

Euros Childs

The Miracle Inn

Wichita Recordings

October 23, 2007

Euros Childs is a mercurial talent. Having barely turned 30, he released his first album as a founding member of **Gorky's Zygotic Mynci** in 1993 and ten years later, released his first solo record. Now, he is about to release his third solo album. That's a mere three albums in two years, each one different in character, as well an expected and unexpected delight. First up was last year's delightfully dilettante *Chops*; then, earlier this spring, the Welsh language pop album *Bore Da*; and now, *The Miracle Inn*. Euros is certainly showing no signs of slowing down: "I thought by now I'd have started running out of ideas but it's the opposite. You can get stuck into a way of thinking that you only record once a year...now, having recorded two, I want to get into the studio again and record a fourth one by Christmas."

Drawing from a familiar pool of Welsh-based musicians, *The Miracle Inn* was recorded in January and February this year at Bryn Derwen Studios in Bethesda, North Wales with **David Wrench** co-producing and featuring **Peter Richardson** on drums, **Meilyr Jones** on bass and **Alun Tan Lan** on guitar, all of whom played on *Bore Da*. Euros' old classmate and former-Gorky's cohort, **Richard James**, adds acoustic and electric guitar this time around.

There is a school of thought that Euros has been wantonly cavalier since Gorky's split up by completely changing stylistic direction just as their predominant melancholic folk style was coming into vogue. One noted critic has already observed, in praise of *The Miracle Inn* that, at last, Euros has "stopped mucking about and gone back to the frail elegant folk that he specialised in" It's missing the point about what motivates Euros, always unassuming but determinedly single minded and, infuriatingly for some, always going his own way whether it's heartfelt ballads, catchy Welsh language pop, Glam jazz or cheesy DIY disco. Euros is quick, not to defend his approach, but to explain: "With Gorky's, we did what we wanted to do but it was the right time to change. It would have been too easy to follow the direction we were going in but I wanted to return to something more pop again. *Chops* was more or less just me working out ideas on a four track but I think that was a good thing to do at the time because I didn't feel like getting another band together. I needed a break from that."

Bore Da met with similar misconceptions and the usual puzzlement about Euros recording in his native language of Welsh. It's a familiar gripe where some simply want artists to conform to their idea of the sort of records they should be making: "Some people in England consider *Bore Da*'s not a proper record somehow, because it's sung in Welsh, but it's a very commercial record. I'd say it was the most obviously commercial record I've made but because it's in Welsh that's seen as a contradiction. In Wales, it's done really well and, because it's a pop record, I get a whole new crowd when I play here. It was quite an eye opener because it's a much younger audience who come to the shows now."

Following on from the essentially upbeat *Bore Da*, Euros somewhat reluctantly concedes that *The Miracle Inn* is probably the closest of his solo recordings to the feel of Gorky's later work with its mix of optimistic melodies and those "elegant", languorous, sad songs. The centerpiece is the title track, an engrossing epic 15-minute suite of songs.

"The Miracle Inn" itself is a wonderful, unfolding, remembrance of times past:

"The track took about nine days - not back to back - recorded in sections. When we finally played it back, David Wrench described it as prog music without the prog. I was a bit worried about over reaching on it. There was always going to be a song called 'The Miracle Inn' and it took two years to write, on and off. I started it in January 2004 and finished it around Christmas last year. It was a long time in my head, mulling over which section comes where. I didn't start out to write an epic but I wrote the first part, then I thought it would be great

to have the actual song being played in The Miracle Inn, it evolved from there. The Miracle Inn was a shack by the beach in Freshwater East near where I came from. It had live music a couple of times a week. All the local teenagers would end up there. We never actually played there, but we used to go and see local bands, usually shite heavy metal bands from Pembrokeshire. Prog is a bit of a dirty word but fortunately there is no danger of me becoming muso because I can't play in that virtuoso kind of way like Yes or Focus, those sort of bands. I'd say, despite its length, it's actually a very simple song."

Another stand out on the album is "Outside My Window", an involving, slow-paced litany of observations, including the seemingly pithy: "Write a song, send it off/sign a contract get ripped off." But not every song is written from particular personal experience: "I don't think I've been ripped off - well not properly. It's more that you're aware that other people have been in terrible positions - the idea that you're such a fan of music that you create it and then you get exploited. It hasn't happened to me. I'm not overly bothered about anyone buying my records at the moment. The only ambition I have is to record and put them out, to make sure they exist."

It's always quite astonishing that, whatever Euros is doing in the now, the next record is already marinating in his mind. Nothing's changed: "We already have a few ideas for the next one and the one after that - both very different ideas. I've been recording an EP with **Norman Blake** (from **Teenage Fan Club**) that should be coming out next year... I recently worked with Norman doing some vocals on Kevin Ayers' new album. He knew about Gorky's and that we'd recorded a song called "**Kevin Ayers**" but I don't know if he'd ever really heard us. He's someone who has somehow carried on regardless of success or fashion and you have to admire that." Like **Kevin Ayers**, you instinctively feel that Euros will still be making the records he wants to make after forty years. Just another 26 years to go then.

MICK HOUGHTON

"An experimental, sensual collection of songs harking back to the days of the first Gorky's EPs." – *Mojo*

"... like sunshine, *Bore Da* is full of uncomplicated, underrated pleasures: seaside and sandals, daisy-sweet melodies and Childs' guileless vocals." – *Plan B*

"An album of varied pop beauty, both jubilant and affecting." – *Under The Radar*

"... Childs has ... reconnected with the infectious high spirits that once made that band so enchanting." – *The Sunday Times*

"...Gorky's records have always been lovely, lilting and more than a little mysterious." -- *Rolling Stone*

"...an accomplished 24 minutes that are as wise and adroit as they are delightful." – *Pitchfork Media*

"...one of Wales' most enduring and endearing bands." -- BBC online

"A perfectly poised, richly textured set of light-footed psychedelic pop." – *Q Magazine*



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