

STRANGE FOLK

KULA SHAKER FANZINE

ISSUE NO.6
JULY 2010

Gig review

RELENTLESS GARAGE
LONDON

EXCLUSIVE

THE BAND ABOUT
Pilgrims Progress

Indepth interview
with Crispian

WIN!
A SIGNED
BOX SET

+ CHORDS
+ PILGRIMS PROGRESS REVIEWS
+ LEARN ALL ABOUT KULA'S COVERS

Love letters to the band

EDITOR'S LETTER

Dear readers,

It has been a long wait, but we're sure you will agree that it was worth it. With Pilgrims Progress we were given a real masterpiece that truly deserves the release of a new issue of Kula's very own fanzine STRANGE FOLK!

Just like the album this 6th issue felt like a pilgrimage and as always we collected some fine exclusives on our way. At first you get our very own review of Pilgrims Progress – Ian analysed every note of it and wrote his thoughts down. Marco spent hours and hours listening to "Peter Pan R.I.P" and "Space Caravan" to write down the right chords for all of you guitarists out there. In Mary's article 'Unusual Homage' you learn all about Kula's covers. But most of all, we're very happy that the band agreed to answer some questions about their new album. Sudevi Geary managed to catch up with Crispian for a very personal interview, thanks for offering this to the fanzine!

It has been too long since Kula Shaker have been on stage. But, finally, for the release of the new album, they offered a free gig to those who ordered a copy of the new album. And what a great gig it was! We were there to capture this very special live experience for you, including some exclusive pics.

Also, to convince the band that they are desperately awaited all over the world, we asked the fans to send in their very own Kula story. Why did they become a fan? What makes Kula Shaker so very special? The result is a bunch of very personal love letters to a band that really deserves it.

Enjoy!

Andrea & Anni

Got some feedback? We'd love to hear it! Send your comments to:
kulashakerzine@googlemail.com

CONTRIBUTORS

Editor:
Andrea Zachrau - text, photos
(hosannah@t-online.de)

Layout:
Anni Kotisalo
(anni.kotisalo@gmail.com)

Cover Photo: Shoko Ishikawa
Proof-reading: Mary Nilsson

Thanks to Susheel, Mike and Ian
Special thanks to Maurice and Kula Shaker

WITH SPECIAL CONTRIBUTIONS FROM:

Sudevi Geary (Crispian interview)
Mary Nilsson (covers article)
Ian W (album review)
Simone Merli (photos)
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/simonemerli>
Simon Bruce (photos)
Glenn Rossington (photos)
http://www.flickr.com/photos/168_seconds/

Mizuho (news)
Marco (chords)
Peter Bruce (artwork)
...and many other fans!

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NEWS & GOSSIP

Here we bring you the latest on what's been happening in Kula world this year.

TRACK BY TRACK

To shorten the wait for the new album the band put a few videos online in which Harry and Crispian muse about the past months in the studio (What have you been up to? Parts 1 & 2) and the tracks on the new record (Pilgrims Progress track by track, Parts 1 - 4). Watch the videos here:
<http://www.youtube.com/user/KULASHAKEROFFICIAL>



INDIAN ALBUM?

In a Japanese magazine, Crispian and Alonza revealed some interesting facts about the future of the band. This is what our personal Japanese zine-translator Mizuho writes: According to Crispian: He will make an Indian music album within this year. They'll do a one-week recording with many Indian musicians who are famous in a Indian community. So far, there are 3 films that he'll be involved. The first is "Paranoia in the Launderette", the second is a Japanese animation which is a kind of fairy tale. And the third, although he doesn't mention about the details, will start its production soon and he'll probably work on it in the next year. If Alonza likes the script, Kula Shaker will be involved musically. He also says the film he wrote a script for before has stopped, it must be "The Winged Boy"...

MOOLLON'S MASTERPIECE

We've seen Crispian using a bunch of very special guitars. The newest one is a custom built telecaster by Moollon. To take a glimpse at it, visit:
http://www.moollon.com/products/narcisnc_crispian_mills_e.asp



Custom built for
Crispian Mills



PETER PAN VIDEO

The band shot the video to their first single PETER PAN R.I.P. in Kensington Gardens. Watch the extended version here:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h47fHpIL-MY>

The video was directed by Crispian and does not only star our very own columnist Don Pecker but also the children of the band. The kids were dressed by Nixie Clothing (<http://www.nixieclothing.com/>) which is owned by Paul's wife Nicole.



FAR EAST TOUR

Kula Shaker announced some dates in the Far East. Enjoy the following shows:
27 July 2010: Twinkle Rock Festival, Taipei, TAIWAN
31 Jul 2010: Fuji Rock Festival, Niigata, JAPAN
1 Aug 2010: Jisan Valley Rock Festival, Seoul, S. KOREA
5 Aug 2010: KL Live, KUALA LUMPUR
6 Aug 2010: The Dome. Ancol, Jakarta, INDONESIA
7 Aug 2010: AsiaWorld Arena, HONG KONG

YOUNG MR. BEVAN

Those of you who bought one of the deluxe editions might have noticed that lovely children's voice at the beginning of the 2nd disc "Lost and Proud". Apparently it is Alonza's son who introduces us to the awesome extra tracks.

They've got the **modern blues** for you, honey!

REVIEW



PHOTO: JAMES LAMPARD

IT'S FAIR TO SAY that Kula Shaker's fourth album will surprise a lot of people, not least of all the fans who have been eagerly awaiting its release since "Strangefolk", the band's 2007 comeback. This sense of expectation was fuelled further by early word on the album that suggested a possible return to the Indian influences that were largely missing from its predecessor ("Song of Love" excepted, and even that track largely originated in recordings made before the band split the first time around.)

As it turns out, these Indian influences are, if not totally absent, limited to subtle strokes here and there. There is certainly no equivalent to the likes of "Govinda", "Tattva" or "Radha Ramana" here. True, "Modern Blues" does open with a Bollywood sample, and the instrumentation of "All Dressed Up and Ready" features sitar and tablas (played by such noted Indian classical players as Himanesh Goswami and Vijai Krishna das.) "Figure It Out" meanwhile includes touches of sarangi and tambora beneath its heavy guitars. But that's as far as that particular influence goes.

This tendency of the album to possibly confound initial expectations is in part probably due to its recording history, which – like 1999's "Peasants, Pigs & Astronauts" – was somewhat convoluted. Initial sessions began early in 2008 helmed by Supergrass / Tricky producer Sam Williams, who previously had produced Strangefolk's first single "Second Sight." The assumption among fans at this point was that he would produce the album proper, but it seems that a decision was subsequently made to begin again with Alonza at the helm, assisted by Crispian. Only the recording of "All Dressed Up (and Ready to Fall in Love)" from the Sam Williams sessions has made it onto the final album, although demos of other tracks from these early sessions – such as "Light Years Ahead of Our Time" and "Witches & Wine" – are included on the "Lost & Proud" bonus CD,



allowing us a greater glimpse of the album as it might have been. The sleeve notes to the new album indicate that this change in direction was partly due to difficulties in capturing the heavier sound that some of the original songs required: "In the early stages of recording, many of the rocking tracks just weren't coming together [...] In retrospect this is not the album we set out to make", they now admit.

The location chosen for these new sessions was Alonza's newly-built studio in the forest setting of Lompret, southern Belgium. This sylvan setting seems to have worked its own special magic on proceedings; the band talk of a mood characterized by "medieval musings" and "flights of fancy, enchanted by gentle bird song. The scent of wild garlic, and the sight of the old grey walls of the medieval forge." Indeed, so inspired by the location were they that the band chose to sample the ambient sounds of Lompret for the ending of "Ophelia."

So, if it's not the album it was supposed to be, then what kind of album have they delivered to those of us who have been waiting anxiously? "Pilgrims Progress" (no apostrophe, please note) opens with the album's single taster, "Peter Pan RIP". In some ways a confusing choice for first single, this track - dominated as it is by an "Eleanor Rigby"-style string arrangement - sounds musically like nothing else the band have ever recorded. Add to this a lyric that, it has to be said, will be largely impenetrable to anyone not familiar with the song's subject matter – which concerns the late, lamented Anno Birkin - and casual listeners may well be more than a little nonplussed. (Those who aren't familiar with the story behind the song should investigate the previous issue of this publication for much more info.) The song's chiming intro contains a faint musical reference to "Time To Pretend" by MGMT, a band known for their unashamedly psychedelic sound. This, together with the band's recent cover of the equally-hip Caribou's "Melody Day" – a download-only track which itself might have made the cut for "Pilgrims Progress" at one point – show that the band clearly keep an ear open for today's musical trends.

Overall, "Peter Pan RIP" suggests an album with a distinct Beatles influence – which is not something that would be so surprising, given that this is the band who recorded "Shower Your Love"; one of the more explicit homages to the Fab Four to be recorded during the 1990s – and indeed the next track "Ophelia" offers further evidence of this, with some distinctly Beatle-y backing harmonies that crash in after the quiet bluesy, folk opening. This is a track that wouldn't seem out of place on The Beatles' "The White Album" (coincidentally an album whose wild eclecticism is echoed on the mix of genres presented here.) The lyric draws upon



Shakespeare's tragic Ophelia figure, and her watery demise, an inspiration for much Victorian romantic art ("I will lie beside the river now / For ever and a night.")

"Modern Blues" – possibly the album's stand-out track – is the first suggestion of the mix of styles to follow. Opening with a snatch of Bollywood dialogue, followed by a guitar riff reminiscent of The Hombres' "Let It All Hang Out" (it's probably not a coincidence that that track was part of the pre-gig mix tape that preceded many of the 2006 / 2007 gigs); it quickly develops into a rousing call-to-arms – "Here come the bad times, don't follow leaders / Fold up the red flag, tear up your Nietzsche" – that most of all invokes "Subterranean Homesick Blues" era-Dylan. And it is these distinctly American reference points that often dominate much of the album to come. This should not come as a surprise to those who have followed Crispian's extra-curricular activities, since The Jeevas' second album "Cowboys and Indians" also leaned heavily towards US influences, but it's not a path that Kula Shaker themselves have previously followed. The most explicit example of this influence is the short but quite beautiful country campfire ballad "Cavalry." "When A Brave Needs A Maid" also has a Western theme, this time literally, since this somewhat bizarre instrumental is very much influenced by the Ennio Morricone soundtracks for Sergio Leone's epic sixties spaghetti westerns, along with some references to Eastern (as opposed to Southern) Asian musical traditions.

