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JULY 6, 2018

ROCKWIRED NOTES: **NEVERWONDER**

ROCKWIRED MAGAZINE PRESENTS:

NOTES VIII

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NEW EP
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Southern California-based rock band NEVERWONDER first made it onto ROCKWIRED's radar in early 2006, it was love at first sight and sound. It was also a very different world. Hard rock and the alternative rock of the decade previous were just on their way to becoming the much scoffed at 'dad rock'. MTV and VH1 were no longer as music oriented and were setting their sights on the burgeoning reality television phenomenon. The only road to pop glory was AMERICAN IDOL and LADY GAGA wasn't a thing yet. It was an age typified by the likes of CHRISTINA AGUILERA and BRITNEY SPEARS and those of us who thought we were better than deciding which was better were holding out for a new direction in rock music. It neve quite materialized but NEVERWONDER was something special to myself and to this then fledgling publication.

Driven by the rhythm section and brothers VINCENT RAMOS on bass and ANDRES on drums, NEVERWONDER took the grit of funk and gave it a boisterous hard rock finish. In 2006, the band released their self-titled debut album with lead singer JOY PEARSON fueling the material with her PAT BENATAR-esque growl and guitarist FLINT MAVIS giving the proceedings some heavy metal thunder. The band's musicality and workmanship earned them gigs throughout the state of California and into Las Vegas. Needless they were ROCKWIRED sweethearts.

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ROCKWIRED MAGAZINE'S

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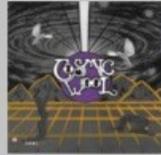
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The sky seemed to be the limit, then JOY PEARSON abandoned ship for solo glory that never materialized. The band wasn't without a singer for long. In 2008, the recruited former AMERICAN IDOL contestant MEGAN BOBO and a new NEVERWONDER emerged - one that emphasized a stronger R&B and pop sensibility without sacrificing too much of the RAMOS' shared rock and roll heart. This "new" brandished this bold new sound on their 2010 album LET IT OUT. Unfortunately, it wasn't long before MEGAN BOBO sought a quiet, married life in the Midwest a million miles away from the uncertainty of a life in rock n roll. Two years later, NEVERWONDER emerged once again, this time with striking lead singer ALIMA SOUL, but this time for an EP featuring ALIMA's take on select cuts from the band's previous album.

If there is one thing that I would never deny band founder VINCENT RAMOS, it is his boundless optimism. Or is it a fighting spirit? It's probably a little bit of both. Now that we're living in a time when rock n roll has been pushed aside in favor of EDM and NICKI MINAJ, we can respect a healthy dose of optimism and fighting spirit. NEVERWONDER is back

with a brand new EP and a new lead singer and guitar player. Hailing from Geneva, Switzerland, FABIENNE GRISEL has stepped into the pilot seat with a set of precious pipes that are able to navigate the bands lofty musical ambitions and a background in both blues and jazz. Guitarist JAY WISE has spent years playing and touring both nationally and internationally. He even worked closely with the band KANSAS. The new EP is an opportunity to get the fan base excited about the new line up and GRISEL get to sink her teeth into such fare from NEVERWONDER's past as GIVE IT ALL and MOVIN' ON all the while sounding like a brand new band. VINCENT and band promise new material on the way and we are excited to see a new iteration of NEVERWONDER come into their own. ROCKWIRED had a chance to speak with all of the members of the new line up. Here is how the interview went.

The return of NEVERWONDER has surprised the hell out of me and I'm super-excited by the new line up and this new EP. How do you guys feel about the EP you've put out?

VINCE: BRIAN, let me start out by saying that I'm stoked to be talking with you again! This was the interview that I was dying to do and I know that this thing is going to be a good thing for us. But to answer to your question, I'm really excited with the way that things are going. There is a whole lot going on. The new music is out there on digital download and hard copy and today, we just announced our EPK. We've also got two fantastic new band members in both JAY and FABIENNE and they both fit like a glove. They are just phenomenal people. If you ask me, NEVERWONDER has never been better. That's my two cents.

ANDRES: Just to reiterate what VINCE said, everything is coming along great. It's like we're really hitting all cylinders and "...cooking with gas" as they say. I can't wait to see what the future holds.

And I've got to turn my attention to the two new members of the band, JAY and FABIENNE. How does it feel working with a band with all of this history and where do each of you see taking this thing?

JAY: When I came into the band a year ago. I asked VINCE what the difference was between this band and any other band. I asked him "What can you offer me?" And he said that we were going to record and make videos and put out songs and that the whole thing was going to be over the top and that it was going to be awesome. You've got to understand that I've heard it all. I've been doing this for about 35 years. Now, just recently, everything has come together in the way that VINCE promised, and it is out of this world! It *is* awesome! Things are going better than in any other group that I've ever been in.

