

New Wave under the 2 torri: TEMPLE OF VENUS (Bologna, Teatrino degli Illusi, 4-11-2011)

It is a wet evening, almost hot that welcomes Nicola and myself, despite the calendar, into the depths of the ancient streets of Bologna, silent between walls in red ocher and sepia, and floors of leaden porphyry washed gray, while on the way the trees on avenues release in quantities a carpet of yellow leaves. An atmosphere that maybe Jacques Prévert "Les Feuilles Mortes" envies.



È una serata umida, quasi calda quella che accoglie Nicola e il sottoscritto, a dispetto del calendario, nella Bologna profonda delle vie antiche, silenziosa tra muri oca rossa e seppia, e pavimenti di porfido grigio plumbeo slavato, mentre durante il tragitto gli alberi sui viali rilasciano in quantità un tappeto giallo di foglie. Atmosfera da far invidia al Jacques Prévert de "Les Feuilles Mortes".

In Vicolo Quartirollo, non distante da Palazzo Aldrovandi Montanari, vecchia sede della Biblioteca bolognese e sontuoso palazzo settecentesco di Alfonso Torreggiani, vicino ad un ristorante storico della città e ad un negozio di dischi di fama, in un dedalo di strade e personali memorie, il Teatrino degli Illusi ci accoglie con eleganza, luci soffuse, velluto rosso, un programma variegatissimo dall'impostazione inedita, gentilezza e familiarità.

Va sottolineato il tono assolutamente amichevole dell'accoglienza, dopo esperienze curiose avute altrove, in cui pare, misteriosamente, gli avventori e il pubblico non siano graditi: quelle non sono gestioni "aristocratiche", ma snob, nel senso letterale di "sine nobilitate". Finalmente qui è invece tutta un'altra musica: accoglienza cordiale, nel significato di "col cuore in mano", calda e limpida, tra persone vere e non posers.

La location è a dir poco suggestiva, non esiste nulla dal genere a Bologna (e nemmeno così di frequente altrove, in realtà), e riesce nell'intento di immergere lo spettatore nell'"opera d'arte totale" e in un percorso concettuale. Per la serata in questione il foyer, dalla volumetria retrò dopo un accurato restauro, ospitava una mostra legata all'evento Temple Of Venus, ovvero l'esposizione grafica di Luca Nieddu, che con i suoi cromatismi era già l'immaginario illustratore al lavoro nell'album "Messiah Complex".



La grafica del disco è particolarmente curata, e contemplare i pannelli esposti di persona aggiunge profondità alle invenzioni visive: grafismi in bianco e nero, ombreggiature, blu acido e acrilico, bagliori rossastri, chine, sintagmi spezzettati della civiltà contemporanea, un'interpretazione futuribile del presente, post-tecnologica, come a denudarne la struttura, resa attraverso un puzzle di sensazioni, inputs.

In un'era come l'attuale, pare suggerirci Nieddu con le chiavi critiche di De Saussure, sono cambiati i significati e i significanti: è così che nel quadro globale della sua rappresentazione entrano anche codici a barre, transistori, simbologie astratte ed elettroniche. Ma si tratta di segnali simbolici, le immagini anche se interpretative rimangono piacevoli, intelligenti, analitiche, un vademecum della contemporaneità. Il risultato è affascinante, particolarmente legato alle simbologie stilistiche di "Messiah Complex".

Lasciato il foyer, ed entrati nell'incantevole teatro vero e proprio, si inizia a respirare l'aria tra battiti wave, chitarismi nervosi e club di Manchester, grazie al dj set "I Love New Wave" di Fabio "FB8" Busi.

L'arrivo del Temple Of Venus presenta da subito alcune novità: Piero Lonardo annuncia un cambio di line-up, che si rivela presto vincente. La serata vede infatti il debutto della nuova formazione, che accanto a Piero comprende Federico Vanzini alla chitarra (al posto del dimissionario Alessandro Montillo) e l'aggiunta piacevolissima della voce femminile di Alessandra Perri.



related to Temple of Venus event, the graphical display of Luca Nieddu, the imaginative illustrator of "Messiah Complex."

The graphics of the cd is well cured and to contemplate the panels exposed in person, adds more depth to the visual inventions: graphic elements in black and white, shades, blue and acrylic acid, reddish glow, inks, fragments of contemporary civilization, a futuristic interpretation of the present, post-technological, as to strip the structure, through a puzzle made up of sensations, of inputs.

