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Bio Information: **FORGAS BAND PHENOMENA**

Title: **ACTE V** (Cuneiform Rune 332/333)

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"Since his comeback in the 90s with Forgas Band Phenomena, drummer, bandleader and composer Patrick Forgas ups the ante with each new release...and they just keep getting better and better like fine wine. ...This band flows smoothly between beautifully layered melodic structures into tasty rave ups...equal parts of jazz and rock, with a healthy injections of orchestral brilliance. ...a captivating and spellbinding journey." – *Exposé*

"The Forgas Band Phenomena...blurs idiomatic considerations so extensively they render stylistic definitions irrelevant. No one can accuse...Patrick Forgas of being tame or conservative in his writing and arrangements. ...captivating." – *Jazz Times*

"those...who grew up on the Return to Forever / Mahavishnu Orchestra / Weather Report strain of modern jazz...will love this group. ...The distinct Euro edge of classical Canterbury art rock minus the abject self-indulgence...extremely listenable music that keeps nostalgia to a minimum. ...terrific music made by a wonderful band that cannot be a trade secret for too much longer. Vive la Forgas!" – *All Music Guide*

Composer/drummer **Patrick Forgas** has been hailed as "the French answer to the **Canterbury** scene" ever since his debut 1977 release **Cocktail** (recorded with members of **Magma** and **Zao**). Since the late 1990s, as leader of the **Forgas Band Phenomena**, he has helped ignite interest in Canterbury-infused jazz-rock among a new generation of young French jazz musicians and fans. Besides Forgas, most of the musicians in the Forgas Band Phenomena are in their 20s or 30s, and they enliven his compositions with an energy and verve that make the music sound fresh. For **Acte V**, his 5th Forgas Band Phenomena release (and his 3rd release on the American label **Cuneiform**), Forgas leads a 7-piece instrumental ensemble (sax, trumpet, violin, guitar, keyboards, bass and drums) through complex, melodic and epic compositions that mix ambitious progressive rock structures and intense jazz soloing. Fusing new jazz directions with the most adventurous rock of the 70s, the music should appeal to fans of **Frank Zappa**'s instrumental works and such British Canterbury bands as **Soft Machine** and **National Health**, as well as to followers of **Magic Malik** and other new jazz-rock and fusion bands. "Jazz-fusion, yes," remarked *Progression*, "but with a degree of compositional content and integrity often absent in the genre."

Patrick Forgas was born in 1951 in the Paris suburb of Boulogne-Billancourt. Self-trained as a drummer, he built his first drum kit from salvaged materials when he was a teenager. Forgas also taught himself to play guitar, bass and keyboards. The multi-instrumentalist could also sing. He began his music career in the late 1960s, playing in cover bands.

In 1975, Forgas recorded a demo at **Barclay Records**' studio, with a trio that included bassist **Didier Thibault** (former **Moving Gelatine Plates** leader). He soon was signed by **Gratte-Ciel**, the label run by rock critic **Jean-Marc Bailleux**, a supporter of progressive music. Forgas' debut release, called **Cocktail**, came out in 1977 (it was recently reissued on CD by **Muséa**, with new liner notes and a wealth of bonus material.). One critic recently described it as "innovative music in the same vein as **Soft Machine** or **Robert Wyatt**...superb compositions, full of invention and melodic research." The album marked him as France's leading exemplar of the Canterbury school, a style of music that began with such English groups as **Hatfield and the North** and **National Health**, who fused rock and jazz in bucolic extended compositions. The musicians that Forgas assembled to play on **Cocktail**, which was released under his name, '**Patrick Forgas**', included his long-time music partner, the then-up-and-coming keyboard player **Jean-Pierre Fouquey**, who later joined **Magma** as well as **Christian Vander's Alien Quintet** and jazz trio. Other musicians were **Zao** members **Gérard Prévost**, **Patrick Tillemann** and **François Debricon**; American sax player **Bruce Grant** (a sometime member of **Chris McGregor's Brotherhood of Breath**); and another young prodigy, guitarist **Laurent Roubach**.

