

The Neo-Classical Touch!

Vitalij Kuprij is a strong person, totally dedicated to the music: classical, neo-classical, keyboards or whatever. His words speak for themselves...

by Alessandro Ballini

Alessandro Ballini : Vitalij, when did you start composing *Forward and Beyond* and where did you take up the inspiration?

Vitalij Kuprij : I started just about a year ago and it took me almost a full year to write it, make demos and everything related to the making of this album. I'm always inspired by things related to music. For the whole 24 hours, even when I'm asleep, I dream about music. I just live and breathe with music. Every time I get inspired I do a project, a record, a performance, a study or a collaboration. You know, so many asked me to do a solo rock album and there already was a buzz about it, so I thought it was time to do something like that.

A.B.: How did you choose all the guitar players? Were there already some friends of yours among them?

V.K.: Well, I knew all of them but not personally. I knew their music, but this has been a great opportunity for me to meet them, even if some only over the phone. Anyway, all the people I make music with are my friends, because we can relate to each other. I've found some of them through e-mails, some others through web sites... and my manager helped me finding some others...

A.B.: Which guitarist impressed you mostly? Which one do you prefer in his usual band?

V.K. : Well, if I mention one and not the others as well I will get in trouble! Seriously, they all did a great job. After listening to the demos I was trying so hard to see which one would have been the most suitable for each song; it was quite funny to make the challenging prediction. They all did a fantastic job, I can't complain at all. And the fact that they are so different and unique in their style made the album more attractive and stronger.

A.B. : We don't have many information about the recording, would you like to briefly showcase the studio and some other details?

V.K. : Most of the guitar tracks were recorded at their own studios. I sent all the demos to them and I made my own drums programming. I really wanted to do the drum parts exactly in the way I heard and felt them, and the same with the bass. Yes, there is nothing like a true drummer and bass player, and it was very cool to take that approach and it was perfect to my imagination. Then I recorded the entire keyboards in my studio and, after that, I worked with one of my finest engineers at his own Studio Millennium Sound in Philadelphia. We did the mixing, the mastering, and everything needed for a complete record.

A.B. : What is the main difference for you between composing and recording a solo album and a band one?

V.K. : Well, in a band I think it's just a slightly different formula for a singer, structurally speaking, and of course in instrumental albums I have more room to express music without words, which is another formula and it's pretty challenging. But stylistically speaking there is not a major difference, because I'm the same person.

A.B. : About the music: how do you believe *Forward and Beyond* improves your three solo works made until now?

V.K.: It improves everything, and at least my objectives; there is a progress in the songwriting, expression style arrangements, control over the stylistic direction, the sense of concept if it is a concept album, control over the instrument. In my opinion it is a great album, in the past I didn't have that luxury.

A.B. : Classical music continuously



comes out from the notes of *Forward and Beyond*. How much are you linked to this side of music now?

V.K. : Classical music is everything for me, it has been my major career for 25 years. I have 3 conservatory degrees and I believe classical music is the best training you can ever get. There will always be classical elements in my music and strong classical or neoclassical feels. 2004 will be a great year for me with some major classical concerts; the dates for the tour will be posted shortly on my web site. I'm just an artist who doesn't want to be one-dimensional, specially if I have ability to create different styles of music.

A.B. : Therefore what are the projects for Vitalij Kuprij's 2004, both in studio and live?

V.K. : First I'm planning a promo tour in Japan, if possible this February, when the album is scheduled for the release. After that I have so many things planned: the Artension tour, my own piano concerto and other stuff. I will be busy and therefore I'm happy.

A.B. : Please tell us the way you see your musical career looking *Forward*, and then *Beyond*...

V.K. : I look to the future with a lot of faith, hope and believe. The destiny will tell me where I'm going to be. I only believe in Myself, where I'm most powerful, and I look *Forward* and *Beyond* and I thank deeply everyone who helped me to get where I'm right now and let me succeed.