



JESSICA LINKER
DIR 773 784 4335
JESSICA@PITCHPERFECTPR.COM

4865 N WASHTENAW AVE #3
CHICAGO, IL 60625-2824
WWW.PITCHPERFECTPR.COM

SOULSAVERS *Broken*

(out digitally on Columbia Records, physical release date will be announced shortly)

SOULSAVERS return in August 2009 with *Broken*, their sublime new album featuring **Mark Lanegan**, **Jason Pierce**, **Richard Hawley**, **Mike Patton** and more....

In 2007, when Soulsavers released their second opus *It's Not How Far You Fall, It's How You Land*, the collective's leader **Rich Machin** explained what lay behind it. "I didn't want to be in an electronic band. Or a rock'n'roll band. I wanted the freedom to explore."

Today, he reaffirms that position. "I love all kinds of music, which allows me to open all these doors. There's nothing better than bringing in great people who inspire, to keep you on top of your game, and to keep things fresh and never boring. That's the nature of what we've set up here."

Soulsavers had begun as more of an electronic affair, with Machin partnering studio engineer Ian Glover for the 2003 debut *Tough Guys Don't Dance*. Josh Haden of slow-core moodists Spain (the band, not the country), added three vocals, but the following *It's Not How Far You Fall...* set a new benchmark, threading soul, gospel, rock, jazz, country into the mix and a matching spread of singers. Principally, though, out front was the indefatigable **Mark Lanegan**, former Screaming Tree whose profound, growling croon was the perfect match for Soulsavers' broader, richer vein of sepulchral Cinerama.

Besides Lanegan's eight vocals, there were telling contributions from The London Community Gospel Choir, Will Oldham and Doves' Jimi Goodwin; voices to throw light and shade on Machin's expansive music and to contrast Lanegan's tobacco-tarred laments.

The album went down an absolute storm: "An album of such devotional beauty that even on first listen it creates an abundantly transcendent experience," went one review. "One listen to their spine-tingling second effort will have you ready to up sticks and follow them to the ends of the earth," read another.

Now you must be prepared to follow Soulsavers even further, for *Broken* is even better, a future classic that delivers 14 tracks of wide-ranging majesty. The main difference this time, says Rich, is the influence of Soulsavers' stage incarnation. "Touring has definitely brought the guitars to the front of *Broken* and it's got a more soulful twist too. And though it's clearly has some very dark overtones, I don't think it's quite as dark as the last."

True, though Lanegan – who reigns over ten tracks here – still sounds like the weight of the world sits on his shoulders. But the story this time begins with another voice. "Sunrise," which is being released exclusively as a 7" single (and download) before *Broken*, is a west coast-drenched, lone-plains-drifter lament sung by **Will Oldham**, with Lanegan supplying lyrics and music. Returning the favour, Lanegan takes on Oldham's "You Will Miss Me When I Burn"; it's the B-side to "Sunrise" and an album cut.

Like its predecessor, *Broken* was recorded in Los Angeles, in the wee small hours. It took about a year to finish, Rich and Mark bouncing ideas off each other, and back and forth between LA and Rich's base in the north of England, until it was time to sign off on the record. Not that Rich interfered with the wordsmith. "Mark's lyrics are so good, you don't want to wade in there and ask for changes," he says. Regarding any lyrical theme, Rich recently told one journalist, "it started as a concept record, but we forgot what the concept we started with was," though he now admits it was a flippant comment, and there was never such a thing. "Mark and I have never got into any kind of conversation about lyrics. His lyrics speak for themselves, and anyway, one thing he's never going to do is shed some light on anything!"

Perhaps *Broken* is a little lighter than the last because of its circumstances. *It's Not How Far You Fall...* was funded off Rich's credit cards, without a record deal in place. "During the mix, you realize what a dumb thing you might have done, so it became quite stressful," he recalls. "It was a huge undertaking. But V2 came in and bailed us out." Now Soulsavers have a true foundation, from V2 to loyal press and fans alike.

Not only do Soulsavers have a full support network, but they can count on fans who themselves pursue dark-eyed rock hues. One such fan is Spiritualized's **Jason Pierce**, who duets with Lanegan on "Pharaoh's Chariot," a song that came about after both bands toured together in 2008. That most left-field of mainstream rollers, **Mike Patton** duets with Mark on "Unbalanced Pieces," *Broken's* most electronic-enhanced cut, while **Richard Hawley** adds shadowy backing vocals to "Shadows Fall," and finally **Gibby Haynes** of **Butthole Surfers** infamy appears alongside Lanegan on "Death Bells". In the studio the band added **Martyn LeNoble** (Porno For Pyros + Jane's Addiction) on bass duties.