Following **Cocktail**'s release, Forgas formed a live band that included **Roubach** and **Tillemann** as well as new recruits **Eric Bono** (keyboards) and **Philippe Talet** (bass) (both later with French fusion band **Abus Dangereux**). The **Forgas Band** toured throughout 1978 and assembled material for a 2nd **Gratte-Ciel** album. The new album was aborted when the label declared bankruptcy, canceling the band's nationwide tour; the Forgas Band soon dissolved.

Except for recording a few pop/novelty singles as a singer early in the decade, Forgas retired from music during the 1980s. Encouraged by journalist and **Muséa** collaborator **Alain Juliac**, he returned to the scene and recorded two solo efforts, **L'Oeil** (1990) and **Art D'Echo** (1993), which featured Forgas on keyboards, drum programming and vocals, and contributions by reedsman **Didier Malherbe** (formerly of **Gong**) and most of the **Cocktail** musicians. In 2002, he released **Synchronicité**, a solo album featuring electronic/new-age music.

The **Forgas Band Phenomena** has been Forgas' main project since returning to music in the 1990s. He had begun assembling musicians for a live band in the mid-90s, and in March 1995, he led a group called **Villa Carmen**, which performed live. The Forgas Band Phenomena grew out of **Villa Carmen**, and fused his 90s music with material he wrote for his 1978 band. It released its debut CD, **Roue Libre** in 1997 on **Cosmos Music**, an independent label run by **Aymeric Leroy** and **Olivier Pelletant**. Dedicated to the **Big Wheel**, a huge Ferris wheel that dominated the Parisian skyline while providing popular entertainment for twenty years, the CD featured new pieces as well as a previously

unreleased composition from 1978. Featuring a lineup that included guitarist **Mathias Desmier** (later of **Jannick Top's STS**) and mallet percussionist **Mireille Bauer** (ex-**Gong**), the band did a series of shows in 1998. In 1999, **Cosmos Music** released the band's 2nd CD, **Extra-**

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Lucide, which included the epic-length "Pieuvre A La Pluie", a reworking of a piece intended for the aborted 1978 album. The lineup featured Desmier alongside new recruits.

2004 marked a new incarnation of the **Forgas Band Phenomena**. With a new expanded lineup, the group appeared in June at Paris' **Le Triton** for **Les Tritonales**, a progressive music festival that was also featuring **Magma**, **Zao** and **Univers Zéro**. The **Forgas Band Phenomena**'s Tritonales' performance marked the debut of "Coup De Théâtre", a 35-minute piece based on ideas for Forgas' 1978 album. Cuneiform representatives at the festival signed the band, and in March 2005, **Forgas Band Phenomena** returned to Le Triton as an octet to record the epic-length "Coup De Théâtre", two new, shorter pieces, "Soleil 12" and "Eclipse", and a new version of "Pieuvre A La Pluie" for a Cuneiform release. *Soleil 12* (2005) was the **Forgas Band Phenomena**'s 1st Cuneiform release, and certainly the band's strongest work thus far, a dynamic fusion of jazz soloing and rock structures, and of music from the 70s and the current day. Performed by a large band composed of some of France's best young jazz musicians, it proved not only that "Canterbury music is alive and well in France" [Exposé], but also that a style of jazz/rock first formulated in the 1970s, could remain vital and relevant as an alternative direction for jazz today. For their next album, the band this time decided to record in a studio rather than a live setting. The result was *L'Axe du Fou / Axis of Madness* (2009), consisting of fresh material including two epic-length pieces, the title track and "Double-Sens", both of which are reprised on the new album's accompanying DVD.

