

CASSIUS – IBIFORNIA

Ibifornia, the fifth album by Cassius (the duo of French DJ/Producers Philippe Zdar and Hubert BoomBass), a contraction between Ibiza and California, is aptly named and fulfils its oneiric mission. “*Ibifornia is everything we love, it’s where we dream of living one day, Hubert and me*, sums-up Philippe before adding, *Ibifornia is the place where the sun rises high and the horses run free*”, citing lyrics from the title track, a song that concentrates the album’s philosophy: hedonism!

Ibifornia is a great record, dense and ambitious, highly danceable and melancholy, one foot in the past and one in the future, a yin/yang of influences, an album that shifts from laughter to tears without missing a beat. The recording was spread out over three years between London, Los Angeles and Paris, in Philippe Zdar’s own studio at the heart of Pigalle – a marvel of old-school technology, with wooden walls, decoratively placed instruments and Nordic furniture from the 1950’s. A protective bubble of design and acoustics where, for the past few years, Zdar has lovingly worked on and guaranteed the success of records for Phoenix, Cat Power, the Beastie Boys, Kindness or Jackson...

After a little under an hour of listening to the album – with comments by the two musicians, but also Zdar’s irrepressible dancing – it was a musical roller-coaster, from a dancefloor tornado to an emotional ballad, from party central Ibiza to the solar spleen of Los Angeles. From ‘The Missing’ which opens the album on a N.E.R.D-inspired post-funk to ‘Blue Jean Smile’, all perfect sun-filled pop-rock sweetness; from ‘Action’ where Cat Power turns into a dancefloor diva (or “*Into Chaka Kahn*”, as Philippe says) to ‘Hey You!’ which seems especially made to throw your arms up in the air in front of an open stage at Coachella; from ‘Go Up’, all filtered French Touch, with Pharrell and Cat Power taking on the roles of masked robots, to ‘Ibifornia’, a Balearic monument that makes you want to dance with your feet in the water and staring at the sun... A total trip.

Philippe Zdar and Hubert BoomBass met in a recording studio and learned their trade together on MC Solaar’s first albums. Together, for the past fifteen years or so, they have redefined the contours of hip hop, funk and disco by fitting them in the realm of house music and techno. Through their first productions under the name La Funk Mob (conveniently classified abstract-hip hop) and through Cassius, a more ambitious dance project that left its particular mark on the trendy French Touch movement of the 90’s.

This is a buddy record (their old friend Pharrell Williams, a transformed Cat Power, Mathieu Chedid letting loose on the guitar, Mike D from the Beastie Boys doing a crazy rap, Ryan Tedder from OneRepublic, Laurent Bardainne from Poni Hoax and his magical saxophone, and Jaw from the French band dOP transformed into a crooner...), this fifth Cassius album is a summit meeting of talents – like “*Cassius and the Family Stone*”, simply says Zdar – taking on different roles, riding this formidable dance machine, which is also a dream machine.

With *Ibifornia* – a sonic, physical and psychedelic jet-lag that starts on Ibiza’s dancefloors and ends in an after party under the Los Angeles palm trees – Cassius let their influences run free and put Afro-beat, Chicago acid-house, Nassau Studios post-funk from the Bahamas and filtered French Touch through their sieve of unapologetic groove and love of dance.

To put it simply, and to paraphrase producer Derrick May, *Ibifornia* is a bit as if Fela, Michael Jackson, Chaka Kahn and Steely Dan met on the dancefloor of the Space in Ibiza. Probably with a little tab of acid at the bottom of their glass...