



starless & bible black

everyday and every night . time is for leaving . siene . tredog . the birley tree . hermione . b.b. . alight . untitled cartiga . the bitter cup . 016-013

Starless & Bible Black make beautiful spirited & catchy songs in the grand tradition of classic British folk rockers Pentangle and John & Beverly Martyn straight on up through the halcyon days of early 4AD records. On their debut self titled outing, the diverse Manchester 3 piece brings to bear much of the lively attitude, passion and rain, rain, rain of the old textile city they've all come to call home for the last several years. The result is a great collection of 11 songs-at once earthen and elevated – that are given added mood & flavor by the charcoal vocals of French chanteuse **Hélène Gautier**.

Hélène Gautier: singing

Peter Philipson: guitars, chordophones, singing

Raz Ullah: electronics, keys & drones

What's in a name: Starless & Bible Black take their name from british jazz pianist stan tracey's fantastic tune of the same name & culled from the famous Dylan Thomas radio play *Under Milkwood*.

It all started one rainy evening when...

Pete puts forward his idea for a new project with Hélène : finger-picked guitars with spooked female vocals backed by double bass, drums, woodwind and electronic interference- Raz immediately agrees and Starless & Bible Black comes into existence.

Starless & Bible Black make their debut in Manchester in March 2005. At the second gig Raz falls backwards off stage in the middle of a song and wins many new fans.

The other contributing members are the main rhythm men in the Manchester music scene - Paul Blakesley on bass and Brian Edwards on drums - they have perfected their craft playing with the likes of local heroes such as Aidan Smith, John Stammers and Jane Weaver.

Together, all three of the main Starless folks run the Timbreland collective and independent label based in Manchester.

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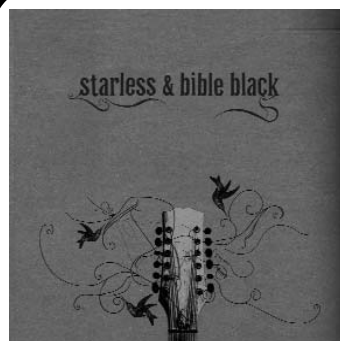
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Starless & Bible Black

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Hélène (pronounced LN) **Gautier** is a French native who emigrated to England from the forests of the Loire Valley in 1998 with two bags, a plastic Norwegian troll and an eclectic musical past.

Her first ever public performance was a Turkish free jazz singing duo in the staircase of a tower block in a French medieval town, the amazing acoustics made up for the lack of a sound system. This was followed by regular appearances as the front woman of a French blues band and a psych-rock collective, all rehearsed in dairy farms and 12th century prison vaults with mischievous gargoyles for an audience.

She revels in a wide variety of musical genres, from Bulgarian choirs and twisted folk to German reggae and torch song, and thrives in the British clubbing and record collecting culture. A chance encounter with Peter after moving to England marked the beginning of a fruitful musical friendship.



Pete Philipson grew up in the north-west of England. Started playing guitar at 10 and formed his first band when he was 11 - they weren't very good but they were not bad enough to put him off doing it more and more as a teenager in various indie rock bands. This also led to an obsession for anything with strings on and anything with tape on - at 14 he was an "expert" in recording between two cassette decks and overdubbing as many guitars as possible, at 16 he was messing around throwing down demos with 4 track cassette and delay pedals.

A few years later, after moving to Manchester at 18, he spent time playing guitar in all types of different bands experimenting in genres such as prog-goth, punk, electro-folk and country-rock. During this time he gradually became more interested in the record making process as well as playing guitar - post college this led to a life of fewer gigs and more staying up late in dark suburban rooms honing those studio skills - a self-confessed studio head but one who can never quite remember those model numbers.....

His musical tastes have often been at odds with fashion (preferring Van Der Graff Generator to the Hacienda in the early 90's) and he's been known to enthuse about anything from old school experimental electronic

music and glam rock through to scratchy funk and afrobeat, but most of all he likes the sound of acoustic guitars and is especially inspired by guitar based producers.

Peter is an occasional recluse compared with the socialite Helene, but met her through a mutual musician friend at the turn of the century and suggested they made some tunes together. An acoustic guitar, a cassette recording, some Fringlish lyrics and three cups of tea later their songwriting partnership was born.

For a couple of years, Helene and Peter wrote and recorded as a studio project where the songs were based around samples and beats under layers of acoustic guitars and synths - a kind of early folk-tronica but with good songs included. They released a couple of EPs and performed a few live shows with other musicians, but after a couple of years Pete left to work with A Certain Ratio front man Jez Kerr on his funk-noir studio side project, 24 Hours. It was through Jez that Pete met Raz.



Raz Ullah was born in the 70's and remembers being fascinated & terrified at the same time by the sounds of Pink Floyd, Jean Michel Jarre and Doctor Who. Starts making tape loops at the age of ten by breaking open cassettes and splicing together bits of analogue tape, then playing them backwards for hours on end.

Confuses his parents. Buys first guitar at sixteen and sees/hears infinite possibilities. Forms his first band a year later- 'Titanium Expose', due to the limited playing capabilities of the three members, their set consists of Jesus & Mary Chain cover versions with a Casio keyboard keeping the beat.

Moves to Scotland at eighteen to go to university, meets American and Canadian exchange students who introduce him to Neil Young, Dylan, The Band, Easy Rider, Grateful Dead, Harold & Maud, Carlos Castaneda, Kerouac and Tequila. Lots of meandering jams occur. Drops out of university and spends several years playing guitar, keyboards and bass in Spacemen 3-influenced bands. Spare time is spent hill walking, sleeping in caves, staying up all night, lighting fires on beaches, selling his records to buy food & cigarettes, and cycling through forests.

Starts a synth-experimental-metal-drone duo: 'Mungo & Shoddy'; instruments used include broken effects pedals, toy keyboards, mandolins, cheap guitars, electric bass and charity shop records. It sounds incredible. Sells all his possessions and moves to Spain with nothing but a guitar and a four-track recorder.

After lying about his work experience, gets a job as an English teacher. This pays for guitar strings and more toy keyboards. Plays a gig on the roof of a Barcelona flat with his latest band, 'Xuta'. The bass drum is an oil can with a snare skin stretched across it, the rest of the band play through one tiny practice amp. It rocks. Hard. Moves to London and hates it, escapes to the West Country for fresh air, open spaces and sea breezes. Meets many musicians. Lots of meandering jams occur.

Enrols on a music technology course in Manchester, finds himself sitting next to Jez Kerr from A Certain Ratio. Friendships are formed, a laptop is bought, ideas are hatched and '24Hours' becomes a live entity rather than just Jez's studio project. Pete Philipson is the guitarist. The band sound like 'James Brown in a morgue'.