

Wednesday, 25 June, 2003 10:58

## **Sparklehorse interview**

**Dreamy, melodic American, indie rock band Sparklehorse are leaving their American shores to return to the UK for a string of dates to show off some new material.**

**BBC Southampton's Indy Almroth-Wright chatted to frontman Mark Linkous as he prepared to saddle up the mighty Sparklehorse and head to Blighty...**

### **Where are you at the moment Mark?**

I'm at my house, I've moved from North Carolina to Virginia - so I'm on top of a mountain right now.

### **What can you see out the window?**

I can see the mountains - right in front of the house is a cliff with rocks and on the other side of the house there's a huge valley. I'm really high up - when prop planes go by they're actually underneath me.

### **It sounds like a great spot....**

Yeah, but I got trapped in the house by a big black bear the other day. I was taking the trash to the dump, I'd put it in the back of my pick-up truck and I guess the trash attracted the bear and he was up inside the back of my pick-up truck eating and going through the trash.

### **How big was he?**

When he stood up on his hind legs he was about seven feet tall. I was worried because one of my dogs was out there and she's really deaf. She didn't even see him. I was afraid that the bear was going to go after the dog so I had to shoot my gun - not to hit him, but to scare the bear away, and he eventually went away.

### **How did Sparklehorse come about?**

The singer from Cracker, David Lowery would leave a recorder at my house when he went on tour and I eventually learnt how to record myself.

Tapes started circulating amongst musicians and managers and then Radiohead heard it and invited me to tour with them. There's never really been a proper band though, Sparklehorse is me and whoever else I want. So when Radiohead offered the tour I had to assemble a band.

### **How would you sum up Sparklehorse's sound?**

I don't know it's sort of changing. I guess in the last year or so it's kinda been perceived as being low and pretty. But I think the new album's going to be more poppy really.

### **What can we expect from Sparklehorse at the Wedgewood Rooms.... is a stripped down affair with the three of you?**

Yeah, it's gonna be pretty stripped down and we're going to be playing with some playback so it's not a full band it's just the three of us. It's kinda cool because the playback that's been recorded is sort of new takes on old songs and it's sort of representative of what the next record's going to sound like.

The new stuff tends to be more pop - I've been frightened of pop, but I've been trying to get over my fear of pop. Not my fear of pop music, but my fear of making pop music. I'm trying to write 70's AM radio pop songs but make them

instrumental and really intriguing and make them sound like something you've never heard before. We'll also be showing films alongside the music that we've made ourselves.

**You've had your ups and downs over the years, but right now things are looking fantastic for you. How are things going?**

I try to look at it that way, but it's still hard to get through everyday. I'm very lucky to be doing what I'm doing - I'm doing what I've always wanted to do and you would think that anyone would be content and satisfied with that - but it is still hard to get through every day. If I didn't have music and art I would just go crazy. It's still a struggle every day.

**What three songs would you choose on the soundtrack to your life?**

Well lets see.... Jesus Blood Never Failed Me yet by Gavin Bryars - It's a loop of an old man singing as he's digging clams on the beach with music behind it, Henryk Gorecki Symphony No.3 and Ever Fallen In Love With Someone You Shouldn't Have Fallen In Love With? by The Buzzcocks.

**Who do you most admire in the music industry?**

The Flaming Lips - we just did a tour with them.

**Do you have any unfulfilled ambitions?**

I used to say I wanted to be a VCR repairman, but I'd like to skydive. It'd be great to jump out of an aeroplane.

**If your music career ended tomorrow what would you do?**

I'd probably be a farmer, or maybe a hermit that lives on a mountain who eats rabbits and drinks out of streams.