FABIENNE: In a lot of ways, my experience is similar to JAY's. I've been doing music for a long time. with bands and with my own solo projects for a while. I went into this thing with an opened mind. I've worked with a lot of great musicians in the past and I was excited that these guys were so accomplished. I could see that these guys could play and right when we started playing together, I could see that we had something special. It all

came together pretty quickly. I'm excited to be playing in a band again with people with a vision similar to mine. I'm excited to be a part of a great band. We work really well together. I have a great deal of respect for what they've done before, but I'm more interested and looking forward and seeing what this iteration of NEVERWONDER can do. This is who we are now and this is what we're all about.

And how did the meeting of the minds occur with this new iteration of NEVERWONDER?

FABIENNE: VINCE called me up through BANDMIX. I was looking for session work and the chance to sing in a cover band. He heard my music and was looking for a lead singer. That was how it started. I wasn't looking to join an original rock band, but after talking to VINCE, we clicked. I liked what he had to say and in talking further, we found that we were like-minded folks.

JAY: For twenty five years, I was doing the gospel music thing. I was a leader in a bunch of different churches and that sort of thing and had a lot formal training in that area. Over the years, I refined my style of playing and now I have that chance to incorporate all of what I've learned into NEVERWONDER. This was a perfect fit right from the start. When I walked into the studio and met these guys, we clicked right away.

VINCE, I've seen you down this road before with other versions of NEVERWONDER. You've been through some great lead singers and guitar players. What sets this current line up apart from the others?

VINCE: With all due respect to the players that have played with NEVERWONDER before, NEVERWONDER has never been better. I attribute that to chemistry and the friendship that exists within this band. There is this willingness of all of the members to hear one's point of view and going that extra mile to make the songs better. Things have never been better. For that, I'm grateful for these two new players. It's a pleasure to go into the studio. It's a pleasure to go to show and it's a pleasure to hear them talk about music. They bring so much from their life experiences to their respective musical abilities. At the end of the day, it's all about the music. They have what NEVERWONDER has always needed and that is passion. It's all about the want and these guys bring it to every single rehearsal. Right now, we're on the course to take everything to another level.

What do you think that FABIENNE and JAY bring to the table specifically?

VINCE: These guys are a trained musicians. They come into this band with their theories on music and the abilities. This is not just rock n roll, I mean formal training. At the same time, they're not hung up on theory. Their formal training allows us to express ourselves in ways we never could. FABIENNE is a classically trained vocalist and if a key doesn't work for her, she tells us instead of singing it for three hours and then losing her voice. As a guitarist, JAY is up for anything. He can play it clean or he can play it heavy and dirty. The musical training of these two has elevated the band without dictating the bands direction. It's not like they'll stop and say

"I can't do it this way because my instructor told me not to do it that way!" All I've got to say about that is '...that instructor ain't muthafuckin' here! Do what you want to do bro!' That's the beauty of these new guys we have in the band. Imagine someone telling JIMI HENDRIX that he can't play a certain way.

ANDRES: The bottom line is this. Everyone is very open-minded. When we're writing a song, we respect each other as musicians, which is key with NEVERWONDER. I love and respect all of the players in the past but this is a different level. I play guitar as well but not at JAY's level, but when I come up with an idea for how to approach something, there is no resistance from him. Same with FABIENNE. They're both open-minded and I think that sets this version of NEVERWONDER apart from the others. Just the communication and the open-mindedness.

I've noticed that the EP that you guys have released features two songs from NEVERWONDER's past. One is GIVE IT ALL which goes back to the days when JOY PEARSON was your singer and MOVIN' ON which came from the years that MEGAN BOBO was the lead singer. Are you guys working on new music?

FABIENNE: Yeah, the two songs on the EP were songs that were done before and I picked them because I really liked them. Especially GIVE IT ALL, which happens to be a favorite of mine. I really dig the song. We thought it was important to re-introduce the band. At the moment, we are writing together. We've already written about five songs and we've got more on the way for a future album. When you're writing for a band that has a history and a catalog of songs, you have to adapt to that. I love the songs that we are doing, but I feel it's important to put my own stamp on the songs so that they have a new life. With these two songs we've released, we have changed things around and it sounds different. As far as the new stuff we're working on, I'm super-excited.

Describe the reactions that this new lineup has been getting.

JAY: The energy of this band brings out people both young and old. The other night, I sold some CDs to a couple who are in their seventies. They love the retro feel of the music and the band's funk rock flavor. There are not a lot of bands doing the kind of music that we're doing now. People are really responding well to the new EP. It's got more of a hard rock spin to it and people are stoked.

ANDRES: Right now, I'm getting emailed by people that haven't heard from in years saying "Whats happening? You released something new?" The response that we got to our first live show last week was great. We sold a bunch of CD's in a day and age where people don't buy CDs. The downloads have been going great. The whole response has been great.

