

LOUISIANA LEAF

THE MARBLE MAN

Out on July 9, 2021



*****Product: Louisiana Leaf, The Marble Man.**

Vertrieb Broken Silence, Label Millaphon Records GmbH LC-24980

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LOUISIANA LEAF, the fourth album by The Marble Man, sounds like a film noir turned into music. Everything breathes beautiful decay. The songs follow a rhythm of their own. Arranged sparsely, they unexpectedly seem to freeze now and again, coming to a hypnotic standstill. Time becomes meaningless in these moments. Carried by a stoic bass and unwavering drums, this band works like a reduction machine. Not a note too much. The resulting songs are not forced into any kind of straitjacket but are allowed to burst their brims.

Back in 2007, Josef Wirnshofer appeared on the scene as The Marble Man, releasing his debut album SUGAR RAILS. Then 19 years old, the highly talented songwriter and multi-instrumentalist immediately impressed with a sense for timeless songwriting and a fascinating ease. The Traunstein native displayed confident minimalism in his compositions. There was no effect-seeking recourse to harmonic ideas, no proud harping on catchy choruses. Everything was measured. On his second album, LATER, PHOENIX..., published three years after SUGAR RAILS was released, Wirnshofer, by then based in Munich, demonstrated a disciplined restraint. The evident maturity, stylistic confidence and class continued to raise hope for great things.

And that's what followed. 2013 saw the release of the third album, HAIDHAUSEN – recorded for the first time with the now five-piece band. In its sonic grandeur, the spirit of reduction was still palpable. Instead of showing off big pop anthems, which would have been easily possible given the song material and body of sound, the band honed their concentrated, ink-black sparkling sound. Playfulness and ornamentation were practically absent and it was all about depth and weight.

A good seven years after HAIDHAUSEN, and following a long series of concerts, the group continues its path of expansion through reduction. On LOUISIANA LEAF, this path leads The Marble Man deeper into dark, cool, nocturnal regions of soul and sound.

A track like “The Twins” seems like it needs to unfreeze and wake up from its rigor before the narrative can pick up speed, finally sinking like a ship on the high seas in a storm of a steady crescendo. There are pieces like the sublime “Totem” with its new-wave synth bass and galley drums, or the conciliatory “Ruby” with its magical vocal line. “Pusher Street”, on the other hand, appears naked and mysterious with its shuffling, trippy beat.

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Ursulastraße 9 - 80802 München – presse@millaphon.de – 089 - 4520 530 19

For LOUISIANA LEAF, Josef Wirnshofer brought song skeletons into the rehearsal room that the band fleshed out together with downright obsessive attention to detail. The album was then recorded with Frank Mollena (Missouri, Bambi Davidson) at the Lone Star Studio in Nuremberg. There the goal was to avoid familiar soundscapes and to give the songs a unique sound. For example, Michael Zahnbrecher's organs and Rhodes have to make their way through chains of effects and tape echoes again and again. And Jonas Übelherr's drums go hand in hand with analog drum computers and samples ranging from wind chimes to slamming port-a-potty doors. Daniel Mannfeld's guitars come in as sound tapestries and clouds, chopped beyond recognition or bowed with a violin bow. In between, Boris Mitterwieser's bass plucks like on old Bert Kaempfert recordings.

This sound aesthetic is built on unobstructed arrangements that leave room for every single sound. Edges are allowed to be edges (listen to the biting guitars on the opener "A Man We Knew" or the cacophonous snares on "Rowboats"), mistakes are allowed to be mistakes (on "Ruby", the noise of a broken guitar amp was integrated into the song without further ado). In a similarly experimental way, Josef Wirnshofers vocals got their own sound on each track – sometimes with dripping delay, sometimes as if from far away through a transistor radio, sometimes shimmering through a Leslie box.

With LOUISIANA LEAF, The Marble Man did not only take a confident step towards distinctiveness. They wrote music for our time. This album is not reminiscent of the past, but it also doesn't want to surge ahead. It plays exactly in the here and now, full of ideas and certain about the choice of means. And, by the way, the eponymous "Louisiana Leaf" is not a tea variety or a strain of cannabis, but ... best ask The Marble Man. The record label Millaphon looks forward to your interview requests.

(Text: Josef Winkler and Guido Möbius)

***Short info:**

Title: Louisiana Leaf
Content: 8 tracks, 41:32 min
Label: Millaphon Records GmbH
Distribution: Broken Silence
Music & lyrics: Josef Wirnshofer

***Tracks:**

01 – A Man We Knew
02 – Rowboats
03 – The Guest
04 – The Twins
05 – Louisiana Leaf
06 – Totem
07 – Ruby
08 – Pusher Street

***Members:**

Josef Wirnshofer - Vocals, Guitar, Organ, Rhodes, Synths
Daniel Mannfeld - Guitar
Boris Mitterwieser - Bass, Synths
Jonas Übelherr - Drums
Michael Zahnbrecher - Synths, Organ, Rhodes, Backing vocals

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