Vision Éternel Interview for Abridged Pause Blog

This interview was conducted with Alexandre Julien for the Abridged Pause Blog on August 30th of 2013.

-Hello Alex. Thank you for taking the time to answer these few questions. First of all, what has been happening with Vision Éternel since you released "*The Last Great Torch Song*" last year?

Thanks for having me over! I'm always happy to do interviews. The current status of Vision Éternel is delicate. When I released "*The Last Great Torch Song*", Vision Éternel's fourth EP, in March of 2012, I speculated that it may be the last Vision Éternel album. But I still really fell like there's a void if I was to not release anything else, partly because there is a lot of unheard material and partly because I still have one more story to tell. In February of 2013 I started recording pieces of a new song, which may end up on a fifth EP or just on a compilation.

-What is the current mood and genre for Vision Éternel? Do you still stick to "*melogaze*"?

"*Melogaze*" was created a few years ago when I wasn't sure how to categorize Vision Éternel's music. Six and a half years later, I'm still not sure what to categorize Vision Éternel and I abide to the term "*melogaze*". The "*melodramatic*" aspect to it certainly still applies, and the "shoegaze" aspect seems to continue to be relevant, even though it's probably closer to minimalist ambient. I don't think that Vision Éternel can fit in a specific category, but at the same time, it's not all that different. I wouldn't say that I'm inventing something new, but like Alfred Hitchcock said, "self-plagiarism is style", which means that once you start to have a sound of

your own, you have your own style.

-Your last album, "*The Last Great Torch Song*" is raved about in reviews. How do you feel about it and how do you feel it differs from the third EP, "*Abondance De Perils*"?

I'm really happy about the reviews of the fourth EP. It's a really amazing release and I know it sounds cliché but I do feel it is my best. It is a weird composite though. It took so long to put it together. Two of the songs are re-recordings, one from each of the first two EPs. The other three songs were more odds and sods that I polished up and really worked on, and had others help me on, and they turned out better than I could have imagined. Initially, I wanted more collaborators on the album, but some of them dropped out or never finished their homework. The people that did help me out however, Garry Brents, Alexander Fawcett, Howie Change, Eiman Nejad and Marina Polak, really made it something special. I think that's the biggest difference between "*Abondance De Perils*" and "*The Last Great Torch Song*". Because most of the material was recorded within the same time-frame but the help of genius musicians made it something more developed, more profound, more mature.

-I'm really interested to find out the concept of the albums and how they relate to the artwork, which seem to be concepts themselves.

I'm a little bit OCD when it comes to concepts. Every single album that I have ever released always had a concept. Thankfully, for the sake of explanation, Vision Éternel's concepts are more understandable than those of Soufferance, one of my other musical project. For Vision Éternel, each album is based on a different girl. The song titles are directly related to them. Each EP is a concept of a heartbreak, as original as that sounds… The artwork not only reflects the album themes but also attempts to connect the

releases together. The first and second EPs, "*Seul Dans L'obsession*" and "*Un Automne En Solitude*", have similar artworks and the same font, designed by myself. I was never an amazing graphic artist but it was effective in showing the early beginnings of the band.

The third and fourth EPs, "*Abondance De Périls*" and "*The Last Great Torch Song*", both have artwork created by Marina Polak. That is, the picture was "taken" (or rather found) by her. That picture has an interesting story of its own. Marina Polak was my roommate in 2009 and 2010 and she was a photographer, studying photography school. She was a great photographer and I asked her to help me with the artwork for "*Abondance De Perils*" after I had failed to come up with something that I liked. We went through pictures which she had when we landed on this breathless image of a couple standing on a dock overtaken by a typhoon. I knew right away that I wanted it. I could feel how romantic that picture was. She then told me that she hadn't actually taken the picture but that she had found the negative in a garbage can while visiting Poland. So legally she held the rights to it…

-Nearly the entire Vision Éternel catalog has been continuously released by your own record labels, either through Mortification Records or, more recently, through Abridged Pause Recordings. Is there a reason for this?

It is true that each of the four EPs have been released by my own record labels. The main reason is because all of the Vision Éternel songs are copyrighted under Abridged Pause Publishing and I ask to keep the publishing rights to my music. By releasing my music myself, it just makes everything easier. I'm very picky about who I trust to have original material for Vision Éternel. I've allowed some other record labels to release certain things in the past, namely Frozen Veins Records and Dedicated Records, but it always becomes a problem of distribution. I hold Vision Éternel very dear to my heart and I need to feel in complete control of everything,

from the recording to the artwork to the concept of the album and even it's promotion. I feel that by working with my own imprints I can achieve that.

-And within those releases, I noticed that only a small portion has had a CD release, while most are only digital. Do you have a preference for formats?

The very first EP, "*Seul Dans L'obsession*", was released on CD-Rs before it came out digitally. I made maybe ten copies at the most. I'm still trying to remember who I gave them to! There were plans for "*Un Automne En Solitude*" to have a CD release as well, but that didn't happen. Then two years after that, a Japanese label, Frozen Veins Records, released a compilation of the first two EPs as "*An Anthology Of Past Misfortunes*". At that time it was sort of a discography because I hadn't released anything else. "*An Anthology Of Past Misfortunes*" will be re-issued, likely by Abridged Pause Recordings, when Vision Éternel is fully done. I have quite a few demos and alternate recordings of songs that will be great on there. Right now my ideal plan would be to have it in a boxed set; each EP on 7″ vinyl with a CD for the demos, alternate versions and b-sides, and a DVD for the music videos and interviews. There have also been some other non-official compilation CDs that I've burnt and hand-designed for serious fans that asked me. It's always possible to get a CD of any of my music, even if a CD hasn't been officially released. People just need to ask!

-Can you talk to us about your influences for Vision Éternel. A lot of bands in ambient record covers to gain attention. I've never heard any cover from Vision Éternel, has their been any?

That's something that I've always had a bit of trouble pin-pointing. When I used to live in New Jersey, there were a lot of local bands that were influencing me, or that later influenced me. Black Sand and Starless Nights was probably the

first band that I really heard use reverb in a post-rock sense. Eliminator (the New Jersey thrash metal band) has always been incredibly helpful as well. In their first album they have this ambient segue at the end of the last song "*Prescription for Extinction… Time Enough At Last*". I always joked around with Eiman Nejad, the guitarist, vocalist and principle songwriter in Eliminator, that it was influenced by Vision Éternel. But the truth is that Eiman had some solo experimentation songs in the mid-2000's that sounded just like Vision Éternel. He used to send them to me and that was a major influence. The EBow parts are probably influenced by Faith No More (the songs "*Midlife Crisis*" and "*Stripsearch*"), Limp Bizkit (the song "*Boiler*") and The Smashing Pumpkins (who have used it on a number of songs), as far away from my music as this sounds. In Montreal, it was extremely difficult to find an EBow. As for covers, it's hard to find something that would sound decent with just guitars. Early on, I seriously considered doing a cover of Ozzy Osbourne's "*Killer of Giants*".

-Thank you so much for all this information Alexandre Julien! Closing words?

Thanks to you to! I can never get enough of interviews. I'm so grateful for them. Thank you for being a fan of my music and if anyone hasn't listened to the most recent Vision Éternel EP, check it out "*The Last Great Torch Song*".