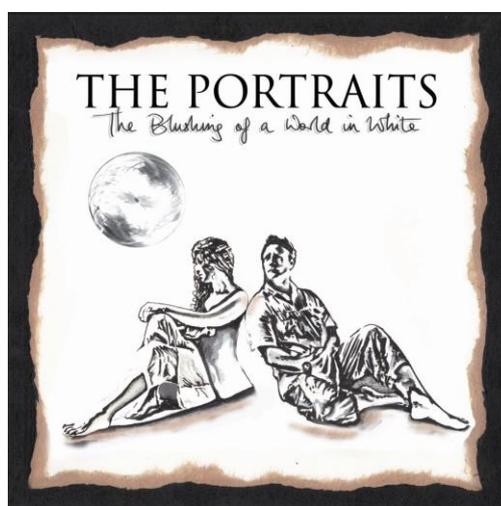




Music Review: The Portraits - *The Blushing Of A World In White*

Author: Jeff Perkins — Published: Jun 21, 2010 at 9:31 am

Last year I enthusiastically [reviewed](#) The Portraits second album *Timescape*. It proved to be an album that radiated artistic craft with a set of beautifully constructed songs. Now we have their latest, the perfectly entitled *The Blushing Of A World In White*, which has been released today. Quite simply, with this beautifully written album they have fulfilled all the promise that was clearly evident in their earlier work.



The Portraits are, Jeremy and Lorraine, an Anglo-Irish folk inspired duo living further into France than I do. Their music contains a deep passion for life and an honest understanding of the power of all types of human emotion. They use their musical palette of soft pastel shades with the odd, subtle splash of radiant, vivid primary colour, to the best possible use.

A quick look at the notes that arrived with the album will reveal a couple who really care about the world around them. They successfully manage to convey this, not only through their music, but by utilising much of the profit that comes from it for a school in Mandalay, Burma. The school is responsible for rescuing orphaned children in their thousands whilst also housing and teaching them.

Reading on I am appalled to hear about the situation in modern Burma. It says, "Its military government denies aid to a starving population and shelter and love to orphans. Destitute children are rounded up and forced to become soldiers or road builders."

This terrible realisation of what is going on outside our often cosy personal existence sits in sharp contrast to the ebb and flow of such atmospherically moving soundscapes.

It should be pointed out that despite having this wholly worthwhile cause close to their hearts, they are not drum beating political musicians. Instead, they carefully deliver a warm, sensitive tapestry of intelligently written songs which ease into your mind amid a glow of beautiful harmonies.

The songs create the perfect environment in which to reflect on the all too real tragedies that exist in the world. This, like *Timescape*, is an album that you can download by offering whatever you choose or can afford to pay towards the Burma cause. It is an admirable and characteristically honest approach to assist a situation where justice, even for the most vulnerable, is apparently absent.

The Blushing Of A World In White is a gently stripped down affair from their previous two releases. They explain this approach by saying that they are "keen to move to fresh sonic territory with each new release." They add that the album is "an acoustic affair, stripping away the electronic facades of its predecessors and allowing their now trademark choir-like vocal arrangements to shine through."

Shine through they certainly do. "The Writer" arrives with a luscious piano introduction before Lorraine's silk smooth vocals, leads to a dovetailed harmony. It acts as the perfect introduction to an album that sees The Portraits take the next step along their creative musical path. The flame flickering opening of "Strong Cien Secretos" introduces another successfully multi- flavoured song.

"Undo" radiates song writing maturity that will come as no surprise to anyone who has heard the previous two albums. Once again they highlight their ability to shine a light on the contrasts of this crazy, often unjust world through music that can deeply touch the emotions.

By the time "Only Our Friends We Choose" arrived I knew that this is, without doubt, The Portraits' finest work to date. "Liberty" again blends the textures that make their musical palette so rich. "Queens Of Ice" typically possesses lyrics that are as satisfying to read as they are to hear.

The mid-section has the delightful "Our Time," and "I Am Made Queen" leading to a deeply moving "Colours," a song that radiates a rare, honest conviction which deserves our attention. Suffice it to say that there is simply no room for any dips in form on an album that has been so carefully and lovingly created.

"Click, Click, Click" steps back up, before "Bago Girl" delivers another highlight with a lovingly soft, yet powerfully thought provoking song that really touches the heart. If people heard this before choosing the amount to send for the album, then I am sure it would have a profound effect on their decision. Lastly, "Old Stone Table" provides the album with a delightful ending.

Please download this album and, when you do, remember the inspiration behind it. What you will get is a beautifully crafted album, and the knowledge that you have helped support two highly talented artists and a cause well worth caring about.

All details can be found by visiting The Portraits [website](#) or [MySpace page](#).

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Jeff is a writer who lives in France. He writes CD/DVD box sets, music reviews and has had a book published about David Byron of Uriah Heep. He is 'busy' exploring the music of Europe with his wife Debbie and dog Dylan. It's Dylan that does the writing of course. ...

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