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## “WITTY, ORIGINAL, FOCUSED, AND A FORMIDABLE

EXPONENT OF A POST-HERBIE HANCOCK/MCCOY TYNER STYLE MEETS THE BAD PLUS, Z MAKES A CHARISMATIC ROLE MODEL...THE PAIRING OF Z AND HAKIM TURNS UP THE INTENSITY AND THE PIANO VIRTUOSITY MORE. COLDPLAY'S SOUR GIRL HIGHLIGHTED THE LEADER'S LONG-LINED INGENUITY IN ITS EPISODES OF CLEAR SPACE, THE POLICE'S KING OF PAIN UNFOLDED OVER SOFTLY TICKING FUNK, WAYNE SHORTER'S NEFERTITI WAS A TOUR DE FORCE OF SKIMMING SWING, AND IN MORE LYRICAL PASSAGES Z REVEALED A SYMMETRICALLY CLASSICAL TOUCH. ”

*JOHN FORDAM, THE GUARDIAN*

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DURING HER YEARS OF INTENSIVE WOODSHEDDING AT THE NEW ENGLAND CONSERVATORY, RACHEL WAS A SELF-DESCRIBED JAZZ PURIST. AS SHE RECALLS, “THE ONLY NON-JAZZ GROUPS I REALLY LIKED WERE STEELY DAN, YES AND THE POLICE. MY ATTITUDE TOWARD POP THEN WAS, ‘IT’S ALL COMMERCIAL BULLSHIT!’ SO I DIDN’T REALLY ALLOW MYSELF TO GET INTO ROCK MUSIC THEN.”

A TURNING POINT FOR HER CAME IN 1995 WHILE WORKING ON WAYNE SHORTER’S GRAMMY AWARD-WINNING HIGH LIFE ALBUM. “AFTER THAT I STARTED GETTING INTO BANDS LIKE DEPECHE MODE, COLDPLAY AND U2. I WAS A LITTLE LATE ON KURT COBAIN AND NIRVANA, COURTNEY LOVE, ALICE IN CHAINS. THE KILLERS AND NEW ORDER CAME MUCH LATER. I BASICALLY CAUGHT MYSELF UP ON THAT WHOLE ENGLISH ROCK SCENE AND THE ALT ROCK SCENE, AND I FOUND MYSELF KIND OF ATTRACTED TO GOTH ROCK. SO I HAD THE CONCEPT TO KIND OF BE A GOTH JAZZ BAND. AND THAT’S WHY I TEND TO PICK SONGS THAT ARE MORE HARD-EDGED.”

ON COLDPLAY’S “LOST” SHE USES SHORTER’S STYLE OF NON-FUNCTIONAL HARMONY. ON DEATH CAB FOR CUTIE’S “I WILL POSSESS YOUR HEART,” SHE INCORPORATES A BIT OF FREDDIE HUBBARD’S “RED CLAY” WHILE ON THE MORRISEY SONG “THERE’S A LIGHT,” SHE USES “GIANT STEPS” KIND OF CHANGES. SAYS RACHEL, “IT’S REALLY IMPORTANT TO ME TO HAVE BLOWING CHANGES ON THESE TUNES THAT ARE AS CHALLENGING AS WAYNE SHORTER’S ‘E.S.P.’, WHICH IS ANOTHER REASON WHY WE KEEP THAT SONG IN OUR LIVE SETS. IT’S A KIND TUNE THAT REALLY KEEPS YOU ON YOUR TOES, AND IT ALSO INSPIRES PEOPLE WHO DON’T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT JAZZ TO GO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT WAYNE SHORTER.”

SHE IS ALSO QUICK TO POINT OUT THAT THE LYRICAL CONTENT OF SOME OF THIS ALTERNATIVE ROCK PIECE WERE PARTICULARLY INSPIRING TO HER. “TUNES LIKE ‘ANGRY CHAIR’ AND THE KILLERS’ ‘WHEN YOU WERE YOUNG’ ARE REALLY IMPORTANT TO ME. ‘ANGRY CHAIR’ IS A REALLY DARK SONG BUT THE BRIDGE IS ALL ABOUT THERE’S LIGHT, THERE’S HOPE. AND SHORTLY AFTER HE WROTE THAT TUNE, THE SINGER COMMITTED SUICIDE. AND ‘WHEN YOU WERE YOUNG’ IS A REALLY HEAVY SONG ABOUT DREAMS AND LOVE AND BEING DISILLUSIONED. THE STONE TEMPLE PILOTS SONG ‘SOUR GIRL’ HAS REALLY IMPORTANT LYRICS TO ME. AND ‘BIZARRE LOVE TRIANGLE’ HAS REALLY INTENSE LYRICS THAT OMAR AND I REALLY LIKE. ‘THERE IS A LIGHT’ IS A DARK, TWISTED LYRIC ABOUT IF A DOUBLE DECKER BUS CRASHES INTO US, TO DIE BY YOUR SIDE IS A WONDERFUL WAY TO DIE. AND THE LYRICAL CONTENT OF THESE SONGS REALLY PLAYS INTO THE ARRANGEMENT FOR BOTH OF US. BECAUSE OMAR WILL PLAY A BEAT THAT GOES WITH THE FEELING. AND WE BOTH HAVE SUCH A CONVERSATIONAL THING GOING ON THROUGH ALL OF THESE SONGS.” ADDS OMAR, “OH, IT’S INCREDIBLE, MAN! IT’S THIS WEIRD, MAGICAL THING THAT HAPPENS WHEN WE PLAY TOGETHER. IT’S ALMOST LIKE IT TAPS YOU ON THE SHOULDER IN A WAY, ‘HERE IT IS, HERE’S THE MAGIC.’”

WHILE RACHEL AND OMAR ARE TOURING THIS SUMMER IN THE TRIO OF OZ, THEY WILL ALSO BE BACKING ITALIAN LEGEND PINO DANIELE ON SOME SELECT CONCERTS IN EUROPE.