In an era like the present, Nieddu it seems to suggest us with the key criticisms of De Saussure, that meanings and signifiers have changed: so in the overall framework of its representation also enter barcodes, transistori, as well as electronic and abstract symbols. But they are symbolic cues, the pictures are nice interpretations, intelligent, analytical, a handbook of contemporary life. The result is fascinating, particularly related to stylistic symbols of "Messiah Complex."

Leaving the foyer, and entering the enchanting theater itself, you begin to breathe the air between wave beats, nervous guitars and Manchester clubs, thanks to the DJ set "I Love New Wave" by Fabio "FB8" Busi.

The coming of the Temple of Venus shows immediately some news as Piero Lonardo announces a change of line-up which soon proves to be successful. The evening is the debut of the new line-act, which aside Piero includes Federico Vanzini on guitar (instead of the resigning Alessandro Montillo) and the addition of the pleasant female voice of Alessandra Perri.

The concert begins with "Across The Stars": after the first few beats, and some minor sampling, live music soars from the portentous bass rhythm of Piero. This is a bass that has memory of the first coldwave, of Peter Hook and New Order, know how to generate a rhythm, but most of all amaze because of its introspective use of the instrument, able to touch and stir our inner depths. The charm of the musician Piero is not only being on the scene since the 80's, but his figure, human, warm, like his person, able to open up chasms of unacknowledged sensibility, transposed into his notes.

The musicians are in great mood, Piero on the vocals, Federico, really young, is simply enchanting on the guitar, and Alessandra's voice drives the music even higher with grace at the mainly emotional climaxes points. It follows an astounding version of "Hide And Seek", even more alive than in the album, though well recorded.

"Goodnight" here has an even more cured arrangement, expanding into a contemplative song, among melodies and amazing variations: there is complete harmony between the new band members, guitar and bass dialogue massively without pauses.

Federico's guitar ranges easily among the suggestions of the first Robert Smith, the early records' Cocteau Twins and calandos Cranes-style, up to a sound among shoegaze and dream pop, constantly playing in slightly bitter tones and other more fluid and other, among Lush, Slowdive and Curve.

Still "Sugar Sandman" (a sort of other embodiment of the Silver Surfer, the Marvel Comics character, a messiah between this world and the future, the real main protagonist of the disc) mixes electropop and postpunk, there's a rock soul hidden in these swirling spirals, between this dimensional traveler.

"Anything Inside Me" is rather hypnotic with his beat at first, ranging between abstraction and magic, but has a second part that played live, becomes spectacular thanks to the mix between bass, guitars and vocals, a postmodern anthem. The burning desire to dance rise high with "Hey Stranger," reminding the last New Order and Clan of Xymox, but it's not a pop song, but a rhythm song full of emotion and inwardness: "Hey Stranger, Can You Read My Soul?".

Indefinite, just like between beats, starts the contemporary "Metropolitan", and winds between plenty of acoustic surprises: now it steps in an dilated aura of an almost shoegaze, now the post-punk-funk nervous bass, to draw a human condition of lack of communication between individual and the mass, loneliness and cities, singularity and the universe. We approach the end of the gig with "Tonight Can Be Done", including synths once again charm reminiscent of the Covenant, upon which jostles with skill vocals and instruments.

There's time for an encore, and the choice fell on "Hideaway," from the recent past the Temple of Venus ("Poseurs", 2004), a "darker" song with any doubt, that somehow recalls the Southern Death Cult and The Sound.

Temple Of Venus are able to enchant: playing live, their music takes on a new concreteness and vitality, their strokes are heartbeats.

The acoustic was good, and the soirée has been in my opinion one of the best of the last times (months and months) in the city.

Il Teatrino degli Illusi, ex Italiceo, is exactly halfway between the venue and theater, along the lines of coffee chantant. The idea of the cabaret and live entertainment is from John Cacioppo, actor and art director and from Massimiliano Princigallo, technical director.

In this habit, the Teatrino offers a kind of a familiar embrace between the art onstage, the friendly management and the audience, a superfine bar service, in a tasty and well-measured outfit, for a "venue" that start to be multifunctional and multimedial in a sort of way: it ranges from evening entertainment, to gigs, real theatrical acts (from the Gemelli Ruggeri and Rosalia Porcaro on these days), with the participation of artists of all kinds (soon also Baby Dee, Montefiori Cocktail, Steve Grossman), from comedy to drama, to national and international musicians.

Different events in a unique setting.

Text by Phaeton - Pics by Nicola Tenani

