

## Mp3 Mandala - Before Memory



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Mandala's debut album merges folk, progressive rock, jazz and electronica, with a distinct Eastern tinge. Featuring a wealth of instruments: guitars, basses, drums, violins, celli, pianos, flutes, mellotrons, laptops, organs, harmoniums, lots of voices... 10 MP3 Songs FOLK: Modern Folk, ROCK: Progressive Rock

Details: Imagine folk, progressive rock, jazz and electronica rolled into one, then given a distinct Eastern tinge, and you'll be somewhere there. Let the imagination run wild - if Nick Drake and Jeff Buckley fronted King Crimson, which for this occasion also featured Joni Mitchell, the Incredible String Band and Ryuichi Sakamoto, you'll be somewhere closer still... Mandala's is a sound which is consistently difficult and unjust to pigeonhole, but the tag "Folk-Noir" is the one that people keep on coming back to. A new genre for a new sound. Autumn 2005 sees release of Mandala's debut album - it features a wealth of instruments, such as guitars, basses, drums, violins, celli, pianos, flutes, mellotrons, laptops, organs, harmoniums, lots of voices and a liberal amount of space. Songs which have become live favourites, such as 'The Dark Waltz' and 'Fire Is Mine' show the more full-on side of the band, whereas 'Shadows Play' and 'Spoken' represent their more reflective, melancholic side. There's a dynamic contrast in the songs - one moment a whisper, the next a scream - captivating and passionate. The line-up is built around the core of Neil Marsh and Francis Booth, who have been the driving force behind Mandala since its formation in 1997. Neil, who luxuriates in the recordings of David Sylvian and Jeff Buckley, handles the songwriting, guitars and vocals, while Francis, whose iPod is as home to obscure Bjork recordings as it is the bittersweet tones of Nick Drake, handles the bass and electronics. The recent additions are the incomparable Will Spurling on drums, who's as comfortable playing with a lilting jazz swing as he is a full-on rock assault, the deeply haunting soprano of Kerry-Fleur, and the beautiful tones and perfect counterpoints of Corinna Robins and Natalie Rozario, on violin and cello respectively. Put all of these

elements together and you're faced with a sound that will keep you on edge whilst grabbing at your heartstrings. These songs were recorded over May and June, and whilst managing to capture the energy of the live versions, they benefit from an elaborate and rich sound, produced in the band's own Chamber Studios. "Folk-noir" The Guardian, London "Emotive indie melancholia, with soaring strings and an icy electronica edge. Intimate and enchanting" Time Out, London "Knife-edge atmospheres with intricate and delicately poised arrangements" The Independent, London Personnel on Before Memory: Neil Marsh - voice, guitar, flute, piano, mellotron Francis Booth - bass Will Spurling - drums Kerry-Fleur - voice Corinna Robins - violin Natalie Rozario - cello Tim Bowen - cello (on Now And Then) Peter Keser - harmonium This album was originally released in Europe as a double EP. That's why some of the reviews below reference them separately...

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