

Sparklehorse Interview

By [Heidi Duff](#), Monday 16th October 2006 03.00pm

When Heidi met Sparklehorse for the first time they hit it off like a house on fire. Here's how they got on in Liverpool;

6 hours before Sparklehorse take to the stage at Liverpool Uni, a quiet but friendly Mark Linkous meets me and we enter a very dark tour bus to have a chat...

Glasswerk: So how's the tour going?

Sparklehorse: Yeah, Really well.

G: Are you enjoying playing live again? Because I know you took a break...

S: Yeah how long's it been? It's been about 5 years since the last album. We did 7 dates in the states and then we came over here, it went really well in the states even...that was a nice surprise.

G: Do you think you're received better over here?

S: Yeah, ever since the beginning, ever since the first album we've been better received here. And now it seems like, 9 years later, they're starting to catch on in the states.

G: Do you like playing the new songs live to see what the audience's reaction is like? I imagine you could get sick of the songs playing them night after night, would you rather just put a record out?

S: Yeah I used to feel that way, definitely. But my bands have always been ...I don't know if you've ever seen Sparklehorse live before but, the bands always seem to be teetering on the edge, sort of, on the verge of collapse...and I know that maybe a lot of people come to see that, but the band that I have now is really good... so there's not so much of that, it's pretty tight together, therefore I can relax a little bit, now that I know the band is going to hold it together. So that's kind of a new thing, I'm enjoying it now, I hadn't enjoyed it for a long time.

G: The new album 'I Dreamt for Lightyears in the Belly of a Mountain' is great, it's produced by Dangermouse right?

S: Some of it, he co-produced the first and second one ('Don't Take My Sunshine Away', 'Getting It Wrong') and 'Mountains'.

G: How did you end up working with him?

S: Well, I quit working for a long time, I stopped doing music, and I think people were trying to get me out of a hole that I was in, and they were sending me records by people that I might be excited by or people I might want to collaborate with. Then my

manager sent me 'The Grey Album', and I didn't listen to it for the longest time, but I was listening to a lot of later period Beatles stuff, then when I finally listened to 'The Grey Album', I just loved it. And I like some of the sparser sounding, stripped down hip-hop anyway so, yeah that really knocked me out, I didn't know the back story to it or anything. So I got in contact with Brian (Burton, aka Dangermouse) and he turned out to be a big Sparklehorse fan, and we started talking, and it ended up with him coming to my house in North Carolina.

G: I read in another interview that you are more old school when it comes to creating music and he helped you produce some sounds that you could imagine but didn't know how to make. How did you explain to him the sounds that were in your head?

S: Well.. I would say, can you take this guitar track or drum track from one song, change the timing, put it in this other song, and make it sound like it's been washed up on the beach, buried in the sand, on an old scratchy 78 record! And he's really good with a computer, which I'm not good at.

G: Your vision seems to me to be a very personal one, but you have done a lot of collaborations, why do you like working with other people? To bounce ideas off them?

S: Well, after 'Good Morning Spider', I didn't want to be responsible for everything on the record, including recording it all and being the engineer, so on 'It's a Wonderful Life', I really made a point to travel around a lot and learn different recording techniques from people that I like, like Dave Fridmann (producer of The Flaming Lips, Mercury Rev), and people's records that I really liked the sound of, just boring shit like mic technique, and how to mic amps, drums, that sort of thing. And I didn't really plan to have all those high profile guest musicians on the last record it just sort of happened like that, like when it came time to record somewhere, we were thinking of somewhere to record, and I was doing a track on the last record with John Parish on the last record, and that's when Adrian [Utley] and Polly [Harvey] came on board, in Barcelona and we recorded there. So there were songs that I wrote [for the new album] that I specifically wanted to have other people playing on, but it is kind of like Vividixie [Vivadixiesubmarinetransmissionplot] 'cos there's about 4 tracks that I play everything on, and did at home, so they're kind of homemade.

G: You mentioned Polly Jean Harvey, she's said that she doesn't like explaining her lyrics because the best way she can express what she wants to say is in song, do you feel the same?

S: Well when people ask me specifically about lyric content, I don't really like trying to articulate...the songs are full of imagery and metaphors anyway, and that's one of the reasons I try to keep the lyrics quite poetic so that people can maybe interpret them... into their own lives.

G: Your songs have been used on quite a few movie soundtracks, would you consider making a full length film or writing a soundtrack for one?

S: I don't think I could write literally and put a story together. I've thought about scoring films, but I think I'd rather that my songs just appear in films as they are. But

there's some other projects that I've been working on, I've been working with Christian Fennesz. A lot of electronic stuff I listen to is, I guess they call it 'glitch', and Christian is really the best at it, him and Oval. So we're doing a record together, me and Christian, and Scott my old drummer, he doesn't play with me anymore, and the guy who is doing the front of house tonight is half of a band called 'Stars of the land', It's like really chilled string stuff. So we're doing a record that's going to be really atmospheric, more electronic and filmic. So if I was going to do anything for a film I would want to hook up with those guys.

G: Your songs are often described as dreamlike, do your dreams influence your writing?

S: I used to, but I guess in the last 5 years I've had bad dreams so I just try to forget them!

G: Finally, I was wondering about the band name...if I was an animal in a past life, I'd have been a deer or a type of big cat, would you be a horse?

S: [Laughs] I would like to think that I might be one day. I just love watching them run...there's something about the motion of horses running, it's the most graceful, beautiful thing in the world. Although I don't get along with horses very well, last time I was on a horse I got thrown off!

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