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Brian Auger, Julie Driscoll & Trinity

„Open“



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Genre: Rock

Brian Auger talks about the album „Open“

The album was done in five hours. We did it live, because we had the studio only for one night. Richard Hill did the arrangements for „Open“ between me and him. Only the big band parts from tracks like i.e. „In and Out“, „Black Cat“, „Tramp“, „Why (Am I treated so bad)“ were done first. Then we send the brass section out to the pub to have a drink, while we started to cut the tracks. We had invited all our friends to gather



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round in the studio, so at least we had people to play to. It was like one of those evenings. And as it got late, you can hear Julie saying "not too fast" when we were doing "Season of the Witch" which was the last thing we cut. We were all exhausted by then.

We were playing in a club called the Speakeasy in London, for some reason the drummer went missing after the first set. So we were waiting for the drummer to come back and start the second set, and he did not show for a little while and the club owner said, hey, what's on - you guys have to start. And I said well, we're waiting for the drummer, I'm sorry, you know. So I told the guitar player, play this rhythmic lick. And he started to chug away on the guitar; we ended up making this groove, just playing away. I put some stops in there and played percussive bongos on the organ as well. So it got all very crazy and people loved it. We called it **"Good-bye Jungle Telegraph"** because there was no drummer. It was in fact so successful in the club that I decided to do in the recording studio.

"Isola Natale" is a special island. My wife comes from Sardinia. She was born there.

Also, her second name is Ella, and Natale is her family name. This was very funny because when I met her, I learned that Ella means "she" in Italian" and "Natale" means "Christmas", so her name in fact is She Christmas... (laughs) When I first went out to meet her parents and her family, I received tremendous hospitality from everybody there in Sardinia, and I enjoyed what I think is one of the most beautiful islands in the world. So I decided to write a little tune for the "Christmas Island" or the "Island of Birth", whatever you wish to interpret.

Julie and I were interested in the recordings of an American songwriter called David Ackles. At some point, tapes were sent over of some tunes he was writing. Of all **"Road To Cairo"** really took our attention, the type of moody, psychedelic track with a story. The Cairo involved in fact is not located in Egypt but in Ohio. It may be that one, because there are several in America. I have driven past Cairo in Ohio many times. It is just a little town in the middle of nowhere, in a farming community. The song is about finding the way home. So it has nothing with getting to see the pyramids. I did the best arrangement I could on it.

It went into the charts in several countries. Unfortunately, we ran into a streak of bad luck at that time. The tune, it reached # 30 on the charts, I think it was on the main Melody Maker charts. So we were poised to get into the Top Twenty, I think it would have done well. And we were on a TV show, a big show called the "Amon Andrews Show". Amon Andrews was huge; he was the number one personality of British TV at that time. This show should have sent us easily into the Top 20 or even Top 10. We were going to perform live. But then the recording desk broke down, a major technical problem. Julie got pretty annoyed and was not too kind to the host. Because, actually, we had no more time that year to do anything in



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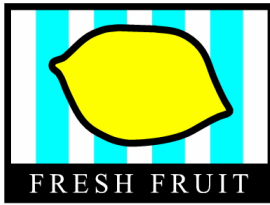
England, our itinerary was very crowded. That show was supposed to be that last shot to getting into the Top 10 in England. That was just unfortunate, and although they said, you have to come back next year, we will do it again. By the time we got back into England, the time was really gone for "Road to Cairo".

I was living in Twickenham at that time. There was a black Cat that constantly came to my doorstep and tried to get into my house. I open the door and this thing would be waiting for me, and I would go "no, no" and close the door in a hurry. I don't know who it belonged to. I guess it belonged to somebody in the apartments I was living in. It had nothing to do with me being superstitious but I just did not want to have a cat sneak in and me be out all day, and the cat was trapped in the house. At one point, it must have slipped in when I was coming home from a gig, when had left the door open this moment too long. Because I woke up in the middle of this night mare and this thing was actually sitting on my chest looking at me. It was a very scary moment, and lyrics of "**Black Cat**" begin to appear... later the lyrics where connecting with a poem by Robert Browning called "Childe Roland to the Dark Tower came". "Childe" is an archaic aristocratic title for a young man that has not been knighted yet. It's all about a night mare, and also referring to a line from Shakespeare's King Lear.

Miss Baker was a friend of the family, at a very young age - I think she was only in her middle 20's, suddenly just passed away very quickly with cancer. We were really stunned; none of our peers had passed away. While I was messing around on the piano, written this tune and gotten it into shape, I thought maybe I dedicate that to Brenda, to have a little R.I.P. from myself – "**Lament for Miss Baker**".

"**Save me**" was released in France, and it went to #1. So we went over to do the TV and all the promotional work. It was ridiculous; there were the Paparazzi at the airport, and people kept asking me who I was. Are you Miss Driscoll's musical director? Or something to do with the management or... and I said, no, not really, I played on the single. I did not realize why until we were at dinner. A lady from Polydor came, by the way, Brian, I brought you some 45's. And she took them out and put them on the table and - I will never forget it when I looked at it - and I said, wow, wait a minute! The picture was only of Julie and it said "Save Me" pt. 1 and 2 Julie Driscoll. I pull the record out - and again that's all it says! It was like Muhammad Ali had punched me in the guts! After like four or five years of work we have finally a number one, and I'm left off – I couldn't believe it! When I look at it now, the start of our success really was the start of the band falling to pieces.

This is so surprising because Giorgio Gomelsky would go, no, they made a mistake here, they have to change it – and I believed him. Julie believed him, and so I would let it go. This was in January. In October we would go to Scandinavia for an hour's special and I remember



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saying to Giorgio “Listen, this is the first time in Scandinavia. Make sure there are no mistakes here”. When we get there, the same thing: only Julie Driscoll on the single. Back in London, I looked at my contract and realized that Giorgio had signed me to a company, his company that did not exist. A lawyer who checked it gave me my contract, here you go, Brian, that’s none and void. In fact, I was able to get out but Julie wasn’t. Also, we never found out what happened with the deal made with Atlantic records for “Open”, Definitely What” and “Street Noise”, three albums which were big with the hits. There was talk of a six figure advance, and we don’t know where the hell that went. We never saw a penny.

TRACKLISTING:

1. In And Out
2. Isola Natale
3. Black Cat
4. Lament For Miss Baker
5. Goodbye Jungle Telegraph
6. Tramp
7. Why (Am I Treated So Bad)
8. A Kind Of Love In
9. Break It Up
10. Season Of The Witvh
11. I've Gotta Go Now (Bonus Track)
12. Save Me (Bonus Track)
13. Road To Cairo (Bonus Track)
14. This Wheel's on Fire (Bonus Track)