



Existence - Small People, Short Story, Little Crime

Artist:	Existence
Title:	Small People, Short Story, Little Crime
Label:	Black Pearl Productions BP003CD
Length(s):	63 minutes
Year(s) of release:	1999
Month of review:	[03/2001]

Line up

G rard L v que - drums

Richard Lanthier - bass

Fran ois Beaugard - violin

Gaston Gagnon - lead guitar, vocals

 ric Pilon - lead guitar on 13, 14 and 15

Alan Charles - piano, keyboards, rhythm guitar, bass on 13, 14 and 15, voice

Tracks

1)	The Therapy, Part I	0.53
2)	Beauty Teen	5.28
3)	No Hero	4.18
4)	The Journey	4.03 MP3 or RealAudio

In the kingdom of madness [5-10]

5)	Dripping Cloud	3.07 MP3 or RealAudio
6)	No Sun Can Shine	5.49
7)	Darkness	3.48
8)	Delirium	2.13
9)	Open Letter To My Friends	4.37 MP3 or RealAudio
10)	Farewell From The Lone Poet	3.04
11)	Whispers (the Theme, Part IV)	2.25
12)	Business As Usual	5.08 MP3 or RealAudio
13)	Flowers Won't Do?	5.21
14)	Another Fine Day Of...	7.29
15)	Overtime	4.48
16)	The Therapy, Part II	0.02

Summary

The band is from Quebec, which is evidenced also by the combined French/English lyrics and other texts in the VERY extensive booklet. In fact, the booklet is like a magazine in which the band has made the actual lyrics sung bold face. The stories in there are articles of a magazine it seems not even especially made for the cd, because as they say this is issue 127 from 1999. Actually, I get the impression that some people are pulling our leg, but truth is that this is a marvellous piece of work, 56 pages long and as large as a jewel case. As they state themselves, the cd and such were made in Canada without any subsidy (but it does have a number of possibly fake advertisements). A great touch is the non-positive review in the magazine of one Existence's independent tapes. There is even an advertisement in there for another

The music

The album opens with the thunderous percussion of The Therapy, Part I. After this short but loud intermezzo we run right into the melodic blues based rock of Beauty Teen. A nice additional feature of this track is the rock violin. The song has energy, slightly accented English vocals and sensuous female voices against a dominating backdrop of Led Zeppelin styled rock (but with the violin of course). The music really rocks, but it has little to do with progressive music. The middle part however is a bit different with more emotional vocals alternating with a low whispering voice. The more laden vocals in this part remind me of the vocalist of Jump. After the nice intermezzo the rock returns.

No Hero opens with bouncy rhythm guitars and melodic additions on violin. The song seems again a simple rock song, but especially the drummer shows himself from his most varied side, with the guitarist following slightly behind. The guitar solo does not do that much for me, the hasty violin more so.

The Journey is a sharply played instrumental track with a leading role for the violin. It is followed by the first part of the epic, In The Kingdom Of Madness, on this album called Dripping Cloud. Percussively played, yet melodic piano together with rolling drums and some nice violin, make this a great atmospheric introduction to the song. Great interplay between the various musicians and a strong build-up result adding guitar and bass later on, make for a flashing first part. The second part takes it easier with well dosed piano playing, and afterwards a good emotional guitar solo. The music has a rather sharp ring to it. The violin later on is very melodic, but has a certain dramatic quality to it.

The third part to the track is Darkness, which changes the mood of the song slightly into something darker, menacing. A tense atmosphere for the dramatic lyrics and an emotionally laden rendition. This is one of those singers who as they say in Dutch "has a tear in his voice". Again the violin supports the track in good way. Open Letter To My Friend continues this weird but imposing story in a style which is a mix of Roger Waters and Steve Harley (the latter occurred to me more often in the earlier tracks). This part is really sublime, the melody is genius, the lyrics are devastating, especially when read within the context of the story. The last part is wrapped up by the active violin.

Whispers (The Theme, Part IV) is well placed. An easy going instrumental. Business As Usual has a strong Roger Waters feel with the music going back to the first two track of the album: varied, blues rock with violin and guitars.

Flower Won't Do? is from an earlier period and does not open well, I have to admit. The lyrics are trite (until you also read the lines in between in the story), the groove is okay, but the song is too simple at first for people into progressive rock. This becomes better later on when the music again moves into the direction of Roger Waters. Actually, quite a good song.

Flamenco opens Another Fine Day Of... which continues in a waltzlike fashion. The conclusion is again one of rare beauty with tender violin playing and a majestic guitar solo that comes right out of it.

Overtime could have been left off, if you ask me. A funky piece that is simply not very interesting. Again the violin tries to liven things up a bit, but this time does not succeed too well. Too bad about that.

The final track only last two seconds and has only spoken words.

Conclusion

How wrong can you be? After a difficult start with music that was not that typical of progressive at all. Simply nice tracks with rock guitar and violin, simply turned into something great along the way, finding its climax in track 9, Open Letter To My Friends, which had tears coming into my eyes. The other highpoint of the album is Another Fine Day Of... Some of the other tracks were not that great, but the playing and energy tend to make up for that, for the most part at least. Comes heartily recommended.

Jurriaan Hage

© [Jurriaan Hage](#)