Broken also introduces a new voice, **Red Ghost** (aka **Rosa Agostino**). Her suitably dark, sultry tones unfurl across three standout tracks – the stately "By My Side," the glowering "Praying Ground" and the sensual, jazz-blues of "Rolling Skies," on which she trades verses with Mark over a steamy, New Orleans-tinted groove. "This young Australian girl from Sydney kept on sending me demos," Rich recalls, "and she was better than most everything else we'd heard. We traded ideas, and it really gelled."



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All the other amazing collaborations notwithstanding, Mark Lanegan remains at the album's core, for which Rich is eternally grateful. "When you hear him throw a vocal down, it's incredibly inspiring and pushes you to raise your game even further. He really brings out the best in you." Rich, for his part, sounds at the top of his game too. "Shadows Fall," "Pharaoh's Chariot," and "All The Way Down," have a rich, gospel undertow. "Death Bells" malevolently rocks the hardest, while "You Will Miss Me When I Burn," "Highway Kind," and "Can't Catch The Train" showcases Soulsavers' becalmed, solitary side. And then there is the album's stunning, eight-minute version of "Some Misunderstanding," written by original Byrd and fallen angel Gene Clark for his epochal 1974 album *No Other*, which Lanegan sings with bruising conviction - and don't forget the superlative guitar coda, which Neil Young would surely have been proud of nailing. "I grew up listening to lots of that music," says Rich. "I was always a big Neil Young fan, for example. It's pretty inspiring to get up into Laurel Canyon and around those parts, particularly when you're making a record yourself."

Finally, Rich contributes two instrumentals, which bare his soundtrack soul. Soulsavers songs have unsurprisingly been used for US TV dramas, from "Grey's Anatomy," "Friday Night Lights," & "CSI: NY", through to HBO's new smash hit, "In Treatment," but Rich - a huge film buff - has his eyes on the bigger screen. Brilliant "auditions" both, "The Seventh Proof" and "Wise Blood" are gloriously moody in the Morricone/Nicolai (both formative influences of Rich's) Italian school of killer orchestrations. To help him, he called on a contemporary Italian arranger **Daniele Luppi**: "He brought alive our ideas, which has pushed me harder to try and work a lot more in that film world."

What of the future? Rich is committed to keeping things fresh, "but Mark and I have got this thing, and we'll always work together one way or another." It seems that, for the time being, they've saved each other souls, and now they're out to save yours...

Soulsavers' Tour Dates:

- Sun. Sep. 6 Portland, OR @ Wonder Ballroom
- Mon. Sep. 7 Tacoma, WA @ Bumbershoot
- Wed. Sep. 9 San Francisco, CA @ The Independent
- Thu. Sep. 10 Los Angeles, CA @ Troubadour
- Sat. Sep. 12 San Diego, CA @ The Casbah
- Tue. Sep. 15 Austin, TX @ Stubb's
- Wed. Sep. 16 Dallas, TX @ House of Blues Dallas
- Fri. Sep. 18 New Orleans, LA @ One Eyed Jacks
- Sat. Sep. 19 Atlanta, GA @ The Loft
- Mon. Sep. 21 Washington, DC @ Rock and Roll Hotel
- Tue. Sep. 22 New York, NY @ Bowery Ballroom
- Wed. Sep. 23 Boston, MA @ Paradise Rock Club
- Fri. Sep. 25 Toronto, ON @ Mod Club
- Sat. Sep. 26 Cleveland, OH @ Grog Shop
- Sun. Sep. 27 Chicago, IL @ Double Door

"The symbiotic union of Mark Lanegan and the UK production duo Soulsavers is fast becoming one of the most creatively fertile partnerships of the decade... pure gold." -- **The Times - 5 Stars**

"Their imposing third album substantially increases the scale of their heavily orchestrated, Ennio Morricone-influenced rock and soul... This is gloom worth wallowing in" -- **The Observer - CD Of The Week**

"epic, wide-screen, evocative... Mark Lanegan is in sonorous, imperious voice" -- **MOJO - 4 Stars**

"Mark Lanegan reprises his role as a latter day Johnny Cash, while fellow alt-rock alumni Jason Pierce, Mike Patton and Richard Hawley make fleeting cameos. The result could be the soundtrack to the greatest spaghetti western never made." -- **Q - 4 Stars**

"a tumultuous amalgamation of zoned-out jazz lines, wistful soul vocals, moody strings, dreamlike electronic sequences and compact rock... A veritable Dante's INFERNO of an album" -- **NME - 8/10**

"Mark Lanegan distinguishes Machin and Glover's concept project for a second time... Nobody does the dark stuff better." -- **The Independent - 4 Stars**

"Heartfelt and profound... A classy album of gospel-infused, effects-laden rock that is, by turns, brooding and uplifting" -- **The Sun - 4 Stars**

For more information contact Jessica Linker at Pitch Perfect PR - jessica@pitchperfectpr.com, 773-784-4335, www.pitchperfectpr.com, www.myspace.com/soulsavers.