



Dark Night Returns

The mystery behind Danger Mouse's new project



FANS OF TRIPPY pop and nonexistent animals had reason to celebrate earlier this year: Danger Mouse (Brian Burton) and Sparklehorse (Mark Linkous) had teamed up to record an album of moody rock songs featuring vocals by famous friends such as Iggy Pop, Julian Casablancas, and even filmmaker David Lynch. Better yet, the album, titled *Dark Night of the Soul*, would be packaged with a book of enigmatic Lynch photos. But in May, the duo announced the album wouldn't be released at all because of some unspecified "legal dispute" with EMI. (Whether this had anything to do with Danger Mouse pilfering from EMI's Beatles catalog for *The Grey Album* is anyone's guess.) Instead, the book will come with a blank CD and a note obliquely encouraging people to download the music online. While Danger Mouse didn't open up about the EMI fracas, he, Lynch, and Sparklehorse did shine a faint light on their mysterious project. *DAVID MARCHESI*

Is there anything that people should know about the album before hearing it?

DANGER MOUSE: No. In an ideal world, the album would just show up unannounced and people would seek it out because they were intrigued for whatever reason. The idea is that the less that people know about the album, the more they'll get out of it.

SPARKLEHORSE: The only thing that people need to know is that we worked really hard on it.

DAVID LYNCH: Doing the tracks and then asking different people to sing over it is a very modern concept that could lead to great things in the future. More people should try it.

Ever have a dark night of the soul?

DANGER MOUSE: I'd rather not say anything that might color people's perception of the album. And, you know, if I answered this question, I'd go into some personal stuff that I don't want to go into.

SPARKLEHORSE: If I had some funny answer, I'd give it to you, but the stuff in my head is just

too disturbing to talk about.

LYNCH: Well, yes. It was brought on by life. I spent five years living in Philadelphia in the mid-1960s. There was a lot of violence in the neighborhood where I was living at the time. It was terrible.

Which animal would win in a fight: a Danger Mouse or a Sparklehorse?

DANGER MOUSE: A Sparklehorse. It doesn't sound as mean as a Danger Mouse, but it's more clever.

SPARKLEHORSE: Definitely the Danger Mouse. It's more cunning and Machiavellian. It'd sneak up behind the Sparklehorse and stab it in the back.

LYNCH: A horse is a lot bigger, but Sparklehorses are beautiful, not dangerous. So the mouse would have a chance. The mouse would definitely have a chance.

Iggy Pop's song on the album is called "Pain." When did you last feel that sensation?

DANGER MOUSE: About a week ago I dropped a bowling ball on my foot. I was with some girls,

so I made sure I didn't cry.

SPARKLEHORSE: Physically, every day. I had an accident with my legs a few years ago. I feel pain whenever I walk.

LYNCH: I don't like speaking in public, and I've been doing a lot of that lately. It's a psychological pain. That counts.

Were there any artists you wanted to contribute to the album but couldn't get?

DANGER MOUSE: There wasn't anyone. Let's not ruin the coolness of what this is by talking about what it isn't.

SPARKLEHORSE: Beth Gibbons from Portishead.

LYNCH: The list would go on forever.

What's your favorite David Lynch movie?

DANGER MOUSE: If I named one, it would be unfair to the rest of them.

SPARKLEHORSE: *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk With Me* scared the shit out of me.

LYNCH: A decent parent doesn't love one child more than the others.