"Ruby" is another track that will undoubtedly confuse; an echo-laden, string-dominated 60s-style ballad that brings to mind the likes of The Walker Brothers (as with Peter Pan RIP, the impressive string arrangements here are

provided by Alonza himself.) By this point in the album the first-time listener may well be wondering if this really is the work of the same hard-rocking band that produced "K" and "Peasants, Pigs and Astronauts", so this is a good point for the massive riff from "Figure It Out" to kick in – blessed as it is with a verse that invokes The Verve circa "A Northern Soul", but building to a chorus that is instead pure Kula Shaker, bemoaning our society's rejection of the spiritual in favour of the ephemeral ("Are we alone here facing the world, trying to figure it out?") There's no doubt that this Indian-flavoured rocker represents the sound that a lot of fans would have liked to see more dominant on this album, but it's already clear that the band have little interest in playing to people's expectations. Admittedly "High in Heaven" and "Sister Breeze" both have a similar retro-Kula style, but it might be considered significant that these two latter tracks have been relegated instead to the bonus "Lost and Proud" CD (of which more later.) This move suggests the band have little interest in being seen to produce a Kula Shaker-by-numbers album. (Although it should be noted that the lack of production credits for the bonus CD make it hard to determine exactly how old some of these recordings actually are.)

"Only Love" – which began as an Alonza song about "drug-induced paranoia" according to Crispian – has echoes of Canned Heat in Crispian and Alonza's harmonized vocals, together with a sitar-like guitar solo that recalls The Doors' dronier moments. The aforementioned "All Dressed Up (and Ready to Fall in Love)" is somewhat changed from its live debut in 2008, with more Indian instrumentation here and a revised lyric ("Bring her forest flowers, to decorate her crown.") The quirky solo has

however been retained, which quotes directly from the Bollywood song "Jaan Penechaan Ho" (which might be better known to Western audiences as the song from the opening credits of the movie "Ghost World.")

An Eartha Kitt-style growl introduces one of the album's lighter moments. "Barbara Ella" is a rather silly track that at one point features a German female voice declaring "Das ist gut!" Also of note is the impressive falsetto lead vocal from Crispian and a lead guitar part that strangely recalls Mick Ronson's "Ziggy"-era work with Bowie. "To Wait Till I Come" is a Delta blues driven by bottleneck guitar, a musical setting that's perhaps somewhat at odds with the song's medieval fairy tale lyric: "Will my true love wait in a tower? If I rest my head in this place / 'neath the shady bower."

The album closes with its one epic track, the six-minute "Winter's Call", Alonza's moving farewell to his late father ("Winter comes for us one and all / Prepare your minds, prepare your hearts for the call"). The song begins as a gentle waltz before gradually building to epic rock (taking time out for a spoken French section in-between.) The ascending chord sequence in the outro is very reminiscent of the closing bars of The Beatles' "I Want You (She's So Heavy)", with the church organ strains (recorded at "La collégiale des Saints Pierre et Paul" in Chimay) gradually giving way to Crispian's guitar heroics.

Moving on to "Lost & Proud", the album opens cutely, with a child's voice announcing the album. Then follow the previously-mentioned "Sister Breeze" and "High in a Heaven". The latter is most noteworthy for its Oasis-style verses, while "Sister Breeze" is a more of a blues number, with a slide guitar intro reminiscent of The Stone Roses' "Love Spreads" and a verse with distinct hints of the soul standard "In the Midnight Hour." This opening salvo of up tempo rock instantly gives the bonus CD a very different feel to its companion.

"Space Caravan" is a beautiful slow folk track that seems like it was dropped from the album at the last minute (as recently as Christmas it was offered on the band's official site as a taster of the forthcoming album, anyway.) Frankly, it's too good to deserve such a fate, but at least we get to hear it here and make up our own minds. "Let It In" is an alternate version of Crispian's solo song "Song of Innocence" but given a more stripped-down, acoustic treatment and sporting a very different verse lyric (although as mentioned previously, the lack of any kind of sleeve notes on this bonus CD reduces the task of differentiating between original and remake to pure guesswork.) "Witches & Wine" again references a Crispian solo track – the chorus is lifted wholesale from "Crooked Lines" – but the rambling Dylanesque verses ("Standing on the

top of the Glastonbury Tor, Everybody's saying it's the Third World War / Nobody cares if Jesus come back, Some brother told me that Jesus was black") are seemingly brand new. In all honesty, while both parts are fine when considered on their own, they don't blend together particularly well. One can't help but wish that "Crooked Lines" had got a release in its original form, with the new sections held over for a song of their own.

Just to get the negativity out of the way in one go, "The Phantom" is a big disappointment. Reminiscent of the title track from "Strange Folk" (as opposed to the long-lost-till-recently PP&A epic of the same name), this indulgent track is basically a somewhat-cryptic spoken-word piece about the elusive criminal mastermind of the title. When it ends with a bored-sounding "Whatever", you can't help but think it's speaking on behalf of the listener too. To add insult to injury the backing track to it is oddly reminiscent of "Be Merciful", an infinitely better unreleased track that would have been much more welcome here but instead remains unreleased.

"Light Years Ahead of Our Time" is another track about the perennial clash between the material and spiritual: "So life, why do you burn with me desires I can never satisfy?" A sitar-like drone throughout makes this one of the more Indian-influenced tracks. The CD ends with "Sweet Sympathy" which, like some of the tracks on the album proper, has its country-ish touches, although here they seem more down to arrangement choices rather than necessarily anything inherent in the song itself. Nonetheless it's a bright mid-tempo song with a catchy chorus that would've fitted well on "Pilgrims Progress" itself.

Already the band have intimated that the fifth Kula Shaker album may yet turn out to be the Indian extravaganza that this album was once touted to be. If this were to be the case then "Pilgrims Progress" may one day be looked at as something of the odd-one-out in the band's back catalogue, but it's certainly no failed experiment. No doubt the band must have felt a lot of pressure on them during the making of "Strange Folk" to come up with an album that justified to their detractors the decision to reform. With that hurdle successfully negotiated, they may well have felt that they'd earned the right to spend some time alone deciding exactly what kind of music it is that they want to make these days. But if that's the case, then the end result seems to suggest that they still aren't quite sure. Nonetheless, it's a defiantly individual album that shows a band very much making music on their own terms; those who would like to see the band's return as a cynical attempt to cash in on their 90s hits will find little here to confirm their prejudices. They've got the modern blues for you, honey...

Ian W

पौग्रिल्स प्रोग्रेस

NEW ALBUM

Pilgrims Progress was released on June 28th in the UK. The new album comes in two special editions:

PILGRIMS PROGRESS (DELUXE EDITION)

CD1 Pilgrims Progress

1. Peter Pan RIP
2. Ophelia
3. Modern Blues
4. Only Love
5. All Dressed Up
6. Cavalry
7. Ruby
8. Figure It Out
9. Barbara Ella
10. When A Brave Meets A Maid
11. To Wait Till I Come
12. Winters Call

CD2 Lost and Proud

1. Bonus Intro
2. Sister Breeze
3. High in a Heaven
4. Space Caravan
5. Let it in (demo)
6. Light years ahead of our time (demo)
7. The Phantom
8. Witches & Wine (demo)
9. Sweet Sympathy
10. Peter Pan R.I.P (video)

Poster

Full colour printed both sides
Band picture on one side and Map of Kensington Gardens on the other

Paperback book



PILGRIMS PROGRESS (SUPER DELUXE EDITION)

Includes everything from the deluxe boxset + 180 gm single LP Vinyl

With a limited edition screen printed cover numbered and signed by the artist (Chris Hopewell / Jackknife)

+ Screenprinted grey t-shirt by artist

Vinyl Side A

1. Peter Pan RIP
2. Ophelia
3. Modern Blues
4. All Dressed Up
5. Ruby
6. Cavalry
7. Only Love

Vinyl Side B

8. Figure It Out
9. Barbara Ella
10. When A Brave Meets A Maid
11. To Wait Till I Come
12. Winters Call

COMPETITION

WIN A SIGNED BOX-SET!

We won the Peter Pan video competition for you! With a little help from our Japanese translators we got more than 60,000 people to watch the new video. Our prize is a signed box set. Now it's your chance to win!

All you need to do is describe Pilgrims Progress in three sentences and post it on your Myspace/Facebook/Twitter etc. pages together with this mention: "Get your own copy of Pilgrims Progress now! <http://www.kulashaker.co.uk/buy>"

Make sure to send your contribution to kulashakerzine@googlemail.com by August 15th including the link to the page(s) where you posted it. The winner will be chosen by best text/most posts.



"We came into the music industry as cynics"

Interview by Andrea, Anni and Mary

THIS SUMMER SEES the release of the long awaited *Pilgrims Progress*. How do you feel you have progressed musically from previous albums?

Alonza: It's really hard to be objective about your own music but I can only say that on this album there are some musical places that we haven't been to before.

Much has happened in the short time since the release of *Strangefolk*, including the birth of Crispian & Joe's baby and moving to deepest darkest Belgium. Have any of these events been reflected in the mood of the new album?

A: The move to Belgium certainly affected where we recorded the album and I'm sure being surrounded by woods and medieval landscapes contributed to the mood. Crispian's song writing hasn't started to sound like a children's TV theme however his insomnia now has a purpose.

Did you bring any guest musicians on this album?

A: We had the pleasure of working with Ben Castle again who has played on all our previous records, normally a Sax player he gave us some fine flutes. A friend of ours out here in Belgium played all the cellos on the record and as unlikely as it seems, we worked for the first time with a sitar player.

Has your song-writing process changed over the years?

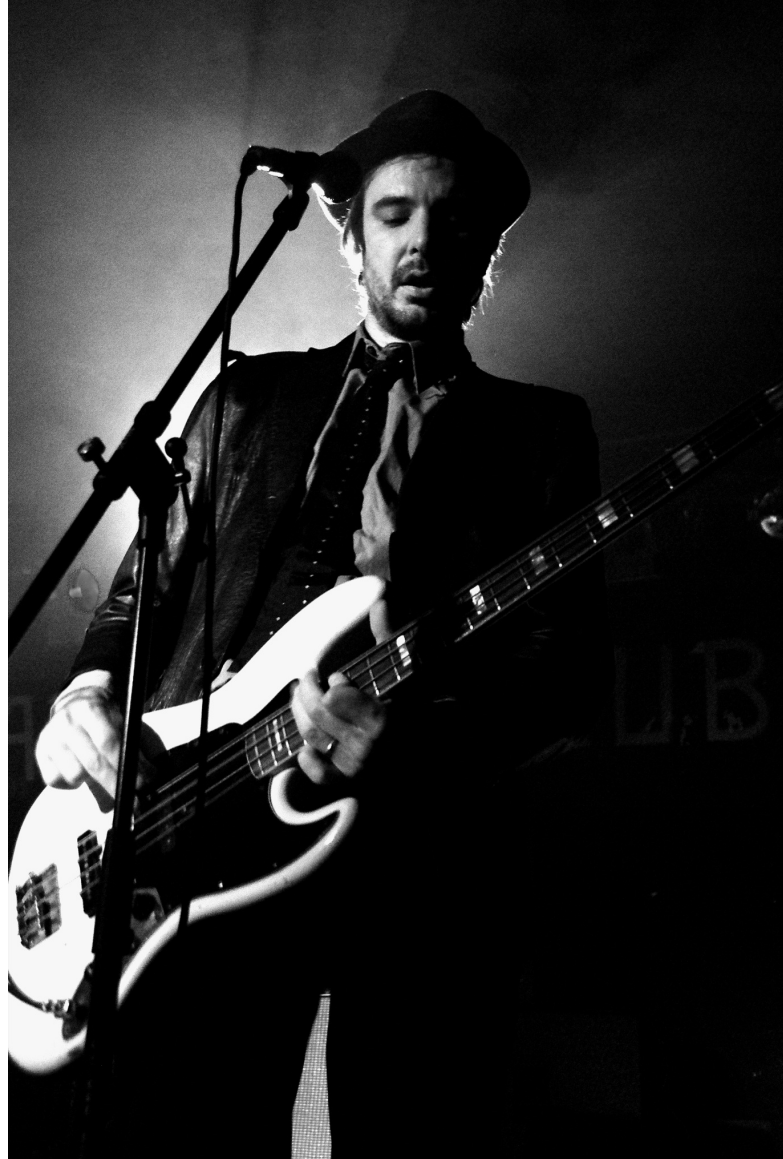
A: Our songwriting process has always been fairly varied; songs have come about through fully formed ideas brought in by Crispian or sometimes myself. Other songs develop more through the band routinely providing ideas in the studio. On this album we did a lot of the writing and arranging on acoustics at my mother's house. This felt like going down the time tunnel and working like we did 20 years ago.

