

Transglobal Underground release new album The Stone Turntable

Release date:

Last September on a rainy Wednesday in the deserted streets of Wapping, surrounded by emptied warehouses, abandoned shopping centres and unused shiny office blocks left over from the last boom, the London based collective Transglobal Underground returned to their roots. Starting out with a few rough ideas, some loops and some live grooves, they entered the studio and started work on, "The Stone Turntable." Transglobal Underground's last two albums, "Impossible Broadcasting" and the more recent, award winning "Moonshout" were notable for the collective's fluid line-up and numerous collaborations across Europe, Asia and Africa. After the European journey of last years side project 'A Gathering of Strangers,' "The Stone Turntable" finds them back in London and the main feature of the album is the band that has come to be recognized as one of the UK's best live acts. However this isn't a live album, but the music started as a series of rough ideas and experiments that were then crafted into a set that starts where "Moonshout" left off. With a mixture of raw, funky grooves such as the '70s clavinet driven "Don't Let Me Skip a Beat," the fanfare for the tribes of West London and Bombay, "Tribe Organiser" and "The Stone Turntable" a song that started as a four bar loop but expanded into a whole choir and a brass section, the band once more set out on a sonic journey. A rejuvenated TGU rediscovered their melodic side on songs such as "Deolali Junglee" an affectionate Bollywood tribute and 'Sing for the Love of Your Life.' Sheema Mukherjee's sitar once again takes the instrumental starring role, but there is more of an emphasis on Mantu's drums and Tuup's congas, plus a greater use of brass and reeds than on any previous TGU outing. And of course there are a few special guests....ex Asian Dub Foundation bassist Dr Das adding his unmistakable groove on several tracks. UK rappers Shimmerbaby and Dizraeli adding their distinctive vocal styles to; "Tribe Organiser" and "Sing for the Love of Your Life" respectively. Afro jazz artist Kevin Haynes appears on 'Gunsinger' and long time Natacha Atlas and Banco de Gaia associate Larry Whelan features on horns and Indian reeds. The combination of TGU and guests completed work on fifteen tracks that form, "The Stone Turntable" and have once again delivered an expansive cinematic/musical journey that though created in London radiates with global energy. It sounds both ahead of its time but also echoes the past; it can be danced to but also sat and listened to, possibly the total distillation of the Transglobal sound.

TRANS-GLOBAL UNDERGROUND - General Biography

Twenty years ago in the early nineties, drum and bass were two separate things, Asian music was still bracketed as exotic, dub and reggae as dead and anyone playing dance music at any tempo than 100bpm was taken out and shot. Into this sad epoch emerged an ever changing line-up of DJ's, producers and musicians of all sorts of backgrounds and cultures, linked by a refusal to be straight jacketed into one style and a belief that mixin

musical genres didn't have to be some sort of obscure artistic statement.

Since then, Trans-Global Underground have become notorious for mixing musical styles and rhythms with a total disregard for musical genres, technological barriers and common sense. Sometimes they've been right in the

public eye, sometimes behind the screen, but they've never stopped being influential. Their mix whatever would have been unthinkable if they hadn't thought of it first; now that sort of cultural mash-up is commonplace. But they've long moved on...

A little history: Their first single 'Temple Head' was a statement of intention and gained the status of a club anthem despite operating at a slow funk tempo with Indian classical rhythms, Brazilian percussion and guitar solos. It took a while for the rest the world to catch up, but by the mid-nineties the growth of ambient and trance styles had created a hunger for new ideas and Trans-Global Underground had plenty. By now an acclaimed live act featuring Arabesque vocals, Nepalese temple guardians and a multitude of rappers and percussionists, their first album, 'Dream of 100 Nations' reached the top fifty, got ecstatic reviews and topped the indie charts... the record company, Nation Records was totally independent at the time. The second album, 'International Times' went top forty and launched the group into Europe.

The schedule got heavier as TGU started remixing and producing, recording the album 'Diaspora' under the name of vocalist Natacha Atlas, while at the same time bringing out a third album 'Psychic Karaoke.' By now the band had developed a reputation in central and eastern Europe that found a reflection in the gypsy influences in the fourth album, 'Rejoice Rejoice,' subsequent recordings in Prague, Budapest and Sofia and tours that took them as from Kazakhstan to Venezuela and from Cape Town to Sri Lanka.

TGU have diversified even further over the years....producers/DJs Hamid ManTu and Tim Whelan relocated in Cairo for a brief period at the end of the 90s, working for artists like Hakim, Khaled and Kazem El Sahar before the release of the 5th album. 'Yes Boss Food Corner' sent TGU on a worldwide journey that lasted 3 years and took them through to the 6th album, 'Impossible Broadcasting,' with which they came home...most of them anyway....to the UK and set up their own label, Mule Satellite.

In 2007, 'Moonshout,' their seventh album, came out to the best reception they'd had since the Nation records days, the albums energy and ambition perhaps bolstered by the group being once again totally independent and plotting their own course. This was the climax of a busy period back in the studio which found them contributing music to the Arabic/English language film 'Whatever Lola Wants' and the Imagine Village project on Real World. 'Moonshout' received a BBC World Music award in 2008 and confirmed the collective's continuing creativity.

'Moonshout' was followed up in 2010 by one of their most ambitious projects: 'A Gathering of Strangers,' was an album/collaboration/live show featuring a cast of traditional vocalists, musicians, Djs and visual artists from across Europe from Ireland to Bulgaria, and toured around the UK in 2010 along with the release of an acclaimed album of songs of emigration and exile from all over the continent.

No one at the start would have predicted that after all these years Trans-Global Underground would still have a large amount of respect and influence, that they would still have a loyal following and that they would still have the energy to continue a touring schedule that would finish most groups off. Trans-Global Underground developed a life of its own, goes where it will for it's own reasons. Everyone simply follows.