



### **BEYOND SENSORY EXPERIENCE "Tortuna" CD, 2003 OLD EUROPA CAFE**

It's hard to say, but 'Tortuna' has probably been my biggest surprise during this first half of 2003, even if we've faced some other astounding releases in this year like the already reviewed Mnem full-length or the very recent [law-rah] collective's vinyl on Force of Nature, to name a couple. And the each time more and more hyperactive Mz.412's Drakhon (just to mention the project that made him celebrity in our scene, but the list goes on and on nowadays) is responsible once more, but this time better than ever from my personal point of view.

Embracing the classic Aristotle and Pythagoras' vision of music and the whole Universe itself as ruled by numbers, our main character, together with the Uppsala based scientist/artist K. Meizter, decided to commence a trilogy with this disc, and whose second part, 'Urmula' is awaiting to be released during this or the upcoming month on the legendary Italian outfit once more.

But well, I won't delay the analysis of such a well-assembled product with boring judgments about its mathematical intrinsic foundations, moreover having a content that speaks for itself during almost 53 minutes, so I'll begin the dissection to prove all the variety included here just right now. And of course, I'll do it with the first cut, 'Number Theory', droning and with a crushing looping pattern on top, but when it ceases, a gritty white noise remains, until a ritualistic rhythm plus a diluted reciting voice take the main role in a fairly hypnotic vein. But anyhow this is not the kind of monotonous trance-inducing disc that, for instance, the Al-Wahaar Dhin project of the same artist is (look for a review in our site). In fact the complete CD is highly dynamic and the initial loop comes back, new ritualistic percussions, lower in the mix come out and the droning layers grow with the track. And talking about rhythm, 'Carnival of the Chained' is full of it in a powerful cadenced manner, quite Industrial-like. Here there's voice too filtered through a robotic chorus or something, but the piece changes drastically when bass or guitar appear heavily low-distorted with a melancholic melody and the shaded sample of an eminent female voice (er... yes, we like Faith And The Muse as well, Mr Drakh, hehe...). I need to remark those guitar passages, which we can find in several parts of the album. We heard several of them in the Nordvargr/Drakh's 'Cold Void of Nothing' CD on Fluttering Dragon, for instance, but this time they sound really different, transmitting a somewhat Post-Rock feeling to my ears. Returning to the song, again the initial strong beats come back in a cyclic manner. 'Two Modes of Understanding', the third one, is initially a thick blend of drones and tense deep layers in the most classic Dark Ambient style (e.g. Lustmord's 'The Place Where the Black Stars Hang') plus some tedious thuds and sporadic appearances of voice. Bass makes its manifestation here as well (around the fourth minute), conferring a very personal touch. Low pitch-bent and factory samples complete the second cut in terms of length (9:38).

Because the longest one is 'Journey in Four Dimensions' (12:11). It has some intriguing loud clunks and unrecognisable voices (male and female) that add a ghostly tone. I would like to pinpoint that this sort of little details of its own really make the difference between BSE and other standard Dark Ambient acts out there. Around the fifth minute the song suffers an evident alteration with tough thuds and variations in the layers; and almost in the seventh minute, a low pitch-bent piano appears with an extremely beautiful, minimal and sombre tune, in a calmed passage with very few sounds in the background, being most of them the spectral referred voices, quite in the mood for the piano. An astonishing achievement to say the least:

bravo! Well, the fifth composition is entitled 'Himmelen', and is pretty melodic once more under the gritty low atmospheres, thanks to a repetitive and constant basis. Yes, I've said melodic, and that's another outstanding quality of 'Tortuna': how the emotive melodies appear from within the typical abstract sonorities of these genres. More factory-like resonances take part in 'Himmelen', while the noisy parts increase their magnitude with the development of the piece. By the way, excerpts of human voice are contained here too. It's not the more complex cut of the CD but works incredibly well, smooth; more when in the end strength disappears and everything revisits the starting point, but for the very last seconds with a concluding keyboard and a deep voice. The track that gives its name to the album is number eight, and that's pretty expressive since it brings almost all of the referred distinctive characteristics of the project together; such as voice (a growling one this time), melody (made with guitar, I think), which supplies the sad tone, ritualistic percussions, dynamism, changes, balance and good taste. There're some interesting brief quick waves that seem to be made with inverted excerpts of roaring voices. During the fifth minute the most prominent variation takes place with the emerging of a granular layer gaining volume. And guess how it all concludes... Yes, everything comes back to its original quiet state, fading out. The epilogue is called 'Nineteeneightyfour': two minutes and a half of emotional Post-Rock ambiances, with an almost eerie touch and a final piano.

As a personal statement, I must confess this album has really touched me, maybe due to the affecting sensation that remains in my ears after the playing stops. But beyond individual appreciations, what's unquestionable is its excellence and its unexpected manners.

Even if the usual offerings of the masters of the Swedish Black Industrial are or aren't your cup of tea habitually, I should ask you to move your prejudices away and listen to BSE as a project non-related to any of the mentioned celebrated bands; mostly because of its personal, introspective approach, which separates it from whatever previous effort Drakhon has achieved so far. 'Tortuna' is simply a disc that deserves to be heard and discovered in solitude, with your eyes closed and an open heart and mind. But sorry, my words fail... Solid, solid, solid piece of sound.

**Marcos Alcocer**