

VINCENT STARWAVER BIOGRAPHY

Bart Vincent is back! The singer, guitarist and songwriter, who between 1998 and 2008 was one of the two key figures of the Ghent based five piece Thou, now goes by the name Vincent Starwaver.

With his previous group he recorded five acclaimed LPs, two of which were produced by John Parish (of Eels and PJ Harvey fame). The album Put Us In Tune even got picked up in the US by Dave Sardy, who released it on his own record label, and received a four-star review from the American music site Allmusic. Thou was also invited to perform at prestigious festivals such as Rock Werchter and Pukkelpop.

After the demise of his band, Bart spent years at the service of other artists. As a producer he was involved in records by Kris Dane, Kapitan Korsakov and Wardrobe; as a sound engineer he worked with, among others, The Van Jets and Melanie de Biasio. But blood is thicker than water. Bart Vincent continued writing songs and eventually cut the album Goodnight Honeybun under the name Vincent Starwaver. His comeback was curtailed however by the COVID pandemic. Hence the record was never officially released. The good news is that, despite the delay, it is now coming out simultaneously with a brand-new collection, entitled Godspeed.

Vincent Starwaver is essentially a solo project, but the singer readily admits that the musicians who support him on both albums have left their mark on the songs. Of course, they all have a reputation that should not be underestimated. Bass player Alan Gevaert is a member of dEUS, drummer Steve Slingeneyer once was a part of Soulwax and presently busies himself with One Man Party. Guitarist Serge Hertoge for his part has showed his talents with Sundahl and Lize Accoe. In tandem with the latter, Bart Vincent also wrote arrangements for Echo Collective, the string quartet that can be heard all over Godspeed. On stage, the line-up will be supplemented with Linard Van den Bossche (L.I.N.A.R.D.) on keys and guitar.

The band celebrated their very first live-performance on a cold Sunday in March 2021, in the workshop of local garage owner Pierre Total. For this concert, which was streamed via the internet and can still be viewed on YouTube, not only were they backed by the string players of Echo Collective, but also by keyboard player Pascal Paulus (BÅAN, Melanie De Biasio, Paulson), who went on to contribute to several tracks on Godspeed.

Vincent Starwaver equals melodic indie pop that does not shy away from unexpected twists. With a view to live performances, the extremes in the music are likely to be more pronounced: the soft parts will sound softer and the loud parts even louder.

Bart Vincent himself has sometimes described his music as 'crooner punk', a reference to both his DIY-mentality and to Frank Sinatra, who inspired the title of the first Starwaver album. 'Often Ol' Blue Eyes would be away from home for weeks, especially at the height of his career. Whenever one of his concerts was broadcast on the radio, he used to bid his daughter goodnight with the phrase 'Goodnight Honeybun'. I thought that suited my songs," says Bart.

Godspeed definitely has a few themes in common with its predecessor. The 'sad songs' on both albums emanate from a grieving process. They are about being forced

to say goodbye, about a loss that eats away at one's heart like a corrosive acid, about a form of loneliness that weighs on one's shoulders like a block of granite. How do you deal with emptiness and an unbridgeable distance, with being powerless and torn? Judging by Godspeed, Bart Vincent has completed a mental journey between 'Everything Falls Apart' and closing track 'Learn to Say Goodbye'. This suggests that Hope is no longer an unreachable destination.

The new record also contains two oddities. 'Heartless' is a drawn-out composition with neoclassical influences in which Vincent Starwaver experiments with a free-form structure. 'Jesus Alone' is an adaptation of a Nick Cave song lifted from Skeleton Tree. "Cave is like a distant uncle to me. He has always walked along the sidelines of my life," Bart Vincent explains. "The cry of despair in that song immediately grabbed me".

Goodnight Honeybun and Godspeed are both released independently (on Starwaver Records). Each of them was created at different times and is available separately. But they also belong together, even in the sense that the cover of one vinyl disc slides right into the other. 'Why am I crazy enough to keep releasing physical records in this age of streaming?', Bart Vincent asks himself. 'Well, I feel I have no choice. It's an urge I am simply unable to suppress.'

Dirk Steenhaut