It has been suggested that Pilgrims Progress is much mellower in its mood than previous albums. Would you agree with this suggestion?

A: Pilgrims Progress probably is mellower than previous albums but that's not to say there aren't a few ear bleeding moments. We've spent more time in the studio than on the road in the last couple of years, so I guess that's what happens when you get a decent night's sleep and don't have to worry about finding a toilet in the morning.

Were there any situations whilst recording that you remember especially?

A: The main memory certainly from the early part of the recording is of extreme cold. It's pretty remote out here and in that winter it had gone down to -20C. The control room has a powerful wood burner and was nice and warm however the live room was sadly lacking any adequate heating. I still have the vision of a cursing skeletal figure wrapped up in hats, scarves and several coats sitting in front of a drum kit.



Which are your personal favourite songs on the new album and why?

A: My favourite songs change depending on how much tea I've drunk that day. At the moment it's probably Ruby because it's a very beautiful song. Also Winters Call is great because it's a true prog epic.

Was it a difficult decision to pick 'Peter Pan' as the first single? And why did you choose this song in particular?

A: There was some deliberation because Peter Pan isn't an obvious up tempo pop single, however sonically and lyrically it really stands out and since we probably won't be competing with N-Dubz or Lady GooGaa for the top spot, it seemed like a good choice and is more representative of the album.

Since there had been some financial issues after the Strangefolk tours, are there mixed feelings about releasing a new album?

A: We came into the music industry as cynics and



there are always problems when you try and mix artistic ideals with money. We've never expected mainstream success and if it has come our way, it has been by chance. There are always mixed feelings when releasing a new album because you have to let go of something you've nurtured and cared for.

What are the main reasons behind the decision to continue as a band and release a new album?

A: Despite all the emotional baggage, dis-functional relationships and occasional nervous breakdowns (that's just the managers), we all still enjoy playing together. The problems we've had in the past have been mainly external, so late in 2008 we met up on the top of Primrose Hill and decided that if we had the songs and the means to record those songs then we should bloody well make another record.

How much does Kula Shaker's future depend on the actual sales of this album/the success of the forthcoming gigs?

A: Obviously we don't want to put any pressure on people reading this but if you don't buy our records or come to the shows, our children will starve!!

What are your touring plans for this year? When are your first UK gigs planned? How about the rest of Europe?

A: We're out in the East Asia over the summer and looking at touring the U.K and Europe in the autumn.

You undertook the role of producer for this project. Do you feel that this gave the band more freedom to express themselves musically?

A: Paul certainly felt he had more freedom to abuse the producer which he may not have done if he was working with somebody else. In the studio I became a control freak with a communication problem so maybe you should ask the others.

How does it feel to be behind the mixing table?

A: The mixing table in my studio is just a table however there is a window between the control room and the live room so I get to say things down the talkback like "yeah that was great, once more please" (studio phrase book, lesson 1).

Is there any song on the new album that particularly stands out for you? If so, which one and why?

A: I would say Winters Call, maybe because it was meant to stand out or maybe because of the apocalyptic organ break - anyway it's quite a theatrical piece so it's always going to demand a bit more attention.

You have a landmark birthday coming up later this year. Do you hope that another decade from now you'll still be working on new KS albums?

A: Yes it's true, I'll soon be 30. In 10 years from now if Western civilization hasn't collapsed and I'm not holding a gun



sitting on top of a stock pile of dhal and rice then it is quite possible I'll be working on a new Kula Shaker album.

Asking PAUL...

Are there any drumming parts you are especially proud of on this album?

There are no favorite drum parts on the album as I find it very difficult to listen to/ appreciate stuff after we've done it. I need time and space to cope with listening back; so, I'm not much use at mixes.

Which song do you look forward to most performing live?

As for tracks I like playing live, Hurricane Season keeps you on your toes and I love the chugginess of Die for Love.

In previous interviews, it has been suggested that you favour the 1970's style slingerland four piece drum set. However, as someone who likes Rush, have you ever wanted to have a good playing session using Neil Peart's totally enormous drum set up?

We might have mentioned this before but I did play a huge wraparound kit when we were rehearsing next to Take That a couple of years back. It was ridiculous; we were all laughing at this array of drums and cymbals. Back in the day I was invited, while in LA, to Stephen Perkins house. I thought I was up for an amazing lesson but the programme was bong and a three way jam on one huge, shallow tom DW set in his garden shed. Crazy!

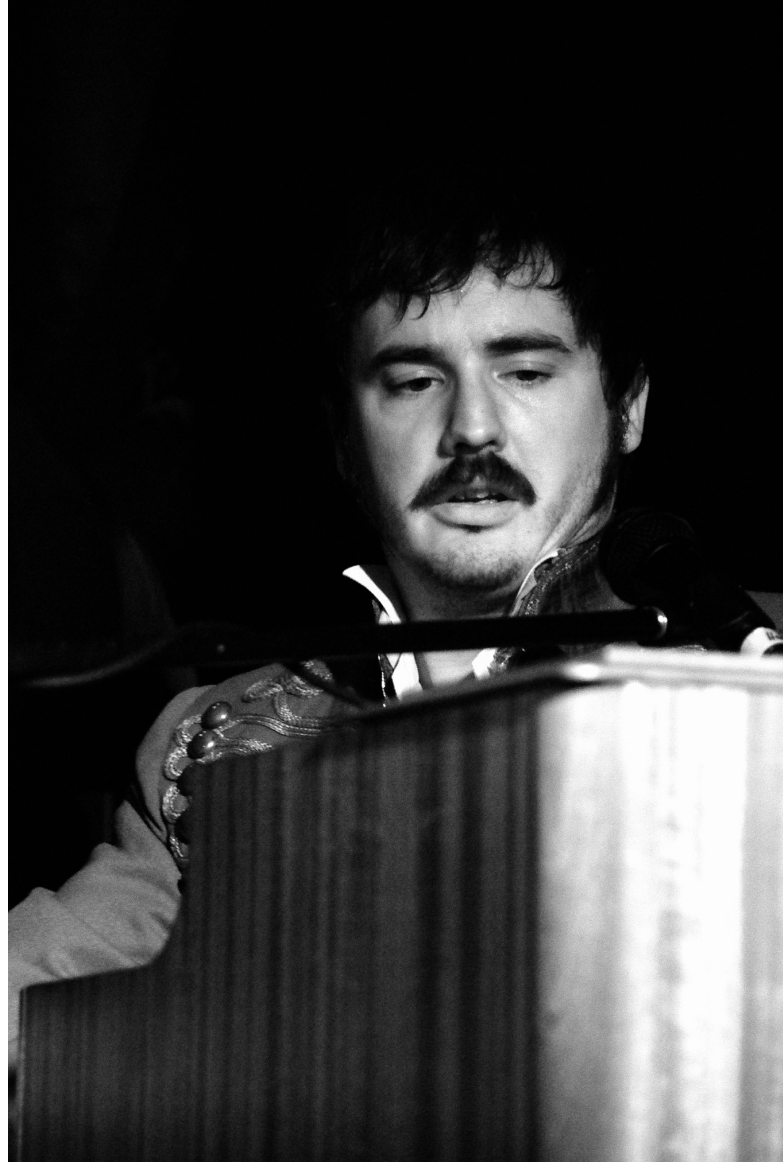
Asking HARRY...

Which is the Beastly pipe organ song? Are you satisfied the way it turned out on the record?

I think it'll be pretty obvious... And yes, it's a great song, with a massive organ solo. What else would anyone want?

Have you been working on any other musical projects recently?

Alongside earning your basic musical crust, I've been doing some production work for Universal, playing drums at incredibly slow tempos and working on my own Magnum Opus.



What kind of different instruments do you play? Is there one that you are especially fond of?

Keys-wise my day to day instrument is my Wurlitzer electric piano. Its action is beautiful and it's such a cool compact design. I've got a couple of Hammonds dotted around and a broken Farfisa that currently lives in Wood Green. Synth-wise I love my moog (well, Dodge's moog) and although by default I hate all digital stuff, I have to admit my little microKorg is a beast. I dropped my harmonium a while back and it's a bit rickety, and stuck on one sound, but it's still a big favourite. I started out as a drummer and percussionist, so I have a few different things to hit - drum kits and other un-tuned percussion stuff. I also have a vibraphone which you can hear on the record in fact. I love it - it's an amazing instrument. Weird and convoluted, but at the same time pretty basic and ordinary. It's full of the kind of 'modernity' that you'd find in 1927.

CHORDS

by Marco C

Peter Pan R.I.P.

Em C
Gather round
G Am
This is the tombstone
Em C G Am6/F#
of Peter Pan, R.I.P.
Em C
Say a prayer
G Am
For all the children
Em
Everyone who still believes
Em Bm/D C
C Am G
Peter Pan R.I.P.
Em G Em Am (2 times)
Em C
Clear the leaves
G Am
From his resting place
Em C
Chase the crows
G Am6/F#
Across the street
Em C
Let the sun
G Am
Warm his bleeding heart
Em
For he meant so much to me
Em Bm/D C
C Am G
Peter Pan R.I.P.

Em
Peter Pan
Em/D
He won't come back
Cmaj7
They've chained his feet
Bm
and broke his back
G C G AmEm
I'm crying
C G Am
Remembering the days
G C G
Crying sweet tears of joy
Am Em
Remembering the days
Am Em
Games that we played
Em G Em Am (2 times)
Em C
Now you know
G Am
This ain't no fairytale
Em C
His grave is there
G Am6/F#
For all to see
Em C G Am
Gather round all good children
Em
Gather round in memory
Em Bm/D C
C Am G
Peter Pan R.I.P.

