

Mr Diagonal

North Pacific



Tracklisting

1. Bannerghatta
2. Serendipity House
3. Indian Ocean
4. Red Lighthouse
5. Hyoryu No Tegami (floating letter)
6. 21st Century Cats
7. Encore une Bouteille à la Mer
8. What do you do with a Manioc?
9. A Little Island Far Away
10. Maybe I'll Build a Boat
11. North Pacific
12. 1000 Sunsets

Label

Self Released

Format

CD/Message in a bottle

Release Date

July 23, 2021

Web Utilities

<http://mrdiagonal.com/>

<https://mastodon.online/@mrdiagonal/>

<https://blacklightorchestra.bandcamp.com/>

* Mr Diagonal boycotts Facebook and Spotify.

EPK & Downloads

<http://www.fiverosespress.net>

Promo Agent

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Mr Diagonal presents *North Pacific* : a desert island disc

Mr Diagonal (Glasgow/Brussels/LA) releases his 5th album *North Pacific* July 23, 2021, in 2 formats: CD and message in a bottle.

Founder and frontman of **Black Light Orchestra**, pioneers of the Brussels 'sprout rock' scene of the mid 2000s, he enjoys cult status in Japan and growing recognition in Los Angeles, where he recently composed for and played in a Hollywood film.

Mr Diagonal, *Prime Minister of Pop* (aka **Dan Barbenel**) was born in Dundee (world marmalade capital) in 1970 to a Jewish scientist and an English dentist. Child prodigy (piano, clarinet, classical dance and advanced maths) he went on to study anthropology at Cambridge. After (miraculously) graduating he took a one-way flight to Japan on a romantic misunderstanding. Thus stranded, his (ex-)fancé lent him a guitar and threw him out on the street. Thus began **Mr Diagonal's** glorious career in pop music.

Often compared with **Divine Comedy**, **Kurt Weil** or **Danny Elfman**, his songs are noted for their lyrical precision, a harmonic invention and a density of imagination and arrangement that recalls the 'light' music of yesteryear. It's a playful, knowing pop that hides a romantic soul with bipolar tendencies.

Since his era as a Tokyo metro superstar, he has done various odd jobs: as cocktail pianist on a private island in Japan, as costumed guide in the royal palaces of London, as cave musician in the Pyrenees. And since 2001 as pianist/singer/actor in Belgium and elsewhere.

Before he became world famous, **Mr Diagonal** accompanied **Damien Rice** on tour in the streets and venues of Scotland. Pianist /co-founder of the **Bruxelles-Aires Tango Orchestra**, he has also collaborated with **Momus**, theatre companies **La Fabrique Imaginaire** (Brussels) and **Kodomokyojin** (Japan), the Belgian poetess laureate **Laurence Vielle**, composer **Philippe Tasquin**, film makers **Isabelle Wuillmart** (Brussels) and **Christopher M Allport** (LA); also with **Surnaturel Orchestra** (Paris) and the mythical **Shibizashirazu** (Japan).

After 6 Japanese tours, 2 rockumentaires on national television at the helm of **Black Light Orchestra**, and BBC radio 3 airplay of his 2nd album '*Late Victorian*', **Mr Diagonal** returns with '*North Pacific*', a resolutely British mutation of chanson française, filtered through a diagonal prism to create a fractured, playful pop. With his trusty shipmates **Yannick Dupont** (Moog, percussion) and **Quentin Manfroy** (bass, bass fute), we share his adventures, his squalls and sunny spells, his shipwrecks; the highs and lows of desert island life, his attempts at maritime carpentry, his manic intoxications. Both an inner voyage and the soundtrack to all our Lockdown Isles. In other words, it's lived history.

Perhaps the first Belgo-Scottish desert island disc, *North Pacific* is a temperate tropicalia, an ocean dream in fullscreen stereo, a maritime mirage for drifters and dreamers.

The album *North Pacific* comes in a bottle, a personal invitation to his private island. Inside, a map leads to a double treasure: a download code and a private video to make one's own origami boat. After emptying the bottle, the listener has the opportunity to relaunch it into the sea with a 2nd download code for the next castaway. Developed during lockdown, this innovative distribution strategy should allow his music to reach new audiences in uncharted territories.

The album launch is accompanied by a tour of launderettes and laundromats in Belgium and abroad. Afterwards, **Mr Diagonal** returns to LA to prepare the production of his new pop opera '*Donuts*'.