

The Martin Green Machine – FIRST SIGHTING (Navigator)



It's a lot like your first sighting of a strange and bewildering continent or unearthly alien landscape, this, and rather like a powerful hangover with its constantly shifting, heaving, perspectives weaving seemingly illogically through your brain.

There's far too much going on to take in at one or even a half-dozen hearings, so you need to allow time for this weird sonic collage to work its magic.

The Green Machine itself started life as Lau's wild-man-accordionist Martin Green's commission piece for last year's Celtic Connections' New Voices series, but since then it's become a formidable and show-stopping

gigging entity in its own right.

The first thing to note is that this is galaxies away from being a solo accordion project, for its distinctive tones don't figure especially in the mix; the closest we get initially is the ceilidh sample loops that permeate the first half of Repetition (before the texture disintegrates into a Zappaesque "jazz noise here"), and some lyrical solo work introducing 23A, the mighty beast taking much more of a backseat on the bus thereafter and leaving the steering to the mutant brass, prog guitars and cataclysmic time-signatures.

For the Green Machine brings in to Martin's creative ambit an eclectic array of talents from England and Scotland including the awesome Tom Cook (aka Manni – guitars, electronics, sound manipulation wiz), the mini-brass-section of Rick Taylor (trombone), Fergus Kerr (French horn) and Andy McKreel (tuba), and the seriously masterly rhythm section of Barnaby Stradling and Alyn Cosker. And not to mention key parts played by two equally gorgeous (yet highly contrasted) vocalists (Inge Thomson from Karine Polwart's band, and Edinburgh jazz singer Sophie Bancroft). Wordless breathy vocals enhance the intergalactic-space-jazz vibe of the early part of Horse, while Inge's delicate solo brushstrokes on Quayle Paint are sheer magic and Shudder (which features the magnificent Sophie) well lives up to its name with its queasy brass dialogues and cautious plodding momentum. Can't Use A Map swaggers rather noisily across different musical landscapes, whereas the six-minute Rory presents an adventurous and atmospheric conflagration of a poem by Shetland's George P.S. Peterson with samples of Rory Macleod, and Moff Skellington allows his own reading of his poem The Disappearing Platelayer to become the focus of the final track on the disc. Martin's accordion gets its chance to elbow its way in again on the beefy brass and Latino street-jibes of Give Up The Body (but let's face it, that movie can always use a re-run!) and again on PSP, which mixes big-gesture fuzz-toned funky ad-music with Anna Massie's banjo.

The Green Machine is a real hotbed of creativity, and has here produced some very original, seriously intriguing and fulfilling music, an inventive, cutting-edge melange of avant-garde, jazz, folk, funk, drum'n'bass and Canterbury-style prog-rock... and you owe it to yourself to listen long and hard to its often fractured, disturbed and welcoming challenging grooves.

www.navigatorrecords.co.uk

www.themartingreenmachine.com

www.myspace.com/martingreen