The lineup of the **Forgas Band Phenomena** that appears on both *Acte V* and its predecessor *L'Axe du Fou / Axis of Madness* (2009) has been together nearly five years, and includes Forgas (drums) as well as six younger musicians, including **Igor Brover** (keyboards), **Kengo Mochizuki** (bass), who had both already appeared on *Soleil 12*, plus newer recruits **Benjamin Violet** (guitar), **Karolina Mlodecka** (violin), **Sébastien Trognon** (saxes & flute) and **Dimitri Alexaline** (trumpet & flugelhorn). In addition to regular appearances in France, in late September 2008, they went on their first outing abroad - in Seoul, South Korea, no less! - and in June 2010 were invited to appear at what turned out to be the penultimate edition of **NEARfest**, the world's leading progressive rock festival, performing to a packed audience of 1,000. The concert was recorded and filmed. In March 2011, FBP went into **Studio Aéronef** to record six Forgas compositions for *Acte V*. A double disc set released by Cuneiform in early 2012, *Acte V* contains the band's new studio CD and a 75-minute live DVD of its 2010 NEARfest performance, and showcases the formidable Forgas Band as both a studio and a live phenomenon.

BAND MEMBERS:

Japanese bassist **Kengo Mochizuki** (age 33), originally influenced by heavy-metal, began to play bass at 19 at the Hosei University, then moved to France and studied jazz bass at Paris' Atla Music school under former Forgas collaborator **Bernard Weber**. There he met **Sylvain Ducloux** (guitarist on *Soleil 12*) who introduced him to the Forgas Band of which he is the longest-serving member, having entered the fold early in 2004. He is also a member of the French rock band **Oriel**, and backs singer-songwriter **Mathieu Hamel**.

Keyboard player **Igor Brover** (age 45) received his formal training in both classical and jazz piano. In demand as a player, Brover has toured since the early 1990s with countless jazz, fusion, and pop outfits and especially with Latin bands, including **Al Samba Tribe**, the **Brothers Maldonado**, **Barrio II II**, **Bazz Latin**. He has also led his own groups, including the **Septet Serenata**. He has been a member of the FBP since 2004.

Saxophonist **Sébastien Trognon** (age 37) studied saxophone at the Conservatoire International in Paris, then embarked on musicology studies in Dijon. His main influences are **Michael Brecker**, **Bob Berg**, **Jan Garbarek** and **Branford Marsalis**. He is endorsed by Jupiter saxophones and flutes, and has a wide experience ranging from jazz to pop and world music. He has appeared on a CD by bassist **Pascal Mulot** and was featured twice on the Tribute to Magma "Hur", both with the **Forgas Band** (covering **Univeria Zekt's "Africa Anteria"**) and **Olivier Wursten Olmos** (son of Magma's guitarist **Claude Olmos**). He joined the FBP in late 2006.

Polish-born violinist **Karolina Mlodecka** (age 38) won first prize in jazz violin at the Aubervilliers CNR in 2006, studying under **Pierre Blanchard**. She has worked in various musical styles as well as theatre, and recordings include a string ensemble performance by **David S. Ware**, and participation in a *History of Jazz* project with notable guest soloists such as **Dominique Pifarély**, **Sylvain Beuf**, **Steve Potts**, **Stéphane Guillaume** and **Philippe Sellam**.

Trumpeter **Dimitri Alexaline** (age 29) studied trumpet at the Boulogne CNR, winning first prizes in trumpet and cornet. He then obtained a PhD in musicology, while continuing his musical studies under **Yves Torchinsky**, the former double bassist of the ONJ (French national jazz orchestra).

Guitarist **Benjamin Violet** (age 26) started out studying classical violin, winning first prize at the Toulouse CNR, then switched to electric guitar, resuming his music studies at the Paris CNSM then the Atla school where his teacher was former Forgas Band Phenomena member **Mathias Desmier**. Of the current line-up, he joined the FBP last, in July 2007.

For more information on Forgas Band Phenomena, please see:

forgasbp.online.fr - www.myspace.com/forgasbandphenomena

PROMOTIONAL PHOTOS: Digital [High-Resolution] versions of these images are available for download on www.cuneiformrecords.com

