

EXISTENCE CDS

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Small People, Short Story, Little Crime	Black Pearl Productions BP003CD	1999	62:53



SMALL PEOPLE, SHORT STORY, LITTLE CRIME

Existence are a Canadian band comprising of Alan Charles who writes the lyrics and most of the music, plays piano, keyboards, rhythm guitar and bass on some tracks, and produced the album with Gaston Gagnon who provides lead guitar and vocals. Gerard Leveque is on drums (and did the artwork); Francois Beaugard plays violins; Richard Lanthier provides bass and taurus pedals while Eric Pilon plays lead guitar on the three tracks that had previously been issued on the 1998 EP, 'Another Fine Day Of..'

A lot of thought and creativity has gone into the packaging of this CD. It comes in a glossy slipcase and is accompanied by a fifty-odd page "magazine". Within this publication can be found six articles expanding upon the stories featured on the album - with each article incorporating its own song's lyrics.

Although this is not a concept album, the songs are loosely linked by the subject of crimes and misdemeanours - from prostitution and gangland killings through to suicide and adultery.

The album opens with 'The Therapy, part I' a short drum solo piece. Then we're straight into the pulsating bass rhythm of 'Beauty Teen'. This heavy rock style song about a high class, fast living, teenage prostitute is lightened by phrases on the violin which glow against the darker musical backdrop.

'No Hero' tells the story of a guy who witnesses a murder and, in defending himself, inadvertently kills the perpetrator - initially he is accused of both crimes but the truth wins through and he is cleared. But, months later he is admitted to a mental hospital after attacking a neighbour. Again the violin provides a highlight to this pacy number which features some strong guitar work throughout.

The first of the instrumentals is 'The Journey', an intense piece led by the violin. The mood changes through the number; starting with a darker feel, it moves more towards an eastern sound and finishes on a menacing note.

'In The Kingdom Of Madness' is a more than twenty two minute piece, split into six parts. This is the tale of a sad inadequate who, while he has no success with real women is an internet cybersex specialist, calling himself the Prince Of Internet! Eventually he sends the females who have fallen for his adopted persona a suicide note online ... the police find his almost unrecognisable body weeks later. The first two parts of this epic, 'Dripping Cloud' and 'No Sun Can Shine', are beautiful melodic instrumentals - named, we are told, after poems written by this victim of society,

a.k.a. the Lone Poet. 'Darkness' is another of his poems, this starts with the sound of gentle piano playing over which strange eerie sounds create an atmospheric feel - the vocals are understated and are followed by a rich instrumental section. The last sound poem is 'Delirium' a short, crazy jazz influenced instrumental. Then the final words of The Prince are told in 'Open Letter To My Friends'. This is a fabulous piece featuring the piano and vocals. It starts quietly and the sound slowly builds and becomes more emotionally charged ... wonderful. The final sector is 'Farewell From The Lone Poet', a highly charged end to this sensational saga.

A short, sweet and pretty instrumental, 'Whispers (The Theme, part IV)', provides some light relief after the heart rending previous track.

A throbbing bass line leads into 'Business As Usual' which tells of a nineteen year old gang leader, drug baron and pimp who after a spate of horrific killings takes over the town. Great guitar riffs, strong rhythm section and fabulous fiddle work make this song stand out.

The next three numbers were recorded and released, on an EP, in 1998. The first of these is 'Flowers Won't Do', a strong rock song with a bluesey feel that tells of a rock star who finally hits the big time and leaves his wife - then realises what he's missing ...

'Another Fine Day Of...' is a fast moving instrumental with an intense, yearning, eastern European flavour. Finally, in 'Overtime', we meet Alfred who sits on the same park bench every day watching other people running the rat race. This is a smoothly played, melodious song with a real tap your foot quality to it.

This is a great album which I have thoroughly enjoyed ... a talented group of people playing some well written music. Add to this the marvellous package that comes with the CD and this is a must have! This album certainly justifies the band's existence!

Marisa 2nd August 2000