Em
Peter Pan
Em/D
Don't look back
Cmaj7
They've clipped your wings
Bm
And chained your back
G C G Am Em
I'm crying
C G Am
Remembering the days
G C G
Crying sweet tears of joy
Am Em
Remembering the days
Am Em
Games that we played
Bm Em Am
Em G Em Am (4 times)
Em G Em Am
Peter P, RIP
Em G Em Am
Peter P, RIP
Em G Em Am
Peter P, RIP
Em G Em Am
Peter P, RIP
Em G Em Am
Peter P, Rest In Peace
Em

CHORDS

by Marco C

Space Caravan

Bm F#7 D

Space Caravan

F#7

Where are we going?

Bm F#7 D F#7

I need to make a new start

Bm F#7

I lost my home, yeah

D

F#7

Bm

I watched as the winds blew away

F#7 D

away 'neath the sun

Em D F#7

Sure as your heart is strong

Em D F#7

Sure as this journey is long

G

Worlds never change,

F#m Em D

they just turn very slowly

C A C

They don't understand

[...]

A

Bm F#7 D

Forever young

F#7

That's your promise

Bm F#7 D F#7

Love in a world without end

Bm F#7

Travelling for free

D F#7

Strange refugees

Bm F#7 D

Weaving our way through the stars

F#7 Bm

Through the stars

F#7 D F#7

Bm F#7 D F#7 (2 times)

Bm F#7 D

Em D F#7

Sure as your heart is strong

Em D F#7

Sure as this journey is long

G

Worlds never change,

F#m Em D

they just turn very slowly

C A

They don't understand

C A

I wonder if you can

Bm F#7 D

Space Caravan

F#7

Where are we going?

Bm F#7 D F#7

Weaving our way through the stars

Bm F#7 D F#7

I said goodbye, said "love never dies"

Bm F#7 D

So farewell, so long, so long

G F#7

Bm

So long

F#7 D F#7 Bm F#7 D F#7

G F#7

Bm

So long


intro

**"It's all about the
journey"**



INTERVIEW WITH CRISPIAN MILLS

PHOTO: SIMONE MERLI



As many fans will have noticed Kula Shaker's unique quality lies in their incorporation of Indian instruments, as well as Sanskrit mantras and Hindu mythology. They stand out in today's pop culture with lyrics that appear to grasp at higher meanings that concern not only the spiritual and the political, but the essence of what it means to be human: love.

Sudevi Geary who is studying English at Falmouth University did an interview with Crispian Mills for her journalism dissertation and aimed to discover Kula Shaker's attitude to music itself and its capabilities as a force for change.

Interview by Sudevi Geary

The poet R S Thomas once said 'true poetry is religion, and true religion is poetry'. How do you feel relate to this idea, as a writer and a musician? Should music be a spiritual experience?

Crispian pulls Gerard Manley Hopkins, William Blake and Yeats from his books shelf as examples of Romantic religious poets.

Who is a poet? What makes poetry? When does one officially become a poet? Do you have to have published a book of poetry? A friend of mine, Anno Birkin, died in a car crash when he was 21. I'd known him since he was a kid and I always thought he wanted to become a musician, but when he died his dad uncovered all his notebooks and it turned out he wrote this incredible poetry. His dad said, if he'd have asked Anno then, if he was writing poetry, he would have said 'oh, it's not poetry, it's just scribbles and thoughts', but it's poetry, amazing poetry; sometimes it follows a form, sometimes it's a stream of consciousness, but he was poet in that

he was able, with imagery and his own natural talent, to speak in that irrational language, like the voice of a dream. I remember having one of those intense, late night conversations with a friend, and the subject inevitably moved to spiritual things, and he made this disparaging remark that 'religion is irrational'. Like, that's such a bad thing? The point being, that there's a very important side to us that exists well beyond the rational, and it experiences the world as such. For instance, you could say love is irrational; the experience of listening to music, communing with nature is irrational. All these things we associate with a higher pleasure, a higher sense of being, are irrational, aren't they? Poetry is this language of the irrational.

Crispian searches through the introduction of a Yeats book about Irish folklore to find 'a good quote'.

The poet Yeats, for instance, was an Irish nationalist. In his case, that didn't just mean

sovereign independence from the British, he also believed in restoring and preserving the Irish ethnic identity, which he felt had been stripped away by the invaders, by the imperial force. (Reads)

'Behind all this ambition, lay an ambition to serve his country by uniting an imaginative movement in literature with all aspects of native tradition: folklore, myth, legend, religion, custom and thought. And intertwined with this ambition was another strand in the fabric of his thinking: the 'revolt of the soul' against the materialistic intellect, which he saw dominating life and repressing imaginative thought in the modern world.'

That really sums up the revolutionary spirit of mystic poets like Blake, and Yeats and even somebody like Hopkins – even if they adhere to a religion, they are not limited by it. They can see the universality of faith, beyond the dogma. The definition of a mystic, I think, is that the mystic seeks *personal* communion with the Divine. He desires an *intimate* experience with God; whereas the religionist identifies

more with the belief systems, the books, the uniforms, the dogma, which acts like a kind of like a mental support for their lives. The great Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati said it was the 'exoterics versus esoterics'; the Exoterics are more concerned with the *structure* of religion, which to be fair, you need to a certain extent, or there's no philosophy. But buildings, rituals, and books, are all external things that are only supposed to serve the inner, *esoteric* meaning. (Laughs) So, I don't know if I've really answered your question about religion and poetry, but that's what it's all about isn't it? The esoteric experience of religion is beyond words, like poetry, it's an experience of the heart.

How important is it for music to carry meaning or message and does your music carry meaning or is it just for enjoyment?

Obviously, a lot of music is purely enjoyment. Nevertheless, music takes you out of the everyday. Even if it's dance music, dancing is a type of communion. It works on lots of levels. Music lifts us out of our feelings of aloneness. I think the main thing is, one should always respect music. Whatever your relationship with it, whether you're dancing to it, or whether you're

in church, whatever it is, you should respect it. It's like respecting the elements, respecting the sun, respecting the fact that water is there, unless, of course, you haven't got water –

- In which case you'd still respect it even more.

Exactly. Music is not some kind of limitless supply to be enjoyed selfishly, it comes from somewhere; we have a relationship with it.

In your song 'Die for Love' you say 'you don't have to pray for the death of your enemies/you'll defeat them with a song' and your music seems to be quite hopeful. Do you hope that your music, or any music with a message can create some sort of change in the world/in people?


Crispian spends a minute staring out of the window.

I think that's supposed to be poetic. (Laughs)

Anything that comes from your heart is

more powerful than something that comes

from the mind, and hate is a product of the mind. I wrote that album when the Iraq invasion was happening and wanted to write something idealistic. They understand this sort of thing more in the East. In a lot of those East Asian countries I've played in - they really love the whole Romeo and Juliet thing. Just look at Asian cinema, their heroes & heroines are constantly committing suicide together! Staying around and living is harder, of course, and more courageous. Dying for love is a more youthful ideal. Anyway, when the album came out, all these young soldiers are going off to die for their country and I did an interview with a broadsheet here in London, and this hack asks me "Die for Love? Isn't that just a bunch of hippy shit?" He said he was just 'playing devil's advocate', of course. But I think the point is that, dried up old men have forgotten what it's like to be young and fearless. Young people can afford to be idealistic. That's what it's all about, not being afraid to stick your neck out. If young people stop being idealistic then the hope of new generations is lost. When my band first came out I didn't give a shit that there were so many cynics laughing at us. What else is youth for? What's rock'n'roll for?



“Everyone wants to be free, to experience the poetry of life, the side of us that is part of God, part of the stars.”

How would you change the world if you could?

First of all? I'd change the parking around here.

When's your new album coming out?

June/July. More and more artists are trying to do it independently – when their contract expires they try to start their own labels. You might not have as much money to spend advertising it but you cut out so much of the bullshit, which is having to translate your ideas via a group of coked up wankers who don't even like your band.

Kula Shaker's sound has changed slightly over the years and seems to involve less of the Indian influence – was this a conscience decision?

On K for instance it was 'Govinda' and 'Tattva', only 20% of the album was you could say part of India, but it was always woven into the mix. I've always said that it's a bit like a cooking

ingredient. You can use it when you're cooking, in various ways, but it's a strong taste and it can be a little overpowering. If you're not careful, not just your food will taste of it, but your whole house will smell of it too. I love the cooking analogy. The famous sax player King Curtis, had a live track called 'Memphis Soul Stew' which starts with the drums, and then adds instruments one by one, 'a pinch of bass' and so on. He brings it to the boil, lets it simmer... it's brilliant. So, in our case, the 'Indian ingredient' really stood out. The first TV gig we ever had, we performed 'Govinda.' We were a very new band then and everything was Brit pop and Girl Power, and lads and beer, and we just decided, 'right, let's go for it'. Half the audience were like 'get these guys out of here!' and the other half really enjoyed it. *(Laughs)* It was always supposed to be fun you know.

Would you say your music has become a bit more serious now? With 'Peter Pan R.I.P' for example, which takes a more melancholic

view on a popular childhood character and seems to suggest an end to innocence. I noticed you incorporated some military themes in the video too. What is the significance of this song?

With any good story you can write in your own meaning. There's a space for you to put yourself in there. It doesn't matter whether it's Peter Pan or the Mahabharata. That's the reason these stories have lasted so long. They touch you. Essentially the inspiration for our Peter Pan song was Andrew Birkin's book (Anno's dad) who wrote 'J.M Barrie and the Lost Boys' which is the story behind Peter Pan and Barrie and the kids that he wrote it for. It's a very sad story. Pan has that famous line 'To die would be an awfully big adventure', it's essentially a fairy tale about death, and like all Celtic folklore, it's very spooky. People are dying and getting carried off by the fairies all the time. It's a very dark and creepy world. It seems like children today aren't given as much opportunity to explore their imaginations, everything is very literal for them, like TV is a literal experience, they're passive observers rather than having to create the story in their own minds.

"Dying for love is the adolescent ideal, to carry on living is even braver."

Do you think you're addressing the balance by singing about it?

Well, I'm addressing the balance for me. I just had a kid so it's personally relevant.

Is music mostly therapeutic for you? Would you say it has a greater effect on you than others?

Anything creative, whether you're a gardener or writing a song, is exciting because something new is happening. I get very excited by the process; you can disappear into a song. I love writing and some aspects of recording, but recording is very difficult process, especially because we're really into production and finding the right character for a track. The Jeevas was just 'plug in and go'. That was nice for a while, but Kula Shaker requires more attention to detail.

The title of the album is Pilgrim's Progress, does that refer to your own journey or does it have another meaning?

It was a working title that just stuck. I think the reason it stuck is because it was appropriate. It's all about the journey.

What was it like directing the video for 'Peter Pan R.I.P'?

Yeah, it was great fun. We made so many crummy videos back in the day. Videos are so expensive and they used to be the last consideration in an album release. Anything that portrays your work is important, and it used to be like 'oh, we still have to make a video' and it would all get rushed through without enough time. I was always pissed off about that. Since we've had our own label we've only made two videos, but I had the chance to direct both of them and tell the story. The band enjoyed it more as well.

