



Love Spirals
Downwards

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LOVE SPIRALS DOWNWARDS

+ Interview by Clint Catalyst +

One evening in August, I had the opportunity to speak with Ryan and Suzanne of the band Love Spirals Downwards. After difficulties with my answering machine and the discovery that Ryan's mom used to live in Russellville, Arkansas (small world, huh?), they were both friendly and eager to discuss the vital information of their musical endeavors. Maybe they were both in good spirits from the Japanese food they had just finished eating, but they seem like tremendous individuals...

When did the two of you first "hook up," so to speak?

Ryan: We started singing together in January of 1991.

Suzanne: My sister was singing with Ryan, maybe like one or two songs, and then I was going to school in London for a while and hearing tapes of my sister's, and they never really got off the ground and did that much stuff. So I came back, and basically a little bit after that, we started singing--I started singing on his music--and from then on, we sent out some tapes. Projekt Records liked us and asked us if we wanted to be on *Grey Land III*.

Ryan: We knew almost nothing about the label, actually.

Suzanne: It wasn't like we were singing together a lot or singing together live a lot. We did two songs together; we scrapped two and kept one, then we did two more, which gave us three songs. We sent them out to Sam of Projekt and that was it. That's how it started.

Suzanne: You know, Clint, it's funny, because we had never even heard of Projekt Records before we sent our tape there.

Ryan: We had no idea what kind of label it was.

Suzanne: We got a card from one of our friends who goes to art school...

Ryan: Susan, Sam's girlfriend...

Suzanne: Susan, Sam's girlfriend, goes to school with our friend.

Ryan: Who happens to be the friend who shot the cover of our album.

Suzanne: Anyway, he gave us the card...

Ryan: And we didn't know how our music would fit on the label. We had just read that it was a really gloomy Gothic label, and we didn't know if we would fit into the type of music that Projekt specializes in. Luckily, when we started hearing their music, we knew that it was perfect - far better than 4AD, even, as far as it goes for our music fitting into the kind of sound a label has.

Suzanne: But, as a matter of fact, we had already sent in our tape before we had even heard anything on the label. Now we've turned into big Projekt fans, though.

Ryan: Seriously, we like the majority of the things on the label.

Does Love Spirals Downwards collaborate with any other bands?

Ryan: As far as writing music together, no, we haven't. We've had a guy play congos on one of our recordings, but it wasn't exactly a collaboration.

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Do you play live?

Ryan: No. We don't have time, basically, being as busy as we are.

Suzanne: We did once.

Ryan: But we don't really have a band, exactly. We'd need to record on a DAT machine to accompany us for a live performance.

What is the significance of the band's name?

Ryan: Basically, there's no meaning behind it. It's not supposed to refer to anything; it's not supposed to mean anything. The words taken together are not supposed to imply some kind of message about love or spirals or anything.

Suzanne: And also, it's not really related to LSD or anything.

That's funny, because a friend of mine mentioned the initials of the band to me. In fact, he said, "I'll bring LSD with me tomorrow," and he was referring to the band.

Ryan: That's kind of helped us, in a way. For instance, we've been included on a compilation on Silent records called *50 Years of Sunshine*, which is a tribute to Albert Hoffman's first accidental injection of LSD.

Suzanne: We also just got an interview with *Option* magazine, which is doing something LSD-related. They asked us some things about our name and that...

Ryan: LSD and music: some kind of revival...

Suzanne: The one thing about the whole LSD thing is: originally, we called ourselves Love Spirals Upwards. Then a friend of ours suggested that we call

ourselves Love Spirals Downwards. It fit the genre better, we figured. It fit our music better, and also there was that acronym, which was kind of interesting. I was conscious of it, and I said that people would say things about the music and philosophize about the name or something. A lot of people think the name fits our music; it's kind of that transcendence, that same kind of thing. It kind of fits. It definitely doesn't **not** fit. I thought it had a nice ring to it...

Ryan: Plus, it's hard to think of a good band name. I like the way it sounds. Forget meaning; I like the aesthetics of the way Love Spirals Downwards looks and sounds.

Is there a particular mood or atmosphere that you intend to establish through your music?

Ryan: In general, it's a more...

Suzanne: Other-worldliness...

Ryan: Yeah, other-worldliness: dreamy, kind-of religious, sacred, profane.

Suzanne: It's quite serious, actually.

Ryan: It's not party music; it's not brushing-your-teeth music.

Suzanne (laughing): You wouldn't want to do aerobics to it!

Ryan: It's more of an experience, something to immerse yourself into.

In what ways would you like to be described?

Ryan: I don't like descriptions, but I guess we have to have them.

Suzanne: Dreamy, other-worldly, transcendent: I think those are good words.

Ryan: We're not conscious of stuff like that when we're making our music. We don't say, "God, we're making Gothic

music," or even any kind of music. We just make music, and people will end up labelling it as they will. Every review we read says something different about (our music), but we're not conscious of it. We just do what we do, and leave it to people to classify it.

How would you never want to be described?

Ryan: Heavy Metal? I don't know...

Suzanne: I wouldn't want to be described as a clone, a rip-off of somebody else, a copy...

Ryan: I see our music as being a part of a small genre of bands. I mean, there's not enough bands around now in this genre that it could really be given a general name. There are bands that do this type of music, of course - say, for instance, Dead Can Dance, Cocteau Twins, Lush, to name a few. If you make this genre of music, a lot of times you get called a Cocteau Twins band, simply because they're one of the biggest bands, if not **the** biggest band, of this style of music. If that genre had a name--say, ethereal-pop or something--we're more in that branch of music than, say, a Goth-Rock branch of music.

What are your current plans for Love Spirals Downwards? Are you working on any projects right now?

Ryan: We're working on a second album right now, and we just contributed to a compilation on Projekt. It's a compilation of all black tape for a blue girl covers.

Suzanne: We also just did a song for a flexi-disc for a 'zine called *Altered Mind*.

Ryan: Hopefully, sometime the beginning of the next year, our second album will be released.

What drives you to create?

Suzanne: For me, it's fun. I enjoy it. It's a good means of expression, and I like to listen to it when it's done. It's definitely not for money or fame or something like that. For me, it's a great creative outlet. I've taken some drawing classes and stuff, which are alright, but I think my niche is more in music.

Ryan: I don't know what drives me, but I notice that a lot of things that I'm deeply involved with in my life, such as making music and philosophy, I learn a lot from them. Making music is a part of my quest for understanding of the world (laughs). I hope that doesn't sound too cheesy! There's something really revelatory about creating music, for me.

Is there anything else you'd like to say?

Ryan: Well, it's annoying constantly being compared to other bands in this genre.

Suzanne: We get a lot of people who insist that we sound like the Cocteau Twins. I hate questions and comments relating to that...

Ryan: They show a lack of familiarity of the genre of music we're in. The funny thing is, I've been making music like this long before I heard of bands like Lush and The Sundays and such. How can we be copying them? Why should we be compared to them, or say, even bands we've never listened to before?

Suzanne: That's always real exciting. People will tell us, "You sound exactly like this and this," when we don't even know what they mean.

Discover the music of Love Spirals Downwards .

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