

LUPEN CROOK and the MURDERBIRDS

THE MEDWAY TOWNS, Kent, Dysunited Kingdom – 26 October 2009
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LUPEN CROOK & THE MURDERBIRDS SUPPORT YOUNGMINDS CHARITY Curse Of The Mirror Wicked EP Released To Highlight Mental Health Awareness

Sunshine Devils
Devil's Son
Boy That Won't Be Told
Love Underground
Of Lovers And Lost Children
Dead Girls And Daggers

Recorded live by Jim Riley at Ranscombe Studios on 22 October 2009

On Monday November 16th 2009, Lupen Crook & The Murderbirds will release a six-track EP entitled **Curse Of The Mirror Wicked**, in support of the UK's YoungMinds charity. This EP will be free to download from the band's website, but anyone downloading will be encouraged to make a donation – at whatever level they feel appropriate – to support YoungMinds. All donations to this project will go direct to the charity.

YoungMinds (www.youngminds.org.uk) is the UK's leading charity committed to improving the emotional well-being and mental health of children & young people and empowering their parents and carers. This is an issue about which the band feels strongly, based on direct personal experience. Lupen Crook was diagnosed with schizoaffective disorder in his late teens and has lived with its effects over the past decade.

Despite hospital treatment and medication, he remains affected by a condition that must be managed on a day-to-day basis. It has informed many of the experiences of his adult life, which have fed into his creative output. While he has referred to it in passing in interviews over the years, he has not talked in detail about it until now. The decision to support YoungMinds is based on a relapse that he experienced this summer.

The EP, which was completed just over three weeks before the planned release date, contains two songs written last year and four written in recent months. The themes of most of the songs – explained in the edited interview overleaf – relate directly to Crook's mental health experiences and his recent relapse in particular. They highlight both the positives and negatives of living with such a disorder.

Schizoaffective disorder is just one of many mental health and broader emotional well-being issues affecting young people, including depression, anxiety, eating disorders, self-harm and ADHD amongst others. **Please support this release and the YoungMinds charity in any way you can.** We are counting on fans, bloggers and journalists to spread the word and to donate generously.

Lupen Crook and The Murderbirds will release their third album in early 2010. Ongoing information about the band's creative output across a variety of media (music, video, artwork, writing) can be found on the band's website at www.lupencrookandthemurderbirds.co.uk. The band can be contacted via the website for further information, interview availability and so on.

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Interview with Lupen Crook – October 24th 2009

You were diagnosed with schizoaffective disorder in your late teens. How did this diagnosis come about and how was it treated?

As a teenager, I was a strange, wiry person, prone to introversion and mania. Medication failed. After raging into my local doctor's surgery, maddened, desperately crying and shouting, I was taken straight to hospital. I was just 17 then, and spent the following four weeks residing in one of Medway's psychiatric wards. I was a complete bloody mess.

I was put onto a long-term course of anti-psychotic drugs. I was told by my team of doctors that my 'obsessive interest' in music and its associative delusions were causing my symptoms to worsen. They advised me to stop at once. A sheer belief in my songs and music meant I had no option but to refuse their advice.

Less than a year later, I spent a further five days in the same psychiatric ward and then again a few months later found myself at my wits' ends, taking up residence in a hospital bed. That last time I discharged myself and disappeared of the radar completely. When I reappeared a few years later, I was signed off sick until 2010, and that was that, until now.

Ten years later, what are the challenges of living with the condition on a day-to-day basis?

Living with schizoaffective disorder on a day to day basis is simply learning to live with yourself. It is not any more or less difficult than anybody else's struggles and strifes, because it's all relative to who you are and how that feels. For the majority of time I can operate and live comfortably being the twisted and often troubled individual I am.

There's a long and clichéd tradition of associations between "art" and "madness". How does schizoaffective disorder impact your creativity?

For better and for worse, over the last seven years I have been learning to employ the symptoms of schizoaffective disorder thus drawing a degree of advantage from them. When the floodgates open, waves of creation crash and flow through you in such a way that all of these symptoms can, on occasions, be seen to serve a very useful purpose.

Tell us about the songs on the EP. What subjects do they cover and what was their inspiration?

Sunshine Devils is about being human. I have recently dreamed of Death Valley - oh, the wonder of living life in that hot heat and inescapable surroundings, to see if I were able to survive in those conditions, as only few animals can. It was written as a vocal line after I'd slept the night in an internet cafe in Oxford Circus. I had staggered half-awake into the crossroads at 8am, to witness the beautiful and insane rush past me on their way to work. Hardly a desert setting, yet I felt so separate from all else around me, this song seemed to encapsulate that mood of being in a desert perfectly.

Just before the release of *The Lost Belongings* EP on July 4th I lost my voice due to a bout of laryngitis. The thought occurred that this could well be a curse laid upon me for my ill actions and cruel methodical practices: karma. This thought kick-started the beginning of a relapse, so **Love Underground** was initially a song about that, and embracing the almost certain fact that this band and our music are destined to spend their life lost to obscurity. **Boy That Won't Be Told** is simply about the terrible treatment of my partner Sam, who bears the brunt of my awful psychosis and ill-tempered pokes to the side.

Devil's Son was written whilst wandering the streets of London, mad as I can be, at a time when I was completely hell-bent, moon-drunk and beastly; ill at ease with everything around me, looking forward to the prospect of disappearing forever. **Of Lovers And Lost Children** is the last song written in this chapter of songs (and that includes the forthcoming album), simply about a man admitting to himself and his love what he has become, a man seeking forgiveness. **Dead Girls And Daggers** always was and remains a simple 'throwaway' song: a drunken dance number, pure pop, a bit of fun with sinister subject matter pinning it to the ground.

The EP's release supports the YoungMinds mental health charity. What do you think is the importance of this organisation in particular?

As for the choice of charity, it goes without saying that my recent episode was a definite factor. As myself and Bob Murderbird are parents, it felt even more appropriate to select this charity in particular. YoungMinds deals with children, teenagers and the parents of those who may be suffering from mental illness. A parent will naturally suffer awful pangs of guilt, sometimes leading to a dangerous denial of their child's deteriorating behaviour and mind. Mental illnesses remain an awkward subject and I have been keen to tackle that.

As 2009 draws to a close and a shiny new decade is only a few weeks away, how do you feel about the future?

Terrified, but in bloody good company. So goes the Crooked Family.

The full version of this interview appears on the band's website during w/c 2nd November.