

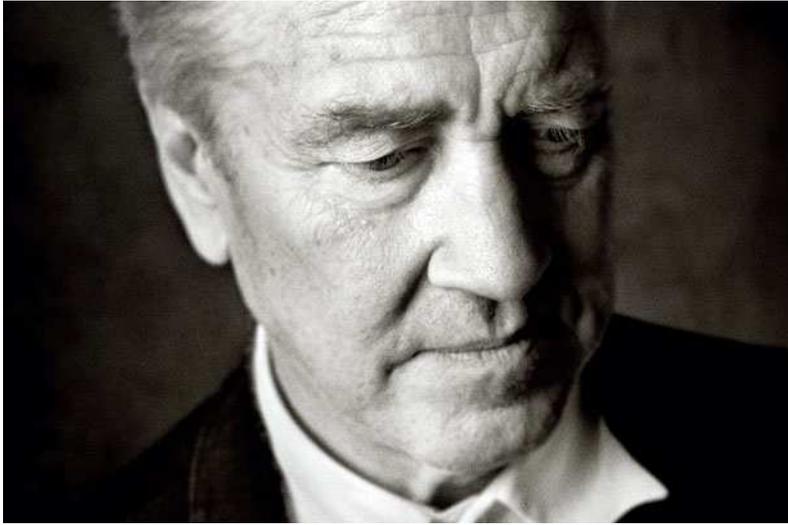
David Lynch Q&A: It's 'Crazy Clown Time'

by Richard Smirke, London | November 08, 2011 10:10 EST

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Auteur Explains His Debut Album, an Alt-Blues Experiment in Creaky Falsetto



Mark Berry

"That track came out of a jam when my guitar was just making a sound that was thrilling to me. It started making the sound of a speed roadster... a night time dream that was sparking in the piney woods."

- On album track, "Speed Roadster"

Artists in this Article



Sparklehorse



David Lynch

Best known as the surrealist auteur behind "Eraserhead," "Twin Peaks" and "Blue Velvet," David Lynch is one of America's most acclaimed film directors. Having long written and performed music for his films -- often in collaboration with others, most notably composer Angelo Badalamenti and Polish pianist Marek Zebrowski -- this fall sees the three-time Academy Award nominee make his debut as a solo recording artist. With the release Tuesday of his debut studio album, "Crazy Clown Time," on Sunday Best Recordings/PIAS, Lynch talks to Billboard about his hatred of singing, fear of performing live and working with the late Mark Linkous.

You recently curated a week-long music showcase at Paris' Club Silencio (a venue modeled on one featured in Lynch's 2001 film "Mulholland Drive"). Was it an enjoyable experience?

It's been incredible. Do you want to hear the bands that came? I started out with The Kills, followed by Au Revoir Simone and Kitty Daisy & Lewis. Followed by Gary Clark Jr, a bluesman from Austin, Texas. Followed by Dirty Beaches, [who sings] American rockabilly in the most dreamlike way. And then it ended up with Lykke Li and she did an incredible show. It was a real good week and the club is really fantastic. It's got a great, great feel and people are happy in that club.

How does it feel to begin a solo music career aged 65?

I'm finding it really good. I'm not touring. I'm not playing live. It's a studio experience... I've been working on music through the years and it's Sunday Best Recordings which came along and wanted to get the music out. Their enthusiasm was what really catapulted it coming out.

Most of the songs on "Crazy Clown Time" originate from studio jams, correct?

That's the technique that was used more often than not. I [would] say probably a 20 to 25-minute jam is 97% garbage. Maybe in that three percent there is something there and that becomes the fuel for the next steps, which lead to the finished song. An example of that is [album



"Speed Roadster"

Warning: Explicit Language

track] "Speed Roadster." That track came out of a jam when my guitar was just making a sound that was thrilling to me. It started making the sound of a speed roadster... a night time dream that was sparkling in the piney woods.

How did you approach sequencing the album? Are there similarities with editing film?

Exactly. I'm not sure if these days people really sit down and listen to an album start to finish but if they do, you want to have the correct sequence. So you live with the sequence, you think intellectually and emotionally to get a line, then you test it and live with it for a while. Maybe rearrange a few things and then you've got a sequence that feels good should someone sit down and listen to it start to finish.

You've formerly described yourself as a self-taught non-musician. Have you got more proficient through making this album?

No. No. No. I can play it once. I can find a thing and it's very, very much like accidents that occur. We all know exceptionally great musicians in the world. I can't play like them. I find a way of getting something that thrills me on the guitar. I don't play them in a normal way. I started playing a guitar just to make sound FX and that method of playing kind of led to how I work in music.

Twelve of the 14 tracks on "Crazy Clown Time" feature your vocals. Is singing something that you have always done outside of the recording studio?

No. The opposite of that. Zero. I hated the idea of singing. I never wanted to sing. Ever. [But] I started getting kind of infatuated with this high voice and singing [about] these characters. I don't know quite how it



"Stone's Gone Up"

happened. The only person I sing in front of is Dean [Hurley, studio engineer and key collaborator on the album]. I sometimes sing a little bit to Emily, my wife, but I'm even embarrassed singing in front of her.

Are there any plans to perform the record live, at all?

In the future it could be possible. I think emotionally I'm not quite ready to do that and technically [I'm] even further away.

Do you plan to do another record or is "Crazy Clown Time" a one-off?

I always love making music in the studio, so we'll see how this goes but definitely they'll be more music. Whether it goes out into an album or not, I don't know. Let's see if people like "Crazy Clown Time."

You worked with Danger Mouse and Sparklehorse's Mark Linkous on the 2010 "Dark Night of the Soul" album. What are your strongest memories from that time?

A great, great happiness and fondness. Danger Mouse and Sparklehorse became my friends because of that and they actually really did me a huge favor allowing me to sing on that [record]. It kind of gave me more confidence and it worked out so well... I was looking forward to really having a great long time friendship with Sparklehorse and then he ended up taking his life which was just a huge giant catastrophe and sadness. I really feel bad about that part of the story.