

Duncan Patterson - Grace Road + Following up (o.v.)

(34:13, Digital; unsigned, 21.03.2022)

The woman is beautiful as sin and sings like an angel (*both* are meant as compliments). The man is a legend and not only because he wrote some of this reviewer's eternal favourite songs. For example, 'Shroud Of False', 'Lost Control', 'Alternative 4', 'Flowers', 'Lights Out', 'Expire', 'Terminal' or 'Planetary Confinement'.



What is it all about? Well, about the Palestinian singer *Enas Al-Said* and *Duncan Patterson*, among others Íon, Ex-Anathema, Ex-Antimatter. And about the second solo album of the multi-instrumentalist and composer from Liverpool.

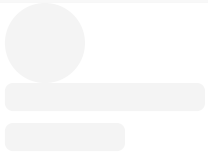
When the author heard 'The Quiet Light' for the first time, it was immediately all over him. So much. More about the sacred beauty of this song in the short interview below.

But also the duet 'The Amber Line' and the title song are beautiful to cry about.

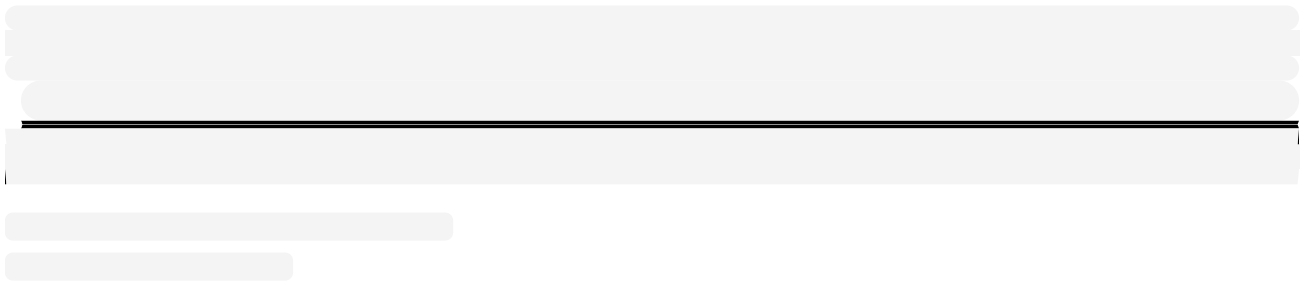
Grace Road by Duncan Patterson

So great that you'd best just check for yourself.

Rating: 13/15 points



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Ein Beitrag geteilt von Duncan Patterson (@duncanpattersonmusic)

Following up on „Grace Road“ w/ *Duncan Patterson* and *Enas Al-Said*:

Zur deutschen Übersetzung des Interviews

How did this collaboration come about, how did you meet and who had the idea?

Duncan: I was looking for something on YouTube one day and came across the cover version of ‚Flowers‘ that *Enas* and *Ahmad* had uploaded. I was impressed by it and posted it on my music page, then *Enas* sent a message to thank me and that's how we got in touch. I invited her to sing one track on the album and she ended up singing on every song. A nice bit of luck.

How did it work technically, were you together in Artículo 123 Studio in L.A.?

Duncan: Artículo 123 is here in Mexico, it was *Alicia Mitchell* who recorded her parts in LA. *Enas* and myself work remotely, sending files back and forth. It's simple enough to do things this way.

Were the vocal lines completely composed, were there perhaps even guide vocals and to what extent had you, *Enas*, the chance to bring in your own creativity?

Enas: Indeed *Duncan* had his vision for the vocal lines and sent them to me to sing over, but I also had my own interpretation. So it wasn't exactly like the vocal lines *Duncan* sent me, but similar.

***Duncan*, the first Antimatter albums were heavily influenced by fantastic female voices (Saviour and Lights Out: *Michelle Richfield* and *Hayley Windsor*, Planetary Confinement: *Amélie Festa*. Your first solo album „The Eternity Suite“ (2015) lived, among other things, on *Gina Rios*, expressive lyricless vocals, which, for example on ‚Divine Decree‘, sound like a mixture of *Krzysztof Komeda*'s soundtrack to Roman Polanski's „The Fearless Vampire Killers“ and works by *Zbigniew Preisner*. *Grace Road* is less cinematic, less orchestrated, but possibly more enraptured by the beauty of its melodies. Should it be more song-oriented this time?**

Duncan: Well „The Eternity Suite“ is pretty much instrumental and cinematic, that was the whole idea. I started working on what was to become „Grace Road“ before I started working on The Eternity Suite. Its more song oriented as most of the songs have lyrics and needed arranging in a way that accomodated the vocal lines and that. But „The Eternity Suite“ eventually influenced me to move away from guitar/bass/drums on „Grace Road“ and continue in a more ethereal direction.

