



Bio information: **MIRIODOR**  
Title: **ELEMENTS** (Cuneiform Rune 498)  
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FILE UNDER: **ROCK / PROGRESSIVE ROCK**

***Quebec's MIRIODOR Makes Mind Movies with a European Twist  
That Feature Silly Stories and Serious Musicianship***

Under carefully controlled conditions—my place, after supper, and with wine in hand—four out of five listeners identified Miriodor as European. And four out of five listeners were wrong.

There's no shame in this, though. There are no other bands in North America that sound even remotely like **Miriodor**, whose new *Elements* is their 10th studio release since their founding in 1984, as well as their 10th for Maryland's Cuneiform label. This likely has to do with where keyboardist Pascal Globensky, guitarist and bassist Bernard Falaise, and drummer Rémi Leclerc are based: the Canadian province of Quebec.

In other words, they're a long way away from the rest of the continent. Granted, Canada's second-most populous province is only 500 miles removed from the country's biggest city, Toronto, and it's even closer to the financial capital of the United States, New York City. On the cultural map, however, the region tilts towards Europe. French is the dominant language; relatively well-funded state schools prioritize the arts; and support for the creative industries is a point of national pride. (And make no mistake: Quebec is very much a nation within a nation.)

The province—and especially its largest city, Montreal—is home to several distinct strands of adventurous musical activity. There's *musique actuelle*, rooted in free jazz but with a strong Quebecois accent; a number of internationally well-regarded modernist chamber ensembles; a burgeoning electroacoustic scene that has been well-documented by the empreintes DIGITALes label; and there are noisier rumblings from an avant-rock underground inspired and typified by Godspeed You! Black Emperor.

On *Elements*, Miriodor touches on all of these. As an improviser, Falaise is an important contributor to *musique actuelle*. Noise and distortion come to the fore midway through the fast-paced “Alambic”, while Magic Band-inspired sprung rhythms drive album-opener “Boomerang”. Meanwhile, the shape-shifting tour-de-force “Poulet-Bicyclette” opens with an aleatory interlude for synthesizer and minimal percussion that's right out of the electroacoustic playbook, before wobbling into a deconstructed funky-chicken dance and, eventually, a sinister and sinuous dreamscape.

Rapid changes of tone and pacing are a Miriodor trademark. “There *are* many different landscapes in the same piece,” Globensky agrees. “Sometimes we'll go see a concert and some band will be keeping the same beat for 10 or 12 or 15 minutes, and we'll be looking at each other and saying ‘Why do we complicate our lives like that, changing all the time?’ But that's the way we're doing our music.”

Some critics have attributed this to Quebec's well-documented love of Frank Zappa's highly episodic music; the California radical had an especially large impact on *musique actuelle*. Yet Miriodor's most obvious markers are European, for better or worse—and Globensky, for one, laments that the band is most often linked to the Rock in Opposition movement of the late 1970s.

There are parallels, for sure. Globensky admits a fondness for Belgium's second-generation RIO act Aqsak Maboul, while the late Lars Hollmer, of Sweden's Samla Mammas Manna, collaborated with the group on its 2005 release for Cuneiform, *Parade*. Closer to Globensky's heart, however, is emblematic Canterbury quartet Hatfield and the North.

"We're a bit like them in the sense that we're unpretentious," he explains. "We're silly at times; even if there's no words there's kind of a humour in the music. And if we have to be compared to the Rock in Opposition founding bands, I think we're more related to Samla than to Henry Cow or Univers Zero, which were more dark or more serious, if I may say.

"But the labelling thing is always dubious," Globensky adds. "It's good and bad at once."

More important is that even though Miriodor is strictly an instrumental ensemble, its tunes always tell a story. "The music has to convey some images, or some cinematic aspect," Globensky clarifies. "If we don't see something in our mind, something moving in our head, we will discard it. We like that cinematic aspect."

Often, he adds, the music is inspired by fantasies and in-jokes. "With the older albums, we were always fearful that when we were done with recording—on reel-to-reel tape—a monster would come at night and eat our tapes. We called it the Master Tape Eater, and there is a piece on the *Mekano* album that is related to that. They're all silly stories like that."

Although the three band members no longer live in close proximity—Globensky has remained in the Montreal suburb of Laval, but Falaise has moved to the countryside and Leclerc lives in Kamouraska, on the St. Lawrence River north of Quebec City—they've retained this sense of intimacy.

"We always see each other as a big machine with many cogs, if you see what I mean, with each of us being a different cog," Globensky says. "Or we see ourselves as ants, working on an anthill. There's a sense of being just a part of something bigger, and if you listen to our music you can see that there's many layers and a lot of intertwining lines, nesting lines, and repeated lines. And there's no clear definition of what *Elements* is all about, but I think it relates to that.

"Like many bands, we're three individuals, but there is a huge respect for what the other people are doing," he adds. "I think it shows in the music."

And while Globensky cautions that *Elements* might be Miriodor's last release, he also maintains that it's their best.

"As we get older we learn stuff in life and we learn stuff about music, and I think we're getting better at it," he says with a philosophical laugh. "And that's something I said to Rémi recently: 'Well, it's a bit of a shame if this is the last one, because we're starting to get good!'"

### **For more information on Miriodor**

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### **MIRIODOR PROMOTIONAL PHOTOS**

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