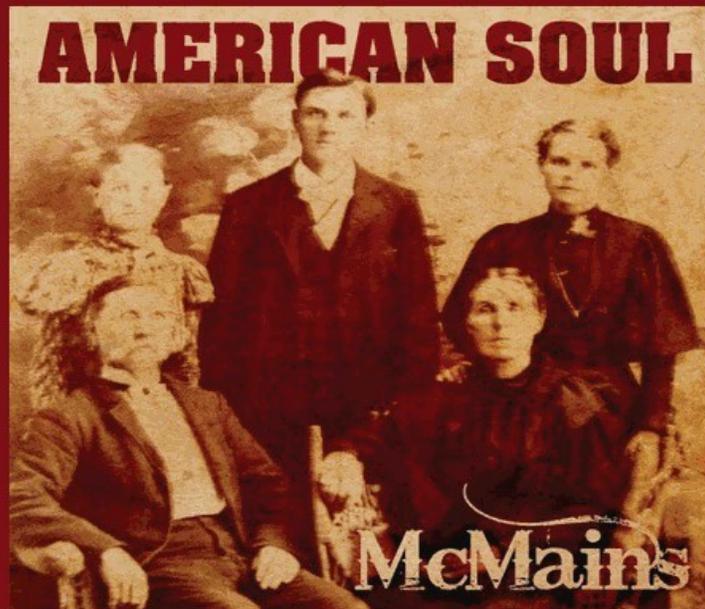
FABIENNE: I've received a positive response from people who've heard me do other things. I haven't been in a rock band for quite some time and went off in other directions such as jazz, blues and Americana, so the people who have come to the shows who know my work are shocked in a

good way. I think we blew their socks off because they didn't expect what they saw and really loved the energy of the band. Even the response from people who have followed NEVERWONDER for years has been fantastic. You never know how people will react.

VINCE: I work in the background a lot with our publicist DOUG so I see it from more than one perspective. In the past three and a half weeks, there has been a lot of radio play and requests to do shows and I think a lot of that has to do with the effort that JAY and FABIENNE have put into this thing. This is everything that I've hoped for and more. The response has been really gratifying and it has been well worth the wait. Fans are digging and so is the press and the music industry in general. So far, I think it's a very proud moment in NEVERWONDER's history.

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AMERICAN SOUL



When do you guys hope to release this forthcoming album?

VINCE: Right now, we've got five songs. Three of them are done and two

of them are still in the oven. We're shooting for a release in 2019. In the meantime, we're trying these two songs as hard as we can. These two songs were picked from the back catalog to help re-establish the band. We couldn't wait until six to seven months to drop an entire album so we decided to rip through these two songs instead and see what happens.

How do you feel this new music will stack up against NEVERWONDER of yore?

JAY: The new music that we're working on really showcases the chemistry of the band. I joined this band months before FABIENNE and got the groove going with both VINCE and DRES, but when FABIENNE came on board, she added her part to it and the songwriting took off. Of the new songs we've got in the pipeline, I think that SPELL and HEY GIRL are my favorites.

VINCE: You hear that BRIAN? You got a sneak peak!

FABIENNE: I 100% agree with JAY. There is a definite chemistry that you can hear in the sound. We are all friends both professionally and personally. It's a safe environment where you feel like you can take chances. The new songs are fun and cool and have a definite rock edge. It's the mixture of the four of us that make this new music special. Like JAY said earlier, there are not a lot of bands that sound like us right now. This is rock music with a funk sensibility and that is what we are going to be bringing to this new album.

ANDRES: We're definitely rocking it harder. We are on a different wavelength now than we've ever been with NEVERWONDER but in a way, it's like we're going back to our roots as a band and hitting all cylinders. We're capturing the elements of our sound from the very beginning and bringing it into 2018 and we're adding input from both FABIENNE and JAY. These new songs are at a different level. Everyone in this band is really bringing it.

RELATED LINKS:

<http://www.neverwonder.com>



BRIAN LUSH
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Brian Lush is a music industry professional and entrepreneur.

In 2005 he launched the online music site Rockwired.com to help promote new music artists in conjunction with the weekly radio show Rockwired Live which aired on KTSTFM.COM from 2005 - 2009. In

2010 He launched the daily podcast series Rockwired Radio Profiles which features exclusive interviews and music. He has also developed and produced the online radio shows Jazzed and Blue - Profiles in Blues and

Jazz, Aboriginal Sounds - A Celebration of American Indian and First Nations Music, The Rockwired Rock N Roll Mixtape Show and The Rockwired Artist of the Month Showcase. In 2012, Brian Lush and his company Rockwired Media LLC launched the monthly digital online publication Rockwired Magazine. The magazine attracts over 75,000 readers a month and shows no signs of stopping. Rockwired Magazine also bares the distinction of being the first American Indian-owned rock magazine. Brian Lush is an enrolled member of the Yankton Sioux Tribe. Brian Lush's background in music journalism, radio and podcast hosting, podcast production, web design, publicity, advertising sales, social media and online marketing, strategic editorial planning and branding have all made Rockwired a name that is trusted and respected throughout the independent music industry.

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