



# LIGHT YEARS AHEAD



## SPARKLEHORSE

DREAMT FOR LIGHT YEARS IN  
THE BELLY OF A MOUNTAIN

[CAPITOL]

The collaborators listed on  
Mark Linkous' five-years-a-  
comin' new record read like the

dream Christmas Card list of a US alt-rock fanatic. For a supposed hermit (*Dreamt...* took shape in Linkous' remote, North Carolina bolt-hole), the Sparklehorse mainman has proved crazily hospitable here - Joan Wasser plays violin, Steven Drozd drums, Dangermouse adds subtle beats, even Tom bloody Waits appears to tinkle some ivories. However, make no mistake - the dominant personality on display belongs to Linkous.

Like an agoraphobic sibling of Mercury Rev's *Deserter's Songs*, *Dreamt...* is a beguiling mixture of the arcane, the morose and the intricately detailed.

The balsa wood fragility of tracks like 'Return To Me' and 'Morning Hollow' set the prevailing melancholic (but delicately melodic) tone - 'Ghosts In The Sky' and 'It's Not So Hard' may be noisier, but they offer little in the way of mood-clearing catharsis. Instead, like the moment when the Beach Boys harmonising of the opener 'Please Don't Take My Sunshine' really kicks in, the shift in gears only acts to emphasise the pervading sadness.

By this stage in the game, we can be pretty confident that Linkous is not in the running for a new James Bond theme song, but, on the evidence of this wonderful, introverted, album, that's not to say that his creative terrain is a closed-off, restrictive place. *Dreamt...* is a fine record full of beauty, mystery and longing. And one that explains why his front-door keeps getting knocked on. No matter how much he wants to hide away.

EIGHT/TEN

COLIN CARBERRY

# a quickie with...

with MARK LINKOUS from SPARKLEHORSE



## WHERE ARE YOU NOW AND WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

In London watching a conference on TV. It's hosted by Bill Clinton and I was just thinking it's very encouraging seeing intelligent Americans on TV these days.

## FIRST RECORD TO SEND A SHIVER UP YOUR SPINE?

'Tomorrow Never Knows', the last song on The Beatles' *Revolver*. I've always pictured in my head what experimental music should be and when I heard that it blew me away.

## FIRST GIG YOU EVER ATTENDED?

Blondie in Washington DC on their *Parallel Lines* tour. Rockpile were the opening act so it was a pretty cool show.

## FIRST GIG YOU EVER PLAYED?

Poe's in Charlottesville, Virginia with my high school band. I remember it was rowdy, the kind of place where you have to check in your gun at the door

## MOST MEMORABLE GIG YOU EVER PLAYED?

I'm not being patronising but Whelan's in Dublin has always been my favourite place to play. When I started playing bigger venues I felt disconnected from audiences.

## MOST EMBARRASSING THING YOU'VE DONE WHILE DRUNK?

I stopped drinking quite a long time ago but once I played Shepherds Bush and started railing incoherently on stage. It got written up in the paper and I felt a complete idiot.

## FAVOURITE SPINAL TAP MOMENT?

Probably when our name gets mistaken, which happens a lot. The most common one is Spackle Horse. Spackle in America is something that you put on walls.

## LAST RECORD YOU BOUGHT, BLAGGED OR DOWNLOADED?

The last thing I bought was vinyl – an ambient album called *The Tired Sounds Of Stars Of The Lid*.

## WHO'D BE IN YOUR DREAM BAND?

I had my dream band on *It's A Wonderful Life*, which was Adrian Utely on guitar, Polly Harvey on piano, John Parrish on bass and my favourite drummer, Johnny Hott.

## WHAT SHITE JOBS HAVE YOU HAD IN THE PAST BEFORE?

Houspainter, dishwasher, chimney sweeper, coal-miner.

## WHAT SONG WOULD YOU LIKE PLAYED AT YOUR FUNERAL?

I've never thought about it but it would be something like Gavin Bryars' *The Sinking Of The Titanic*.

Sparklehorse's new album, *Dreamt For Light Years In The Belly Of A Mountain* is released on Parlophone.

Polly thriller