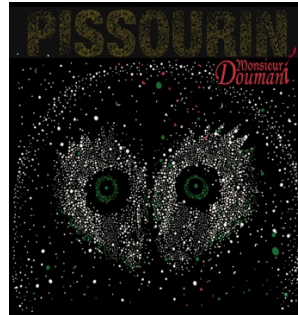




Vibrant Global Sounds



Monsieur Doumani - Pissourin

Release date: September 10th, 2021

GBCD/LP 114 EAN: 4030433611425 & 4030433611418

Album stream: <https://bit.ly/3eIbHrm>

This much acclaimed Cyprus-based trio return with a thrilling fourth album. The record pushes their trademark Mediterranean sonics into a deep psychedelic and avant-folk direction. A danceable fever storm of stringed instruments, multi-layered singing and trombone-driven low end.

Night is when strange things happen. When shapes shift and blur. When it's hard to know what's real and what's illusion. Night...is the time of the imagination. For Cyprus's Monsieur Doumani, those hours of blackness have lured them in a very different direction for their fourth album, *Pissourin*.

Since their beginning in 2011, the trio have been globally-lauded for their innovative, highly-charged acoustic reinventions of the Cypriot tradition. They have won numerous awards, ranging from *Songlines* "Best Group" (UK/2019) to the *Preis der Deutschen Schallplattenkritik* (Germany/2018) and the *Andrea Parodi Critics Award* (Italy/2018). Yet after three albums they'd grown restless, searching for something new. A challenge, a fresh resonance that illustrated the people they'd become.

Something unexpected.

The timing was certainly right. After eight years, founding member Angelos Ionas had decided to leave the band. To replace him, Andys Skordis, who was already a touring guitarist with the group, joined full-time and began to contribute his own ideas.

They were ready to embark on a very different journey.

"Our idea was a concept, an album that was a portrait of the night,"/ says band leader and founding member Antonis Antoniou, who plays the bouzouki-like *tzouras*, and along with trombonist Demetris Yiasemides makes up the trio. "Something that began in the place between sleep and dream and waking. It gave us the concept, a quest through the night for the meaning of life, to feel things we did when we were kids: innocent, true, honest. A chance to leave behind what keeps our mind and soul down and to be able to fly towards freedom and love." The *pissourin* (Cypriot dialect for total darkness) "brought us the different elements – the moon, stars, planets, rivers - and the creatures that appear in the songs are actors in this quest."

It was an idea that stretched Monsieur Doumani past the Cypriot tradition they'd been exploring. It gave them the freedom to draw inspiration from far beyond Cyprus while staying connected to their roots: adding the punch and raw power of rock, the wild colours of Turkish psychedelia, even the hypnotic draw of West African music, which weaves its cord around the melody on "Alavrostishiótis."

Even the way Antoniou composed for this album was different.

"In the past I was always searching for a magic melody," he explains. "But this time, the main elements were the interplay and what we were saying with the song. We developed a distinctive approach, which was unlike anything we'd done before."

A new concept, a fresh way of writing, they were changing everything. Even the way they made the music. Monsieur Doumani went electric.

"We already knew we wanted to explore sonic territories and we spent a lot of time experimenting to make the instrumental textures intertwine in a very dynamic way," Antoniou says. "Some surreal. Some psychedelic."

Technology offered the band a vastly broader palette of sound. Pedals also allowed them to think of their instruments in ways that simply hadn't been possible before. They began using the guitar as more than a rhythm or harmonic instrument, letting it provide basslines and work with the trombone. The looper allowed them to make it into a drum.

Suddenly Monsieur Doumani had a huge sound. It's startling, a real electric shock. This music they make on *Pissourin* is overwhelming, a tsunami that surges relentlessly from the very first note of the opening track, "Tiritíchtas."

"With only three instruments, people don't expect that kind of thing," Antoniou admits. "How did this happen? It's dense. Sometimes it surprises me, too."

Much of the secret, he notes, lay in the preparation. The band's new sound was complex, built from interlocking layers and instrumental filigree. To have the attack the music needed, everything had to be careful and precise.

"We all worked together on the arrangements. You need a powerful melody for a good song, but without the right structure and arrangement, it's boring. We wanted to make sure each song was spicy, that it had something to excite both us and audiences. That took time, and plenty of thought and experimentation."

That thought extended to the lyrics. *Pissourin* isn't just the darkness, but the creatures who inhabit it: Those who find their freedom in the night and the madness it can hold. Beings like the hobgoblins, the "Kalikándjari," and their hypnotic dance that grows in intensity as it progresses.

"The words for the song were written by Marios Epaminondas," Antoniou says. "They came out of a night we'd been together, drinking. I told him that only our craziness will save us, that you have to be crazy in a good way in this life. He made it into a poem and I wrote the tune. I think it's the most revolutionary song here, a way of saying we'll provoke the system by refusing to be normal."

The madmen, the dreamers who inhabit the blackness; for Monsieur Doumani, they share the darkness with the fey, the stars in the sky, and, looking over it all, the owl – *koukkoufkiádos* – flying above, watching.

“It’s a creature that’s awake all night,” Antoniou says. “More than that, it’s a symbol of knowledge. The wise owl.” You can hear the stirrings of such creatures on *Pissourin*. A boldly electric and eclectic music that comes to life in the depths of night.