Do you see this as contributing experience to your new venture of working in film? Will just write films or do you plan to become a director? And acting?

I was working on 'The Winged Boy' with Stephen Fry and his company, and I realised the hard way that, if you're a writer with a total vision for your script, it's going to be very painful handing it over to someone else. It was a big lesson. Anything I get made now I'd need to direct. And

acting? Well, I suppose it would be funny for my friends, but I prefer watching

than acting. It's a very vulnerable place, to be an actor in front of the camera. You're at the mercy of the director. It's quite a masochistic job. A lot of actors are insecure and they put themselves in a really vulnerable position as well, it's strange.

How does making films differ from writing and performing music? Is one harder than the other?

I've spent ten years now, working on film scripts and projects. Some of them have borne fruit, but on the whole it's all been a learning experience. I've got one film that's in development hell in Hollywood, and another, which has been teetering on the edge of funding for over a year! Films are, by nature, long term projects. Even a very low budget film requires a huge amount of time and effort, let alone money.

Is there anyone in particular who you'd like to, or plan to work with during your film/music career?

Well, 'Paranoia in the Launderette' is based on a story by Bruce Robinson, who's one of my favourite writers. *Withnail & I*, *The peculiar memories of*

Thomas Penman are both brilliant, so I'm thrilled to be working with him. Musically, I'm really happy that Alonza is now producing. He's really talented and it's opened up the band.

What would you say you've learnt from being involved in music?

Somebody said to me 'The problem with the music business is there's too much business and not enough music'. I mean, you can't escape everyday life, the lessons of life, the challenges of life, they'll come in a different shape and form. The music business is just like any other business. There's just a little more pantomime.

Any favourite films?

I love them all, what can I say! The more you study movies the more you realise how hard it is to make one. It requires luck and timing, and some magic. More so in film making than any other art, because so many factors have to come together in a harmonious way for it to be successful. With a poet it's just him, a sheet of paper, and the muse, but with a film there are hundreds of variable factors and people. Compare the first Indiana Jones and the most recent one. Why wasn't the last one memorable? It's got better special effects, more experienced actors, a more experienced director. Logically, everything should be better, and yet it's the *first* film that actually hits a nerve. Call it luck, maybe. But I'd call it *karma*. It's a subtle and mysterious thing. That's the problem with the word *karma*; say it and everyone thinks they know what it means.

Do you have a muse?

Of course, I have my wife and my kid. I also have a bona fide spiritual teacher, so I'm pretty damn lucky like that.

What do you feel your greatest achievement has been? Is there anything else you hope to achieve in this life?

Wow.

Stares out of the window and spaces out for about 20 seconds.

Everyone wants to be free, to experience

the poetry of life, the side of us that is part of God, part of the stars. Anything is possible, and in everything we do in our life, we should try to remind ourselves and others of that. Everyone is going to tell you to keep your head down and earn some money and stay out of the way and take after everybody else and be afraid, because the whole world is afraid. But you wouldn't be doing yourself any favours. "I will not sleep from mental fight, nor shall my sword sleep in my hand" and so on, blah blah. Blake, Yeats, Hopkins, it's what they're all talking about, it's also the battle of the Mahabharata. These are *your* stories.

So you'd die for love, but what do you live for?

Exactly. Dying for love is the adolescent ideal, to carry on living is even braver. Personally, I take comfort in a nice cup of tea. I'm happy. I didn't used to be comfortable being alone, I associated it with death and failure and abandonment. But I've settled down now. I wish everyone well and many fine cups of tea!



Confessions of an

REVIEW

addict



The guys after the gig with Harry-impersonator Jamie

PHOTO: SIMON BRUCE

THE RELENTLESS GARAGE, LONDON, JULY 8TH, 2010

By Andrea

WITHOUT A DOUBT: Addiction is a dangerous thing. "Smoking harms you and others" can be read on ciggy packs. Alcohol destroys your liver and drugs your brain. But what if you're addicted to gigs? The gigs of a very special band called Kula Shaker? Well, speaking from my own experience: It can cause dangerous withdrawal-symptoms. An unhealthy amount of bad-quality-concert-video-consumption can be one of the signs of the disease. However it doesn't exactly satisfy your needs and, even worse, it harms others. Ignoring the absence of your favourite live band does help for a certain amount of time, but be warned that cold sweat and shivering attacks can accompany it. So what do you do? Jump into an aeroplane and fly over to London to get your desperately-needed fix of the Kula live experience!

The place to get it is the Relentless Garage in Islington. A small venue which holds maybe 400 people, only a few metres walk from the tube station. Standing in front of the closed doors we see nothing to remind us of the Mighty Shaker – only their name printed in the schedule affords

the relief that it's actually going to happen tonight.

The withdrawal-symptoms are slowly easing when the doors open. The sight of many people in well-known t-shirts - and a merchandise stand especially made for addicts - is helping. Okay, we only just survive the support act, I think, but it's not that bad, a girl called Kirstenana. She's got a remarkably beautiful voice and we fans are most happy that someone we remember very well from gigs too many years ago joins her: Paul Winterhart. The drumming is great, the vibe is good but it's about time for the rest of the unused instruments to get put into action! One glass of red wine and a free and very healthy visit to the exclusive Garage-sauna later (it's so bloody hot inside!) and they're there. Finally. Kula Shaker appear on stage and I eventually understand what addiction really means. The first part of the drug called 'Sound of Drums' slowly enters my veins and a huge feeling of relief arises. It's really happening! After three years of abstinence (and that is a pretty good result for an addict), Kula Shaker are back on stage!





I FEEL AT HOME at once and so do the Kula guys. 'Under the Hammer', a long-forgotten b-side, goes down so well that it's quite unbelievable. Considering that it has been (or at least feels like) ages since the band played together, they harmonise as well as if it was the last gig of a tour. Next up is 'Die for love' from their last album 'Strangefolk' and then Crispian announces: "You've got the special privilege of seeing a very under-rehearsed band fuck up its new album!" The first song they (don't) fuck up is Peter Pan R.I.P. What has already been shining on live-videos comes truly to life on stage. Even though it seems to be a real challenge to play it live the song sounds just stunning with electric guitar! It sounds more amazing still when the crowd joins Crispian's singing – so good to see there's so many true fans out there who know every line of the new songs! Peter P is followed by the stunning 'Ophelia' that has been loudly acclaimed by some fans, intoned with electric guitars as well. "This is Alonza's first time playing guitar on stage", Crispian explains, not to mention the harmonica. 'Modern Blues' really gets the crowd going and 'All Dressed Up And Ready' is just bound to become a true classic live. They also include 'High In(ner) Heaven', a track that we first heard as part of the Mogadishu -festival and which is featured on the 'Lost and

Proud' extra CD; a truly lovely track. And then 'Winter's Call', probably one of the most difficult numbers Kula Shaker have attempted to play live. Crispian announces "I don't know the chords" but that was a sheer lie. It's all in place and so is his whispered singing at the beginning. There we have it, our long-awaited epic number which gets standing-ovations for Harry's organ-solo and thundering applause afterwards! The next songs are the ones to enjoy and rock away to – '303' and 'Tattva' shouldn't be missing from any playlist. 'True Love Will Find You In The End' gives us a chance to calm down a bit, but 'Hush' sees the audience jumping and cheering again. The band is soaked in sweat, just as us fans are, but they don't leave us waiting for too long before the encore starts. Whereas the setlist had 'Hey Dude' written on it, the band makes a quick change and plays the wonderful 'Song of Love' instead, a safe way to get the whole Garage join the chanting enthusiastically. Up next is my all-time favourite 'Great Hosannah' and then, for the classic ending of a Kula Shaker gig, we get 'Govinda'. Cheering for an encore doesn't help; we're left with a happy grin on our face to echo that of Lord Jagannath's who's been smiling at us all evening from Crispian's t-shirt. Addiction satisfied. When are we invited to the next trip?

@ The Relentless Garage

PHOTOS BY GLENN ROSSINGTON, ANNI AND ANDREA





Unusual Homage

by Mary Nilsson

KULA SHAKER AND THEIR COVERS

Greetings fellow Kula fans!

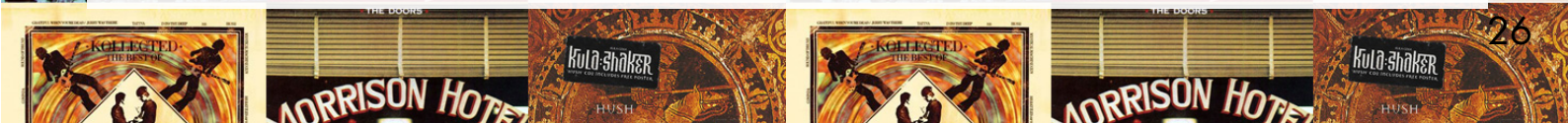
There is a lot of excitement in the Kula camp at present which cannot be ignored. With the release of 'Pilgrims Progress', a London launch gig and a Far East Summer tour, the KS lads are bound to be enjoying their current success. So, to celebrate this joyous time, us good people at Strange Folk have decided to take a look at some of Kula Shaker's past achievements by digging into the archives, where we have managed to blow the dust off of some of their finest cover records to date.

Now to many people, cover versions are a sensitive issue. You either love them, or you hate them. There seem to be two types of cover songs, ones by bands that do not have the ability to find their own identity, and then there are those by bands who have already established themselves artistically, and are able to gain a badge of honour by showing versatility in their own talents. Kula Shaker belongs to the latter. Having already established themselves with an individual sound which completely separated them from their early peers, Kula Shaker had already released the likes of 'Tattva', 'Hey Dude' and 'Grateful When your Dead' before committing to the release of homage songs. Some of the covers which immediately come to mind include Hawkwind's 'Hurry on Sundown' (released on the 'Sound of Drums' single, 1998), 'Red Balloon' taken from the Small Faces album, 'The Autumn Stone' (1969) and Daniel Johnson's 'True Love will Find you in the End', which was played by the band at the Anno's Africa concert (see Peter Pan RIP article, SF issue #5). Other songs include MC5's 'Kick Out the Jams', and The Doors 'Peace Frog' both of which surfaced during the extensive Strange Folk tours between 2007-2008. The band have shown great diversity in the covers they have chosen to perform, and in each case bring a sense of individuality to the sound of each song, even though it has not been originally composed by them.