»I wanted to get the same kind of vibe as the spaces between verses in church hymns«

It's been ages since I've heard an album that makes so little effort to roll over the listener from the start, to lull him in and not let him off the hook for a second. On the contrary: the opener ‚Absolut Absolutum‘ almost couldn't feel its way more carefully into the consumer's attention and leaves frequent empty spaces in the form of general pauses lasting many seconds. It's almost as if the musicians themselves are listening to the sounds and their effect and marvelling afterwards. I think this is beautiful, but isn't it also a little risky?

Duncan: Its risky if you're on a quest for validation and popularity, but thats not why I make music. Quite a few people have mentioned the spaces on ‚Absolut Absolutum‘, which is very fulfilling for me to know that people have paid attention and understood what I have put out there. I wanted to get the same kind of vibe as the spaces between verses in church hymns. I actually tried adding some field recording from churches to capture the atmosphere better but it sounded forced (to me at least).

‚The Quiet Light‘ is the most beautiful thing I've heard in a long time. While Enas sings that one could spontaneously become religious about it, the piano carries the melody and the bass pushes the calmest ball ever, the trippieness of the

great first two Antimatter albums reappears in the drums (here and a bit also in ,Walking Between Worlds'). Is it intentional, a coincidence or am I just imagining things?

Duncan: Thank you. It does have a similar feel to the Antimatter stuff. This is the kind of sound and vibe that I was going for back then. On „Grace Road“ it wasn't intentional to recreate 'something that sounds like old Antimatter' as such, I'm just continuing to make music in my own style.

How can a light be quiet, still at all?

Duncan: I had church candles in mind, or the sunrise when the world is still asleep. The original title was ,Ashes' as I wanted something related to cremation for this track, so theres a bit of that as well.

The cello and the flute on ,Walking Between Worlds' – real instruments or artificially created? The male background choruses are certainly ,artificial', are the ethereal female *enas* in multitracking?

Duncan: I create a lot of the sounds by mixing things together. There are some flute and cello samples from „The Eternity Suite“ which I have mixed with keyboard sounds. On Walking Between Worlds the female voices are from *Enas* and *Alicia*, male voice is me and I used church choir samples too. I often toy around with samples and textures.

Why did you label the enormously melodious album „LoFi“, produced by yourself *Duncan*, with an almost tangible spatial sound and very aesthetic light reverb?

Duncan: A lot of the sounds are LoFi. I used that to describe the actual sounds that I used, not as a modern genre description as such. I degraded most of the piano sounds for example, plus a lot of the vocals and the choirs too. The church organ, percussion, I could go on. It is possible to be LoFi and still sound nice and smooth.

Enas, you have named the great *Anneke van Giersbergen* as your favourite singer. Just out of curiosity – do you have more favourite singers?

Enas: It's really hard to pick one, there are many! But the ones who inspired me the most, I would say *Joan Baez* for her beautiful angelic voice that creeps into your skin. She is just amazing, her simplicity and intensity takes you to a different world. I also love *Sinéad O'Connor* for the anger and vulnerability in her voice. *Lee Douglas* (Anathema) has also been a big inspiration.

There are stunning cover versions of you by artists and bands as diverse as Archive, W.A.S.P. (!), Nirvana, Radiohead, Anathema, but also ,Flowers' and ,The Weight Of The World' by Antimatter. How do you choose the originals or templates and is there any self-written material of yours hiding in a drawer?

Enas: Thank you so much! Me and my husband usually play music together at home, and we try to find songs that we both love and would fit my voice. Sometimes I would remember a certain song to play, and honestly mostly his suggestions are the ones that end up in our channel because they are always so good. It comes without planning really. As for originals, we hope so! We don't have something ready yet, but maybe soon. Who knows.

I only discovered „Grace Road“ because I have been following *Duncan* on Bandcamp for ages – otherwise I haven't been able to find or read anything about this spontaneous favourite album of 2022. How is your and Enas' name recognition in general and how is the feedback on this cooperation so far?

Duncan: The feedback has been great, plus it is 100% organic. Any press attention that the album has received has been from journalists who genuinely like the music. Its all been DIY and released on my own label so theres no marketing campaign or any of that. I also had a couple of people really helping to

promote it via their mailing lists, which was really kind of them. This is where the fulfillment is for me, existing on the outskirts of the music industry. The Bandcamp mailing list is growing steadily and the album is finally on Spotify and those digital platforms.

The album is a digital-only release so far. What are the chances that this will change?

Duncan: It was also released on CD and there's a vinyl edition due this year.

I guess the answer to the question, but what would have to happen for you to think about live performances?

Duncan: It would be great to team up with *Enas* to play live, but it is not very realistic at the moment for a number of reasons.

Is a continuation of your cooperation conceivable or even envisaged?

Duncan: Yes, most certainly. We have been discussing the new tracks which I will start work on very soon.

Duncan Patterson, further reading:

Duncan's Blogspot

Facebook

Twitter

Instagram

YouTube

Bandcamp

Instagram

Spotify

Deezer

last.fm

MetalArchives

Wikipedia

Enas Al-Said, further reading:

Facebook (persönliches Profil)

Instagram

YouTube

Bandcamp

Soundcloud

Spotify

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