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WEIRD SCIENCE

BRINGING TOGETHER FORMER SMITH ANDY ROURKE, CRANBERRIES SINGER DOLORES O'RIORDAN AND DJ OLÉ KORETSKY, D.A.R.K. HAVE CREATED AN ELECTRONICA-INFUSED CURVEBALL OF AN ALBUM IN THE FORM OF 'SCIENCE AGREES'. PAULA FROST SPOKE TO ROURKE AND KORETSKY ABOUT THE LEGACY OF MANCHESTER'S FINEST AND LIVING AND RECORDING IN BROOKLYN.

When did you first pick up an instrument?

Andy: "I picked up the guitar at seven or eight. I always used to get a musical instrument either for Christmas or on my birthday so I went through plastic trumpets, saxophone, keyboard, I tried a bit of everything. I played a bit of cello later on but I made that up as I went along because it was needed on a Smiths record so I just bought one, tuned it up like a bass and went from there. But back to the guitar, I used to take it into school to play through lunch to pass the time and so I didn't have to speak to anybody. Coincidentally, Johnny Marr was doing the same thing and that's how we got together. We eventually ended up in the same class together when we were both twelve or thirteen and became firm friends. Then we started bands together and used to rehearse in the school hall and it went from there. We were very close. The bass player we had Kevin Kennedy, he was in 'Coronation Street'! He could only play a couple of Thin Lizzy numbers which got tiresome after a while so he got put onto rhythm guitar and I got moved to bass. I was a little bit put out at first thinking I'd been demoted! I didn't like it at first but then it didn't take me long to get my teeth into it and start enjoying it."

You and Johnny Marr had a band called Freak Party, what did you sound like?

Andy: "I don't think anything was ever released. There's probably a couple of recordings on cassette somewhere. That was with Simon Wolstencroft who used to drum with The Fall. We were just a three piece who could never find a singer. It wasn't till later when Johnny (Marr) joined a choir for a year and in that year was when he struck up with Morrissey. I just got this random phone call one day saying 'I've got this new singer, do you want to play bass?' And that was that."

What was your pinnacle moment in The Smiths? – The best part?

Andy: "Good question. A lot of it was a whirlwind. To tell you the truth I don't remember a lot because I didn't get a second to take it all in. There's moments like when we played The Royal Albert Hall and had all our family in a special box! There's proud moments like that."

How did you deal with the clashes in The Smiths?

Andy: "There really weren't any. The clashes came afterwards! In the studio everyone was very professional and got the job done. I didn't see any clashes. Maybe I was too busy enjoying myself."

The Smiths music is still very relevant today. How does it feel to be so influential thirty years on?

Andy: "It feels great. It's very flattering that people still find the music relevant so many years on. We've obviously done something right! We didn't use huge production or any gimmicks so that's helped it age as it has. I think Morrissey's lyrics are very special and the songs in general – there's some kind of magic there that we had and that's helped us endure."

The Smiths and Joy Division were famous for their fallouts but you ended up working in 'Freebass' with Peter Hook (Joy Division bassist) – did you two clash at all?

Andy: "A little bit, yeah. We're friends now but there were three big personalities in one room. Me and Mani (The Stone Roses) took a back seat because Peter was so controlling."

Not in a malicious way – that's just how he works. It was Freebass then it became two bass then one bass then no bass! It imploded very quickly."

I want to lay to rest an urban myth now. Just before The Smiths recorded 'The Queen Is Dead' it's said that Morrissey left a note on your car basically kicking you out of the band. Morrissey has always denied this but did it happen?

Andy: "Yes! It's not an urban myth nor is it an urban Smith! It's not the kind of thing that you invent. An ex girlfriend still has the note."

Do you think anyone else could have written it?

Andy: "Morrissey's handwriting is very unique and he did used to like writing things on blank postcards at the time so no."

How did you first meet?

Olé: "In 2003 or 2004? We kept in touch. Those were the DJ years for Andy and he was coming back and forth like a yo-yo. He said he was thinking about moving and was sick of the daytime TV and the same faces and wanted to move to New York or LA. I said I knew nothing about LA but I could help him line up a flat in New York and we were upstairs/downstairs neighbours for about a year."

Andy: "I think that's how we got so much work done on the album!"

How did you begin putting the album together?

Olé: "The meat and potatoes of the record was all done in the basement of that building in Brooklyn but all of Andy's instruments were

in the UK and I had very little equipment but we just made do. We had a couple of good ideas and this knock off Stratocaster that a friend gave to me whilst I was saving for my own. I had sold all my instruments in the past because I had some problems but I was getting inspired again and Andy had a lot to do with that."

"It's a dirty record, you know? It really is. It's not done in a conventional way. It's very gritty and there is something very special about that, having to make do and putting the ideas ahead of equipment and the engineering process."

What was it like when you first rehearsed together?

Andy: "It was very liberating and satisfying because we weren't really sure if it was possible given the amount that was going on in the song and all the electronic elements. It was a breeze once we got in there. It went very smoothly and everything sounded great. We've got a drummer and guitarist now."

Olé: "We'll piss off the purists I think because we've stripped elements back. We can't bring five keyboard players and a backing vocalist on tour – that's insane. We've got a drummer who programs and works with a sampler. We've got a guitarist, Andy on bass, me and Delores on vocals and I play a little bit of guitar and we've rigged up some synthesiser playback and that's it. It sounds great."

How much input do you each have in the writing process?

Andy: "Olé and Delores write the lyrics. Everybody throws in whatever ideas they have and things are always shifting and changing. There is no set writing pattern."

Olé: "Some tracks have nine guitar layers added gradually over two years. I don't know why we were just patching and patching. I took cues from Andy on where the verse or chorus was but Delores knew what she wanted immediately and

works very fast. She's the polar opposite of Andy and me and compressed a lot of the ideas into songs."

How well did you know Delores before D.A.R.K.?

Andy: "We kind of got together through my management. I got a message from Delores saying she was interested in writing some new music and getting a project together. So we sent her the instrumental tracks from Jet Lag, which she really liked. We weren't sure if she just wanted to hear the music for a new solo record and I didn't expect to hear back."

What was it like recording with D.A.R.K. compared to The Smiths?

Andy: "We didn't really go into the studio with D.A.R.K.. Most of it was done on rainy afternoons in Brooklyn. There was no pressure – it was just a bit of fun and we had no idea what we were going to do with it. It was completely different because with The Smiths we had three weeks to cut an album and then there would be a tour and three singles and B-sides to choose. It was pressure, pressure, pressure. I liked that but this was the opposite way of working."

Do you feel any nerves about putting out a new record?

Andy: "I'm more excited really. I'm glad to finally get it out there. It's been a long journey, I'm proud of it and I hope people receive it well. Or not! I don't really care."

'Science Agrees' is out this summer on Cooking Vinyl

**"I'M GLAD TO FINALLY GET IT OUT THERE - IT'S BEEN A LONG JOURNEY"
ANDY ROURKE**