

CRYPTEX

Far-out Germans grow and grow on their flamboyant third album.

OKAY, RELAX. CRYPTEX are *not* a death metal act. They're a hard rock group with progressive/art tendencies from Germany that just happens to be signed to a heavy metal label (SPV). Reviewers often call them progressive metal but as a band whose records have featured didgeridoo, cajón and glockenspiel, Cryptex don't have a great deal of time for categorisation.

"The only problem with the term 'progressive metal' is that it suggests us to be this soloing band like Dream Theater and the like, but we aren't," explains guitarist André Mertens. "In that way the label can be a bit annoying. In the end Cryptex is just a name. So folks, listen to the music and think outside the box or risk missing some grand and beautifully designed music."

Since their formation 12 years ago the band have, says multi-instrumentalist Simon Moskon, "Mostly gone under the radar in terms of commercial success – we've been through all imaginable ups and downs but we're still here. Cryptex are like a perennial herb, we will stay and constantly grow!"

Completed by bassist Marc Andrejkovits, the trio describe their newly released third album, *Once Upon A Time*, as "a dark, morbid fairy tale". Its colourful, flamboyant strains suggest that Cryptex grew up as disciples of Queen.

"Yeah, those influences are obvious, and Simon is a big Freddie Mercury fan," Mertens affirms. "The bombastic sound of Queen, also those big choral arrangements, is a very important influence. You could say that we always try to think big."

In a broader sense, Mertens is actually a hardcore Iron Maiden nut. "I think you can hear it in some of the guitar lines," he says with a laugh. "I also like Deep Purple and Led Zeppelin, the old-school hard rock bands with proggy aspects in their music."

"For Simon, his main influences are The Beatles, Queen and also Nick Cave, or straightforward prog bands like Pink Floyd or Genesis," Mertens continues. "Marc, on the other hand, really admires Porcupine Tree, Agent Fresco, King Crimson, Steven Wilson and the like – also some modern bands."

When writing Cryptex music, Mertens says that the trio "try to bundle these different influences to create our own distinctive sound". However, that's not all. "Marc, for instance, also listens to artists like Bon Iver and Simon likes old-school hip-hop from the 1990s. Me? I enjoy indie bands like Alt-J."

Cryptex have so far performed in 23 European countries, including a run of British shows supporting Pain Of Salvation in 2012. They look forward to adding to this total once the coronavirus is vanquished. A few years ago they appeared at a festival with Alice Cooper who, accompanied by his then sidekick Orianthi, observed them from the side of the stage. "Orianthi had been the lead guitarist for Michael Jackson, it was quite surreal to see her watching us," says Simon Moskon.

But better still was to come.

"Afterwards Alice told us: 'You guys are far out,'" he relates proudly. **DML**

PROG FILE



LINE-UP
Simon Moskon (lead vocals, keys, bass), **Marc Andrejkovits** (guitar, bass), **André Jean Henri Mertens** (lead, rhythm and acoustic guitar)

SOUNDS LIKE
 They call it: "Beautiful, ugly, smooth, heavy, hyped, underrated, simple and complex rock music"

CURRENT RELEASE
Once Upon A Time is out now via SPV

WEBSITE
www.cryptexmusic.com



"It was quite surreal to see Michael Jackson's guitarist Orianthi watching us onstage."

Just horsing around: the Pain Of Salvation approved Cryptex.



PRESS/ CORA WERNER