One of Kula Shaker's finest achievements in

regard of a cover song is likely to be their 1997 release of 'Hush'. Written by Joe South, 'Hush' was a song which had enjoyed previous success, mainly at the hands of Deep Purple. Included on the album 'Shades of Deep Purple' (1968), this was a song which displayed many of the elements of late 1960's psychedelia, and is still very much appreciated today. However, the pace of Deep Purple's 'Hush' is slower to that of Kula Shaker's. The 1997 release of 'Hush' was amazing, and full of an energy which demonstrated that this was a band that was very much in love with what they were doing. Unfortunately, it would seem that 'Hush' proved too successful. All too often people who are not overly familiar with the work of Kula Shaker automatically recognise them through this song. Radio DJs seem to use this as their default song for Kula Shaker. Considering the backlog of original work which they have this seems unfair, as listeners tend to forget the best of what they have to offer. It has been aired for various reasons from including the soundtrack to the 1997 movie, 'I Know What You Did Last Summer', to adverts for Jeeps and New York breakfast bagels. Unfortunately, even although this still is an amazing song, many people who appreciate Kula Shaker have been brought to the point of not wanting to hear it for a while. The sad story of 'Hush' has ended with the moral that you can have too much of a good thing!

Fortunately, Kula Shaker have covered other artists including The Beatles, and of course the amazing Bob Dylan. 'Ballad of a Thin Man' is apparently the last song that Kula Shaker recorded together before their 'sabbatical'. As such, this song ended up as a feature on the compilation album Kula Shaker 'Kollekted' (2002). Originally included on the album 'Highway 61 Revisited' (1965), no-one could ever deny that this is a bizarre song, with some very strange lyrics! This, however, adds to the songs overall appeal, and the listener cannot help but laugh or smile at the menace of its story. It would seem that our protagonist Mr Jones finds himself in a rather bizarre situation, entering a room which is





crowded with many circus style freaks, and becomes a bit overwhelmed. Whilst rumours have never really been put to sleep as to whom Mr Jones really is (although it would appear he is likely to be some sort of journalist, or as some sources suggest, a sexual voyeur), the idea of the story is fantastic.

As mentioned, this was the final song to be recorded by Kula Shaker before their split. In comparison to the original song, it was a tall order for the band, as with Bob Dylan's unique style, his work is a hard act to follow. An example of this can be found with The Byrds recording 'Mr Tambourine Man' (from the album 'Mr Tambourine Man, 1965). In this version not only was it rather flat in comparison to Dylan's, but only the middle verse was recorded, losing much of the original message intended by this song. However, in the instance of 'Ballad of a Thin Man', Kula Shaker managed to pull it off with style, and recorded an excellent version of the song which had the same energy and passion found in Dylan's original work. In summer 2007, this song was included in the first of the Strange Folk Tours, and it had a tremendous effect on the audience. It is most certainly a version of the song to be proud of.

It cannot be ignored that in both past and present, many of the people who like Kula Shaker have likened them to the Beatles. However, with apparent covers of 'Rain' and more recently 'Money (that's what I want)', the one Beatles homage which stands out best with KS is 'Baby You're a Rich Man'. This particular song was pieced together by Lennon & McCartney in 1967 - an amalgamation of each of their songs 'One of the Beautiful People' (Lennon) and the already named 'Baby You're a Rich Man' (McCartney). Released on the 'Magical Mystery Tour' album (1967), this was a song which caused a great deal of controversy at the time. Whilst Lennon claimed it was a jibe at successful people who did not enjoy their rewards, the media claimed it was a song about the Beatles manager Brian Epstein, who died of an accidental overdose one month following the release of this song. With a personal life of turmoil and constant media speculation over his sexual preferences, it was suggested that John can be heard singing 'Baby

You're a Rich Fag Jew'. However, this particular piece of the song was written by Paul, therefore the suggestions of this nature were most likely untrue. Apparently, the debate continues to this day...

All controversy aside, it cannot be ignored that there is an Eastern quality to this song, which is most likely what attracted Kula Shaker to it in the first place. Previously unreleased, it was used during the 'Pilgrims Progress' promotion campaign as a free download, given in return for filling out a small questionnaire. However, as most fans will admit, although this song has never truly been released, there are very few who do not own it, or at least have not come across this little gem at some point over the past decade. As a rule for me personally, I tend to ignore cover versions of Beatles songs, because I could never fathom why anyone would want to try and improve on perfection. However, even I could not ignore this version of 'Baby You're a Rich Man'. With a plethora of so many Eastern instruments, along with the hypnotic chanting at the beginning, this version not only carries the original charm of the Beatles but also illustrates the affinity that Kula Shaker have when playing together on stage. It is also a song which captures the imagination of the listener, leaving them looking for more. Even as a live recording 'Baby You're a Rich Man' is a perfect demonstration of homage to the Beatles. Sadly it is unfortunate that this song never officially made it onto one of the albums.

These are only a few of the excellent cover versions associated with Kula Shaker. However, due to their choice of unusual homage, they always seem to make a good topic of discussion, and even today there is a thread somewhere on the new forum where eager fans tell each other what songs they would love to hear. I personally think the Small Faces 'Tin Soldier' or the Beatles 'Glass Onion' were tailor made for them, but everyone has a favourite song that they want to hear covered by the band, and with touring season again upon us, who knows what surprises the 'fab four' may just have up their sleeves!

(Many thanks to George for providing a helpful insight for 'Baby You're a Rich Man').

love letters to the band

Being a fan seems to be much more in fashion these days. The soccer world cup is causing a lot of excitement everywhere. It is cool to be a fan and wear shirts, flags and caps. But, if you talk about your favourite band, everyone looks at you as if you must be crazy! Music's just there, and might be fun every once in a while, but how can anyone actually talk about inspiration and love when it comes to music?

For me music has always been a huge part of my life. It cheers me up, it helps me to get through difficult times, it keeps a lot of memories. Most of those memories are related to Kula Shaker's music, because it has accompanied me through the past twelve years and was the most steady part of my life during that time. So many things changed since I first heard "Hey Dude" and "Govinda", but there was one thing that always remained: Kula Shaker's music. When I tell my friends "Can't wait for the new Kula record" I get funny looks as if they wanted to say "When will you actually grow up?" Well, if growing up means to lose one's passion for music, then I'd rather never grow up!

It was '99 when my friend Anna and I decided to go and see Kula Shaker. I did like "K" and, since we were into all kind of "Britpop" bands, it

was a must to see them as well. By that point I had seen many great bands and awesome gigs. But that very concert managed to completely change my mind about bands and music. You could feel the chemistry of the band, it was not just the music, it was the vibe of everything that came across with it. Since then no other band ever managed to move me the way Kula Shaker did. I suppose it's a part of my youth that I've taken with me all the way through.

When it came to the making of fanzine #6 my fellow fanzine-companion Anni and I were thinking about a fan project to remind people of Kula Shaker. Which better way is there than to ask the fans why *they* fell in love with the band? We got an amazing response: Fans from all over the world sent in their stories. Some of them are touching, some of them are funny, but what they all have in common: They're true love letters to a band that really deserves it.

To accompany that, we asked Paul Winterhart to take a look at his own musical past. How did he get into music? What inspired him most and does he have any special memories of encounters with Kula Shaker's fans? Enjoy his thoughts and the following six pages full of love and passion!

Andrea

If there's some thing that binds Lonz, Crispian and I, it was seeing 'The Wall' and 'Tommy' at impressionable ages. I expect they love the Beatles and Stones vehicles too, but for me, the fact that the bands were so big as to get feature films with mad concepts music etc made, was staggering. I think I saw both 'Tommy' and 'The Wall' before I got into music. I was aware of 'The Wall' through a teenage friend. The gatefold sleeve and the single with the kids singing had primed my young mind so that when I saw the film I was sold. In adulthood I often think of the opening sequence when wandering empty hotel corridors and have fond memories of recording Peasants with Bob Ezrin, whom we tapped up for endless Floyd stories. As for fan memories, there are too many from too long ago. A couple of years back, a girl in Japan asked me if we could play Gokula (obviously a Hendrix/Lenny fan). We hadn't played in it in years but I suggested it in sound check and we played it that night. I saw the girl later and she was delighted. Requests by prior arrangement only! As for special a special message to the fans, thank you for your patience. We want to travel and play together again and you make that possible. You will be pleased to hear that now, thanks to my daughters, I have a near wikipedic knowledge of pop: Tynchy, Rhianna, The Justins, Chipmonk and N Dubz blast my walls as much as Lee Dorsey, The Meters and It Bites used to.

Much love, Paul



PHOTO: ANDREA



“Their middle-Eastern influence is stellar and I crave it”

I received my copy of the remastered 'Peasants, Pigs and Astronauts' by Kula Shaker today. I would say this album is one of the most misunderstood and sadly, forgotten albums of the 90s. The reason it has been over-looked has nothing to do with the music - but to do with Crispian Mills being posh and intelligent musician at a time when the music press was obsessed with bands in anoraks and football shirts. If you go to it now, ripped out of context- an artefact- what do you hear? If your ears are open, you'll hear a spectrum of sound, a symphony of psych-rock bejewelled with chants, strange horns, whinnying horses, cannon fire...even bagpipes. They were often derided as an indie-60's retro band - a sort of a patchouli scented Shed Seven, but the sound palette is lush, way beyond the ambition of most of their peers. Sonically it is not as toasted as Primal Scream's 'Vanishing Point' or as symphonically unified as Spiritualized 'Ladies and Gentleman...'; but I could liken it as the mirror image of the mighty 'OK Computer'. Both albums share a mood of pre-millennial oncoming apocalypse. However, where Radiohead resigned themselves to being submerged, Kula Shaker took up arms and fought back against the vengeful gods! In a sense the album is a virtual 20th century chapter from the Mahabharata, where mankind are corrupted by techno-consumerism, and are spectators to an epic final battle between the Enlightened and the Wrathful Divine. Reasons for its failure: Unfortunately, the Class divide mattered. It did not seem to matter that many of the 'Britpop' heroes of the day were basically posh lads slumming it hobo style. However, the fact that Crispian was genuinely upper class, and a part of the Mills acting dynasty was used as a critical weapon against the band from the onset. Most of those critics would probably rate Gram Parsons as a great artist without seeing the contradiction. Unfortunately, Crispian's willingness to discuss the occult in interviews, and allowing that to stray into discussion of ancient symbols may not have been a good idea. However, it should be noted that none of this should have ever had anything to do with their MUSIC, which sounds as vibrant, rich and groovy today as it ever was.

Lucas O'Heyze, Liverpool, UK

Kula shaker is one of the most greatest band in the world. Their groove always takes me higher. Anytime! Especially, when Crispian shakes his blond hair and guitar, I catch the sun and feel free, love and peace!
Shinya Muraoka, Tokyo, Japan

I have been following Kula Shaker since 'K' was released. I saw a piece on MTV in college and fell in love with them. I have all of the other albums and have listened to them so many times, I can't count. They have accompanied me on many a psychedelic adventure. :) I enjoy British music and it is the majority in my music collection. There is more enlightenment to be found in it. The way Kula Shaker blends that undeniable British rock with their Middle Eastern influence is stellar and I crave it. I look forward to seeing them one day and anxiously await the new album.

