



PHOTO: AP

Metal

CONTINUED FROM P14

TT: What are some of the cohesive elements in your new album?

CB: The idea that the beats need to be really unique and interesting, the idea that starting a song off simply to be something atmospheric and beautiful and really psychedelic and crazy is totally acceptable. We play with every kind of keyboard, loop it, record it, effect it, sample it, play it back through pedal, through another keyboard with an electric wand, and we sit there fucking through la-la land in music; we filled the studio up with balloons so we could live in a surreal environment. We've done some pretty crazy shit, so as a result we've allowed ourselves to be free-thinking rather than "write a song that's gonna be a hit," because we can do that, we know how to do that, and that's fun and we're good at it, but let's do that but let's do it in a completely fresh way that challenges us. That's the hard part — and that's also the most fun.

TT: The song [New Divide] wrote for the new Transformers movie soundtrack, is that any indication of what your new album's going to sound like?

CB: It's kind of a little bit of both yes and no. Yes in the sense that we wrote that song with these ideas in our minds: OK, we don't need to have a hip-hop beat, we can have a really tom-driven, four-to-the-floor, synth-based [sound] and effect-distorted vocals and all that stuff. And out of that came some pretty dope music. I mean the music in *New Divide* is pretty sick, it's pretty original. [Linkin Park also helped write the score for the movie.] The electronic-based element is something that is so pronounced on *New Divide*. I think definitely the electronic element of our next record will be elevated for sure.

TT: Tell me about your own solo project, Dead by Sunrise. How did you come up with that name?

CB: I came up with the name after experiencing many days where I thought I was not going to live to the next day. I was definitely going through a very rough time in my life during certain phases of making this record. One [phase] was in the beginning process of making this record, being divorced. My band was on hiatus and fighting with the record company ... in 2005, 2006 ... and around that period I was drinking whisky like ... it was ridiculous. I literally was not leaving my house, I locked myself in my closet, suffered from delirium tremors, on a daily basis; I thought I was really going to die. I was gray and sickly looking, on the verge of turning yellow, and my liver was swollen. It was horrible.

And then I got remarried and figured out that that was not the way to live. And at the same time while going through all of that, I was also experiencing new, beautiful things — a great, healthy relationship in a loving environment, rediscovering my bandmates through sobriety, and finding out who I really am through all of that, too. So there's a very dark element to the record, a very personal element to the record, and there's a very bright shiny element to it as well.

TT: When you play Taipei are you going to play any songs from your solo album?

CB: [Pauses.] Does my silence give you the answer?

TT: On your blog you wrote that your solo album is going to be "a lot more straightforward rock, with a little bit of an electronic element to it, lots of keys and synths and stuff like that," and that "there are a few elements where I think you'll be able to see what my influence on [Linkin Park] is." Can you elaborate?

CB: I grew up at a time where I was a child of many different things going on that were awesome. There was the New Romantic movement with all these great electronic pop bands coming out of England, there was great dark music coming out of not only the alternative scene all over the world but also in the grunge era and punk re-emergence in the 1990s. All that stuff has made a huge impact on me as an artist, and I drew from all of those elements.

TT: You were one of the first bands to make it big using the Internet. How have changes in the way people consume music — such as buying ringtones, downloading individual tracks instead of buying entire albums — affected how you make music?

CB: [Laughs.] You know we laugh about what people think about the music business, the idea of what that even means. Sometimes we joke, "Oh this is going to make a great ringtone," but it hasn't changed the way we write music. I think one thing we would like to see happen for us in the future and what may be kind of a cool thing is, is an album actually relevant? I'm not even sure anymore if making a record is even necessary. What if it's cooler to release four, five songs every few months? Or every six months? Or release three songs at a time, so you can be touring and creating and releasing music on a regular basis? Why not focus on three great songs, make them as great as you can, and release them in ways that not only give fans what they want but also give bands an opportunity to stay working rather than go disappear for two years?

I think that's one thing the Internet has [changed] in terms of how people get music, because most people buy singles now. They hear a song on the radio and they go, "Oh cool!" and they go to whatever site they go to to get music and they buy it. And if there's more songs by the band they haven't heard, they listen to it for 30 seconds and go, "That song sucks. That song sucks. Oh I like that one! I'll get that one too." And they make their minds up the same way record executives do [after listening to] 15 seconds of a song. I mean you can tell, dude. You're a fan of music. If you listen to 15 to 20 seconds of a song, if it doesn't have you in those 20 seconds then you don't like the song, right? It's turned the world into one giant record company with 3 billion critics. That's really cool! Forcing people to make better shit and deal with having a very small niche of followers. There's nothing wrong with that. That's where most bands are anyway.

Linkin Park, Hoobastank, and The All-American Rejects play Banciao Stadium (台北縣立板橋體育館) on Aug. 13 at 6pm. Tickets are available through ERA ticketing outlets, online at www.ticket.com.tw, or at 7-Eleven ibon kiosks.

