianity was estab-

lished. We are witnessing the masculine imbalance on the planet — the plundering and butchering of the earth and the restriction of all femininity. I believe from the year 1904, which was astrologically speaking the great change, the significance of the female role came into being, her sexuality and all the corresponding attributes. I believe in sexual equality, very much so, it's the only way a partnership can ever work."

'Kings and Queens' also seems to have a definite ideology. Like 'Life During Wartime' — you gotta do what you can to survive ...

"We relate everything down to ourselves, ultimately. In the last six years Killing Joke have struggled to keep our heads above water — struggled to have the freedom to write what we want when we want. During that time it's been enough keeping off the dole. We use our wits the best we can and when opportunities arise we take them with both hands. We've no scruples about this, there is no morality in survival. We've learned the royalty of poverty — how to make do with the resources available to us. We believe there is great dignity in our music, no one has helped us but ourselves. 'Kings and Queens' is the antithesis of that 'Do They Know it's Christmas' rubbish. There will always be atrocities in the world — and while it would probably tear me apart to go to Ethiopia and experience it, I'm fortunate and privileged enough to progress in certain areas, so I must take advantage of that. We must learn to thrive — if we have the opportunity to thrive we must take it. To live like Kings and Queens is our conclusion on that subject."

And the single, 'Love Like Blood'?

"I'm very interested in a clear vision of a perfect being. I'm essentially an imperfect being but I think it's important for humanity to have a vision of something quite perfect, a perfect land that we may aspire to. We must have a parallel realm or dimension of perfection, parallel with the physical domain. Even if the vision is imperfect it's still very important to portray commitment to an ideal — which is 'Love Like Blood'. The tortuous mediocrity evident in our environment these days is caused by the weakness in our relationship with our subject — the relationship with the artist and his or her subject. everything is based on consumerism and the only way to overcome such prostitution is fanatical dedication. One must be prepared to die for one's work, one's chosen vocation in life."

If you read the NME or have followed Killing Joke's fortunes, you'll recall Jaz's "disappearance" in 1982. He was later sighted in Iceland, and the press had a field day.

"Iceland was one of the greatest projects of my life. I had an idea of orientating myself in a country and to enhance the natural properties inher-

ent within it. I needed an area of land that was relatively untouched, Iceland only got a road all the way around it in 1980 and its population is 150,000, so this was the perfect place. We released 'Empire Song' in the UK and after a concert at Hammersmith I sneaked out the back door and went off to Iceland. The Falklands happened that week and everyone drew a parallel with 'Empire Song' and the Falklands, although it was released two weeks before. I was sighted in Iceland and received some very negative press, which ultimately fouled up my ideas. There was controversy and people accusing me of being into black magic — a lot of nonsense, but sadly Icelanders are very superstitious. We had our flat smashed up and I was using some land on the farm for my project which was taken from me three months after I started."

"The day I got to Iceland I decided to write a symphony. I became obsessed with Nordic mythology, which I'd been studying for about a year before I left, and there's a part where the earth is destroyed by fire and then is covered over by water, but certain areas survive. It indicates the resurrection of nature. I decided to portray this musically, setting it as the future set into the past tense, a modern interpretation of a very ancient mythology. I believe we are approaching the great fire and I wanted to move it into the present tense. I've called my symphony 'Idavoll', which is an island they say will survive — I'm searching for Idavoll. Iceland have already accepted the scores and there's a premiere in England. It's very exciting for me — and a good night out for me and the lads, quite frankly."

Phew. And not only a symphony, but Jaz was finishing the last chapter of his book in New Zealand. Its subject is Pantheism: "The intelligence ruling environment, that's selfless, that has the identity of the environment itself."

On a lighter note, Gary Glitter (yes!) wants to record Killing Joke's 'Follow The Leader' and although Jaz sez "the sentiment of his songs is quite basic," they'll let him do it 'cos "we're gonna get cash for it, aren't we?"

There's also the promise of a New Zealand tour later this year and Killing Joke will be in the studio before then.

While I'm not totally convinced of the musical value of *Night Time* (although 'Love Like Blood' does knock spots off the rest of the Top 40), we can be sure their work is not based on idle talk. I took it that every member of Killing Joke is dedicated — nay, fanatical — about what they do. It's Jaz Coleman's religion, and what other band would say they were prepared to die for their work and mean it?

Fiona Rae



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