Love, love and more love,
Lindsay Michael, USA

Kula Shaker are a great bunch of lads! They created sounds that bring me back the sixties along with the East Indian sitar...dreamy, fuzzy feeling... something that is often tried and unfortunately, not true. Crispian has a wonderfully smooth voice that never distracts from the overall beauty of the song itself. They are a band that must be heard. The 60's were and are still the greatest decade in music, period! Kula Shaker brings one back to the time when music was pure and honest and innocent; back to the birth of rock and roll. This is essential in any form of art...going back to the roots! And Kula Shaker has this to the core! Purity is always strived for but few succeed. Hats off to those of Kula Shaker!

Dan Frostman, Recklinghausen, Germany



Kula Shaker is a Band of links: They link the creative phase of the 1960's with today's popular music. They help to survive the new technologies with their "hand-made" instrumentations in their songs. They also link eastern music to the western world within the messages of the Indian spirits. I remember the first time I listened to "Hush". I thought, that this was remastered, perhaps an unknown early tape and version of this song performed by Deep Purple. It was fresh, well recorded and filled with energy. This record was personally the door-opener to a new world of spirituality differing from George Harrison's "Within You Without You" well-known brand. I can't tell you what my favourite song is, but I think "Peasant" is their "Sgt Pepper" so far. It's very creative and filled with melodies, which seem to be very familiar.

George 62, Germany

"Kula Shaker

own a very special place in my heart"

I love most of K.S. songs, but 'Hush' & 'Drink tea' give the real positive vibrations and sounds in the air - then drinking tea makes sense... Patrycja, Poland

My history with KS began in 1996 with Tattva. I had just bought a Sitar myself and had brisk interest in Indian music. While many bands have used a fashionable Sitar, Tamboura or Swarmandal, KS's approach seemed true. The Indian part was really a part of their music, not just added for some exotic flavour. The music was and is mysterious and inviting. As a music listener, I have a very strict "NO BULLSH*T"- policy. I don't listen to albums that contain fillers. 'K' and 'Peasants, Pigs & Astronauts' are still on heavy rotation today, simply because the music has a very high quality and carries a message that I love to hear, and which I also try to spread through my own music. In short: They have some kind of magic. Kula Shaker also does what I really love about bands: They can go through extremes without losing themselves. A feat that very few bands manage to master. Introspective songs like "I'm still here" are as much part of the KS-cosmos as grooving rockers like "Hush", "Hey Dude" or "Grateful, when you're dead". As a musician and songwriter, KS inspired me to also write about out of the ordinary topics, to include spiritual experience AND simple love songs. KS have to share this credit with the Smashing Pumpkins; however KS always had a true message, a code that they've stuck to, while the Pumpkins eventually lost their character. KS also inspired me to spread a positive message in the face of loss and failure. I'm an agnostic and don't believe in Alien Identities, but I know that life is divine and that we are all fragments of the same golden ray of light, lovers of the same love. A love that KS have encouraged me to show in my own music. "And I'm sure I heard them singing, when my head was broken up..." KS often saved the day for me. Frank, the SpiritSpiderS, Germany

I will start saying I love music, I can't imagine my life without it and I can't spend a day without listening to music, but even though I like very different music genres, Kula Shaker own a special place in my heart. I still remember very well the first time I heard Kula Shaker "Tattva": it was 1996 and I was reading something for the school while the TV was tuned on MTV (it was certainly something very boring if I kept the TV on...).

An exotic song started to play and caught my attention, in a couple of minute I fell in love....it was really love at first listen! (And goodbye homework!!!) The following days and months I was eager to learn more about this brand new band, but it seemed that nobody knew them and I wasn't able to find their album anywhere. I remember searching news about them in music magazines, but the few articles I found were always too short! When I at last found "K" I played it for days and days, it was the first album I bought of which I liked all the songs. It was the same for "Peasants, Pigs and Astronauts". I could listen to them for hours and never get annoyed (I suppose my parents and neighbours wouldn't agree). Then "Strangefolk" arrived and it was like when you come home after a long time away... their music is special, not following "fashion" or whatever other bands do. I bet they could make lots of cds full of songs similar to the previous ones, but they chose to change, to evolve and that's why I like them after all these years. They changed, as I changed. Now I wait for the new album, and for their gig, even though I love them so much, I've never been lucky enough to see them live (it seems I am under a spell that send me away when they're in Italy)...so I hope this year it will be the right year to finally enjoy their gig! Keep on like this!! Angie, Italy

Kula Shaker jaya jaya...

Govinda is unbelievable song, they can combine two very different cultures, and it's a most beautiful song. Keep working and making the great songs for the world. Mac Gerrard, Indonesia



“Our daughter came to the world to the sound of 303”

I saw you guys in 1996, at Mississippi Night's in St. Louis MO. And it is one of my all time favourite shows that I have seen. However, I thought you'd like to know that if we fast forward to Feb. 10th of 2000, my wife was in this fairly small hospital in Breese IL. delivering our daughter. (We live in Greenville IL. to be exact) They had a little boom box in the delivery room so you could play music for your child to be born to. Well, my daughter Anastasia Winter came into the world to the "K" record - the song "303" to be exact. Seemed like a good way to bring her into the world. For us – it was a wonderful soundtrack to a wonderful day. She is now 10 and sings like an angel and is a fan of yours. Thanks for being a part of our family memories.

P.S. When our son Dylan was 4 (He will be 16 this month) he was just crazy in love with "Govinda". When I think of his tiny voice belting out that song back then I can't help but smile. He even had a Dr. Seuss book called "My Book about me". Under "favourite song" it says "Govinda". What can I say? We passed along our good taste to them.

Thanks again guys and cheers!

Ian Baird (Spring Clock Wonder) GREENVILLE, IL, USA

I just wish many more people would notice the talent and the genius that is Kula Shaker.

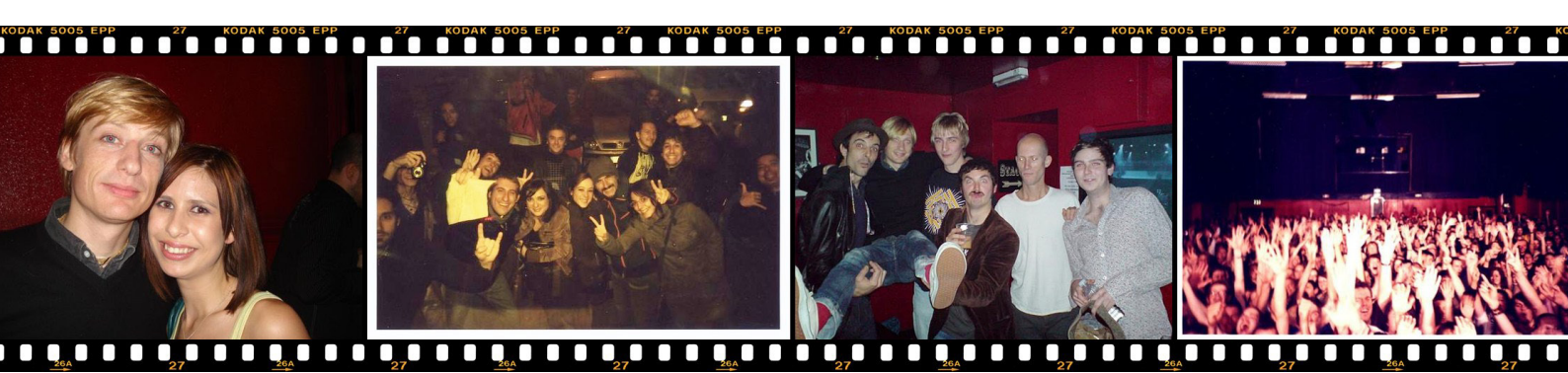
I was born in '92, which was a hindrance looking back now. The music back in the 90's was phenomenal (cut out the Spice Girls obviously) and I wish I could've been more involved with it. An early memory however, was my Dad's obsession with Kula Shaker, and their album 'K'. Such an obsession, that he played it every day in our household. Pretty soon, I, at the age of 4 or 5, would be singing the spiritual psalms of 'Tattva' without any knowledge of what the song meant. Two years ago now, I managed to find out about 'Strange folk' through a friend, and after listening, it was a breath of fresh air. 'Fool That I Am' and 'Out on the Highway' really did it for me, and I suddenly fell in love with their music yet again. After all the commercial furore over the past few years with the X Factor and Pop Idol, music in my eyes was essentially being killed off. But whenever I put my personal copy of 'K' on, or 'Peasants, Pigs and Astronauts' (which in my opinion is massively underrated), I'd slip off into a realm where anything's possible, where music isn't just for Top 10 hits, but where it has a meaning, purpose and a message. Kula Shaker are a pure gem. 'Hey Dude' is my college anthem this year and for this summer, for some reason at the back of my mind when anticipating this summer term break, that song springs instantly into mind. I am eagerly anticipating Kula's 4th album; 'Pilgrims Progress' and I can tell straight away that it's going to be brilliant in my book. People need to get real and notice this band, because they are just truly amazing.

Jay Bowler, Derby, UK

My first experience with Kula Shaker was when I heard the song 'Tattva' on mainstream radio. I was given the 'K' CD as a present that year, and have since found the song 'Govinda' to be of enormous spiritual comfort. I bought the subsequent 'Peasants, Pigs & Astronauts' and 'StrangeFolk' albums on first release, and they have become part of my life. I even downloaded iTunes especially so I could download the 'Revenge of the King' EP that signalled their reformation! (Now I also own that EP on 10 inch vinyl!) Hey, even the freebie downloads like 'Drink Tea (For the Love of God)' put a smile on the face!

I think one of the most overlooked things about KS is that they are superb musicians. The arrangements are absolutely delicious, from the starkness of 'I'm Still Here' to the soaring delights of 'Namami Nanda'. 'Govinda' has some gorgeous xylophone (or other pitched percussion) riffs and the vocal arrangement on 'Song of Love' is stupendously gorgeous to behold. The recordings are well mastered too - punchy and vibrant without venturing into loudness war territory. (Can we have a similarly high quality remaster of 'K' now please?) I have very high hopes for the new album.

Mark Pearce, East Sussex, UK



Tattva got my attention, Hollow Man kept it... Blasting out 303, whilst doing 100 on the 303? Magical!! Then came PP&A, which is still one of the best albums ever made... oh the irony! Since then the Thin Man cover and Narayana have been keeping company ever since... Hell I even called my own band Kill Kasper, thing about K's maybe??? Get back to the Wedgwood Rooms you beautiful strange folk, give us main support and I'll remind the world alright... ;) Kolonel Jamie Kasper, Portsmouth, UK

“Perfection from the first note to the last”

I heard Hey Dude on the radio and liked the sound of the band, bought K, it didn't immediately click with me, but eventually after a couple of listens with headphones I was hooked. I started reading reports that they were working with Bob Ezrin on the follow up, and Ezrin has always been one of my favorite producers so I looked forward to the second album with great anticipation.

It took forever to come out, but when it finally did, it met all of my expectations and way beyond. Over time and many many listens it became my favorite album of all time, and remains so to this day. Perfection from the first note to the last.