[ART JOURNAL]

Out of Africa

The outstanding exhibit *Fatal Beauty: Traditional Weapons From Central Africa* reveals how iron weapons formed a vital part of the continent's rich cultural traditions

BY NOAH BUCHAN
STAFF REPORTER

“For the executions, on the one hand, the victim was attached to a chair-like construction, whereas on the other hand a young tree was chosen for its elasticity. This tree was bent with force and attached to the head of the person to be executed, the head being placed in a net-like rope contraption. The executor with one well-adjusted blow severed the head from the trunk. This head, under the force of the suddenly released tree, was thus projected far away.”

The above account, written by Leon Hanolet in 1897 for the magazine *La Belgique Coloniale*, appears alongside a large black-and-white photograph showing the execution it describes. The image is one of many displayed along with 500 iron weapons in *Fatal Beauty: Traditional Weapons From Central Africa*, an outstanding exhibit currently running at the National Museum of History.

A display of Central African weapons of this size and scope has never been shown before in Taiwan and the museum has clearly done its homework. The weapons (acquired from European museums and private collections), large photos, illustrations and maps are all clearly marked in Chinese and English and concisely arranged.

Working in collaboration with guest curator Jan Elsen and Marc Leo Felix, an expert on Central African ritual and art, the museum divides most of the exhibit into “18 armament groups.” The exhibit’s principal theme is to present the diversity of the region’s swords, spears, daggers, sickles and throwing knives as a means of illustrating the importance that these weapons occupied in the tribal societies where they were used.

This theme is underlined by additional sections on iron smelting, weapons as a form of currency and the role of blacksmiths in tribal society, which provides context and depth and reveals that iron weapons bore as much a monetary and ritualistic importance in Central African society as they did one that was functional. A section on firearms demonstrates the adverse influence colonialism exerted on these peoples — a subtheme of the exhibit.



An execution is shown in this photo, taken in 1913 in what is now the Democratic Republic of the Congo. PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF HISTORY

A map of Africa accompanies the introduction for each group, with tribal borders highlighted in yellow. The museum lists the names of each tribal group (there are a total of 268 for all 18 groups) in high-block lettering beside which are a few paragraphs describing the region’s geographical characteristics and the weapons used.

For example, Group 1, which consists of the Fang, Kota, Bumali, Bakwele, Djem, Ndzabi, Ndassa, Wumbu, Mbaamba, Ndumu and Mbede peoples, covers an area that spans what is today’s Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and the Republic of the Congo. The introduction to this section states that the main weapons used by this group included bird-headed axes (as utensils and for rituals), crossbows (hunting) and barbed javelins (warfare). The weapons, dating from the 19th century, are clearly displayed below the short blurbs.

The illustrated maps introducing each section are of particular interest because they highlight the artificially imposed borders that make up today’s Africa. For example, the border separating Cameroon and the Central African Republic cuts straight through the traditional lands of the Gbaya peoples in Group 2.

The section on iron weapons as a form of currency illustrates how rules imposed by Europeans disrupted tribal society. The



Short swords, from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF HISTORY

An adze, bottom, and axe. PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF HISTORY

EXHIBITION NOTES:

WHAT: *Fatal Beauty: Traditional Weapons From Central Africa*
WHERE: National Museum of History (國立歷史博物館), 49 Nanhai Rd, Taipei City (台北市南海路49號)
WHEN: Until Aug. 16. The museum is open Tuesdays through Sundays, from 10am to 6pm; closed on Mondays. Call (02) 2361-0270
ADMISSION: NT\$30
ON THE NET: www.nmh.gov.tw

curators cite as an example the policies of King Leopold II of Belgium who signed a decree in 1887 setting up a common currency in the Belgian Congo similar to that found in Europe. This policy upset the traditional bartering system where prearranged rules of exchange determined the value of an object. As Jacques A. Schoonheydt writes in the exhibition catalogue, “... it was a lengthy and brutal process. The scale of values which pertained at the time was profoundly upset ... [and] led to a breakdown of a whole series of traditions which had evolved over the years.”

The *mbili ngbiaka* spear point of the Ngbaka ethnic group (given as part of the marriage dowry) and the *ngindza* throwing knife of the Mbugu people (used for barter) are



An undated image of a war dance. PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF HISTORY

two examples of these functionally useless but valuable objects cited by Schoonheydt to illustrate the complex relationship between iron weapons and economic transactions.

The introduction of firearms into the region reduced the need for iron weapons and the art of blacksmithing went into steep decline. This section serves as



somewhat of a depressing coda to the exhibit and one walks away from it with the feeling that the demise of the rich tradition of weapon production serves as a metaphor for the destruction of the traditions of the region’s people.

One small gripe is that the museum uses a smoky-glass as a surface on which to project accompanying films, making the already grainy images almost impossible to see. But this is a small drawback in an exhibit that reveals the important role iron weapons played in Central Africa’s tribal culture.

Atop Trafalgar Square, Britons stand among giants

Antony Gormley’s ‘One & Other’ project aims to stretch the boundaries of sculpture by placing 2,400 people on Trafalgar Square’s grand and usually vacant fourth plinth, for an hour apiece

BY SARAH LYALL
NY TIMES NEWS SERVICE, LONDON

Trafalgar Square is a place of patriotism and past glory, of dead men posing in perpetuity on enormous pedestals. But on Monday, it became a place where Suren Seneviratne, a 22-year-old disc jockey, stood atop a 8m-high plinth, wearing a homemade panda costume and hyperkinetically talking on the phone.

His remarks may not have been profound — “I’m on the plinth!” he informed one caller, in an exchange caught by the microphone he was wearing — but Seneviratne was making art. He was the seventh participant in *One & Other*, a grand project that is meant to stretch the boundaries of sculpture by placing 2,400 ordinary people on the square’s grand and usually vacant fourth plinth, for an hour apiece, from now through Oct. 6.

“This is not about privilege, not about power, not about war or honoring the dead,” said the artist, Antony Gormley. “It’s about celebrating the living.”

London’s mayor, Boris Johnson,

had a different take: “It’s a triumphant meditation on the themes of fame and glory,” he declared. “My friends, someday your plinth will come.”

The idea seems simple, but has been fairly complicated to pull off. More than 17,000 people have applied for the slots, mostly through the Internet, with winners — who have to be over 16 and living in Britain — selected by a computer algorithm that accounts for geographical diversity. The slots for September and October have yet to be filled.

Plinthers, as they are being called, are allotted specific slots and expected to show up on time, even if it is, say, 2am or raining. They must spend the hour alone, but are otherwise allowed to do whatever they feel like doing, within reason.

They can even take their clothes off. “Nakedness is absolutely essential,” Gormley said in an interview. “Nakedness is to art what the ball is to football.”

How about sex? “No sex up there,” he decreed. “Sex after art.”



A participant in the ‘One and Other’ project stands on the empty fourth plinth in Trafalgar Square, in London, on Monday. PHOTO: EPA

If plinthers miss their slots, substitutes take over. It is unclear what happens if anyone suddenly needs to go to the bathroom.

Future participants have announced plans to hold birthday parties for themselves, to raise awareness for diseases, and to communicate with the crowd via, for instance, semaphore flags. One plinther, an aquatic scientist, plans to “highlight the importance of clean water for people’s health by dressing up in a poo costume,” according to the organizers, before putting on a fish outfit “to illustrate the dangers of overfishing.”

The proceedings are being broadcast in a live webcast on www.

oneandother.co.uk, with a disclaimer, true to Gormley’s warnings, that “offensive content” may appear.

At 9am on Monday, the first plinther, 35-year-old Rachel Wardell, a homemaker from Sleaford, England, was raised by a cherry-picker onto the plinth (a safety net has been installed around it, lest people slip or, worse, attempt to jump off). She spent her allotted hour holding aloft a large green sign that said “NSPCC,” for the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.

She was followed by Jason Clark, a 41-year-old nurse from Brighton, who just stood there. He looked poignant and vulnerable, surrounded by such larger-than-life bronze figures as the 19th century general Sir Charles James Napier, over on a neighboring plinth.

Clark intended to provoke “questions about what right I have to be there,” he said in an interview. “I’m going there as a representative of ordinary people,” he explained. “I had to decide what to do, and that’s when I decided not to do anything.”

Then Jill Gatcum, 51, a technology consultant, used a helium machine to blow up 60 balloons, each representing a charity, which she then released. Battling a sudden downpour, she treated herself to a bit of helium at one point, breaking into a few falsetto lines from *Follow the Yellow Brick Road*.

In an age when reality television blurs the line between entertainment and cruelty, Gormley said, one of the things he likes about his project is

that it is competition-free.

“We’re not voting people off the plinth because they haven’t fulfilled our expectations,” he said. “This is a celebration of self-expression.”

Leslie Cooke, a 60-year-old executive secretary, pronounced herself confused by the furry little tail on the panda-outfitted Seneviratne. “If he’s a normal person, why is he wearing that rabbit costume?” she said.

Scott Illman, a pub owner dressed as an old-fashioned town crier, read aloud a rigorously rhyming poem about the superiority of his pubs. Steve Platt, 54, used a chalkboard to share his Twitteresque on-the-spot musings. “I am not a pigeon,” he announced. And: “Where’s my money, Ben?”

Down on the ground, spectators meditated on what they might do if they were up there. Suggestions ranged from doing “something to represent the need for world peace” to dressing as Napoleon and shaking a vengeful fist at Admiral Nelson, smugly lordling over everyone on his exceptionally tall column.

Johnson, the mayor, said: “I’d probably have to make an interminable Gadhafi-like speech about the bus subsidy.”

“I’m not sure it’s legal to do what I’d want to do,” said Anna Drezec, a 28-year-old accountant.

Eliza Pimlott, a secretary, said: “I’m tempted to wear a high-visibility jacket and shout at people to stop doing whatever they’re doing. I bet they would listen to me.”