Recently I did a radio interview with my band and the DJ asked if I could play one song on the radio, what would it be, and I chose Great Hosannah, as it pretty much says it all. Saw the band live in 1999 in support of PP&A in America at a small club, and it was easily one of the greatest shows I've ever seen. (and I've seen hundreds of shows)... Loved Strange folk, can't wait to hear Pilgrims Progress, and I'm so happy that there are so many cool things coming out for the Kula Shaker enthusiast, the 10th anniversary edition of PP&A was awesome, and I look forward to the super deluxe edition of Pilgrims....

Andy Samford
Atlanta, GA, USA

I was too young to know Kula Shaker back in their heyday. My uncle introduced me to them via a David Bowie tape that he'd recorded. There was an untitled track at the beginning, which I now know to be Tattva, but back then, with no title or artist, and not being particularly arsed about those things, I just took it to be a David Bowie song (which, if you listen to it as such, is not too incredible). It was only when my uncle gave me a spare copy of an old Hey Dude single that, with the Scott Mills-intro b-side, I realised Tattva was a Kula Shaker song.

My first Kula Shaker CD was Kollected. When the sweeping and crashing guitars of Jerry Was There prickled the hairs on the back of my neck, then I knew that Kula Shaker was my favourite band.

Esmo, Cheshire, UK

I first heard Grateful When Your Dead on MTV in early '96 and was blown away as it was a riff based rocker - not a chord basher like a lot of the guitar playing at the time! I bought the cd single for 99p in Glasgow's Virgin Mega store (the Union St branch - Glasgow used to have two) but at this point nobody knew who Kula Shaker were, the song only reached 30 something in the chart. I was a big fan of Deep Purple and immediately noticed the influence in KS - the black strat with 70s headstock, the Hammond organ, vintage marshalls, Jay with a goatee a la Jon Lord '71! It was great being in the know about an influence on a current band that my mates didn't know anything about!

As the summer of '96 rolled in Tattva, Govinda and eventually K came out and I've got amazing memories of that summer - the weather was great (as it always is in retrospect), I was skint but always seemed to be busy or out with mates at the weekend. I always regret never seeing them live back then, but I've made up for it since the reunion. One of the great bands of my youth - right between that age of being allowed into a pub but still not having the ties and responsibilities of a fully mature adult. Great days!

Ricky, Kilmarnock, Scotland

I have no story, i just remember that i was in the Military, and one day i just opened the file in the Computer of the military. Guess what i've found! a file clip of "Peasants Pigs and Astronauts" (ha~i know that was wrong, but it did open the door to Kula shaker for me:)).

Till now, i still love it so much!!!!

Hsiu Wie Hu, Taiwan



I loved mystical machine gun immediately. it was just like a thrill right through my mind. then i adored Govinda, from Summer sun ep: one of the best songs i've ever listened to... I've always loved India... Kula Shaker let me discover things i didn't know about one of my favourit country...

Peasants, pigs and astronauts was the door between me and my dreams... and... when I heard Fool that I am and Hurricane season I decided to engrave KS on my heart! Irene Lo Bue, Italy

Actually, when "K" came out in 1996, I didn't fall in love with the band. I just thought it's not bad. Then at one point, I was looking for some songs which I feel I want to try to play on the guitar, and one of the songs I had chosen was "Hey Dude". I wanted to see how the guitarist played it, and I watched a video of Glastonbury Festival 1997. It was the first time I saw their live performance, and it made me fall in love with the band! I thought Kula Shaker was a live band, they're much better at lives than CDs. If you want to complain something about their songs, you should give your opinion after seeing their gig(s)! Mizuho, Japan

"Super space psychedelic wonder tunes"

My first Kula experience is Pesants Pigs & Astronauts when I was junior high school student. I was just boy that didn't listen to music. But I loved fashion. Then, I found a fashion magazine with jacket of Crispian. In the Magazine, there were Kula Shaker article, photo and interview. I was interested in the band with strange name. So I bought their CD for the first time. In the Beginning, very long and fantastic Intro of Great Hosannah made me excited. In the next, Crispian was singing "if you stand here together..." I was knocked down. Well, not only Great Hosannah. Mystical Machine Gun's PV was cool, S.O.S. and 108 Battles were very rock! Shower Your Love was lovely. This album was perfect. 10 years after... Kula Shaker add Strangefolk to Pesants Pigs & Astronauts. Beyond description! I'm looking forward to Pilgrim's Progress too. Michael, Japan

Like Crispian and Alonza I am an Eighties child, grown up with the Super Rock acts of the decade. I loved Simple Minds, Dire Straits, Bruce Springsteen, Tom Petty. What I really can't remember is which sounds I actually listened to in the Nineties. I remember, suddenly, I was fascinated by a certain Bittersweet Symphony seemin' to come out of nowhere... But then there was a - how I call it - revelation that instantly turned my mind around and upside down. That revelation was named "Tattva". Never before I heard such a strange strange song. It totally captivated me with its mystical lyrics and that colourful exotic indian traditional musical style. It kind of streamed through my body and revitalized my sleeping senses. I had to know who that band was, that played there... But I was deviated in the next few years from whatever, I don't know anymore. So, I actually discovered the unique Kula Shaker in 2000 when I was enchanted and overwhelmed from one second to another by Shower Your Love. Finally I had to get Peasants Pigs & Astronauts. From that point on I became an admirer of those fantastic, exotic compositions, extravagant arrangements and indian super space psychedelic lyrical wonder tunes, sung by the distinctive, stunning voice of Crispian Mills. It was in fact the same affection that worked on me as when first listening to Tattva, only much stronger, for I had an album now! There were songs like century essays of the 'civilized' world, containing that strong human statement of responsibility and consciousness, brought to the point in a way one simply could not elude. Great Hosannah, Mystical Machine Gun, Time Worm are so powerful, convincing and incomparably beautiful as well, that they have their place in Rock history for ever, in my opinion. So long we had to wait for that pure inspiration and filigree masterpiece of Strangefolk, but the Peasants' songs have remained a treasure chest for permanent discovery till today. Nevertheless, I'm truly in love with Strangefolk for three years now. I adore those glistening pearls like Hurricane Season and the shiny psychedelic diamond Dr. Kitt that I just can't resist and I get thrilled each time I listen to this album of the Shakers. Kula's unparalleled quality lies in their amazing instinct to turn bold musical romantic sound phantasies into reality with unbelievable accurateness and so much love for every single detail - that's how I feel about the songs by constantly repeated listening. I had the great fortune to see Crispian and the guys in Berlin, 2007. It was Alonza's birthday and it was a celebration of Kula Shaker music anyway. Their live competence confirmed my position of their ultra professional high quality performance on stage as well. I only can tell, I went crazy. I remember that high flying.. trippin'.. manic.. Govinda, such a charismatic performance by Crispian... and Harry's magical organ on Hurricane and Die For Love, the power festival of the smashers Hey Dude and Hush... and so on.. An unforgettable, incredible show in my life. And I hope for more experience soon!! Kula Shaker - You're seductive, mind-blowing, unequalled! - A true phenomenon. I don't know any comparison in today's music world. Marina, Berlin



“Getting into the full teengirl freak-out mode”

... What made you get into Kula Shaker in the first place?

The first time I listened KS song was on the radio. Maybe that was Hush or Hey Dude. I've memorized only the band name, so when I went to HMV, I bought their CD. But It was when PPA was released so I bought PPA. Too young(?) to understand PPA, I only listened once... After a few years, I was really into Kula when I got K. lol But now, my most favorite song is Great Hosannah :)

... which was your most remarkable experience with Kula Shaker/a Kula Shaker song?

First? or second? reunion tour in Manchester and Nottingham. Those were my first 'LIVE Kula Shaker'! I really excited.

...in which way did Kula Shaker inspire you?

To learn more English!!
Mayuko, Japan

Because Kula Shaker are never played on the radio or TV in Australia I was unlucky in that I didn't learn of their existence until just after their split in 1999. As previously mentioned on the old forum, I came down with a virus that winter which affected my hearing to the extent that I had to stop listening to music because it sounded so awful. While this was going on my husband bought a cd burner and proceeded to trade cd collections with one of his mates. If he liked what he heard he'd then go out and buy it, if he didn't he would toss it in the bin.

Once recovered I decided to see what I had been missing and the first cd on the shelf was K. I looked at the cover and remember thinking how interesting it was. I put it in the player and went to walk from my lounge room to the kitchen next door to make a cup of tea. Hey Dude stopped me mid stride. I forgot the tea and listened to the whole album. Govinda brought tears to my eyes even though I hadn't a clue what the lyrics were about.

It had been a long time since any other band/artist had moved me that way - and probably none so dramatically. I went online and purchased my own copy of K followed by PPA, Summer Sun, Kollected and then all the singles and then vinyl copies of the first two albums! Gasps! I then bought the Jeevas stuff when I discovered where Crispian had disappeared to, The Healers CD, the Braja cd and so on to date. In between all of that I found you fellow fans/obsessives/mad/ wonderful like minded people and - here I am.

Hillingdon (Christine Edwards-Brown)
from Adelaide, South Australia

We were 16 when my friend bought K. She came over to my house with the new CD, bouncing with excitement. I was supposedly reserving my judgement until I would hear at least a few songs, but it only took the first bars of Hey Dude to convince me that Kula Shaker was the Best Thing Everrr! By the time we got to Temple of Everlasting Light we were in full teengirl freak-out mode, squealing and jumping up and down, and Govinda pretty much blew our minds, though we didn't understand a word of the lyrics.

That was the only time I've sat down to listen to a new album and immediately loved every song - that is, until I heard Peasants, Pigs and Astronauts just now, when it was re-released. I can't put my finger on any specific thing that made me go crazy for these two albums but it's probably the guitars and the sitars, the old school organ sound, the cocky rock'n'roll attitude, the sound of drums (and other percussion instruments), Crispian's versatile and expressive vocals, and last but definitely not the least, the Hindu gospel delivered with winsome joy and sincerity.

The third album, Strangefolk is somewhat different from the two earlier ones. The overall effect is that the loud Indian flavoured rock has been downplayed in favour of a more mellow folk sound. Some of the new material took some getting used to, so the album as a whole didn't quite hit the same nerve as its predecessors. But dreamy, hypnotic songs like Second Sight, Hurricane Season, Ol' Jack Tar and Dr. Kitt mesmerised me, and soon became new favourites.

One song in particular on the third album is strikingly different from the old Kula sound. Great Dictator (of the Free World) is a song that delights with its withering sarcasm rather than its beauty. It introduces two new elements into the band's repertoire, straightforward political commentary and humour.

The first single, Peter Pan R.I.P, from the much anticipated fourth album, is a melancholy song that shows Kula Shaker is continuing on the course it embarked on with Strangefolk. The band is maturing, increasing its scope, conquering new musical, emotional and intellectual grounds. That's the way it should be, rather than sticking to the tried and true. Bring on Pilgrim's Progress!

Laura, Tampere, Finland



Crispian Mills
By Peter Bexis
2010