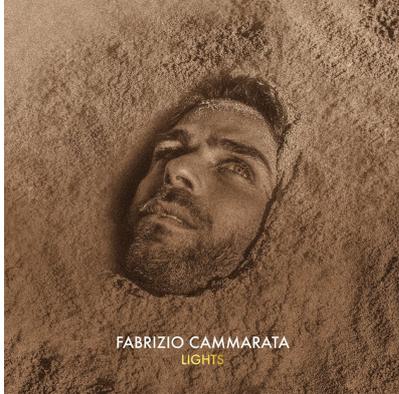




IRASCIBLE MUSIC



FABRIZIO CAMMARATA (IT)

Album: *Lights*

Label: Haldern Pop Recordings

Release Date: 29.03.2019

Web: fabriziocammarata.com

EPK: irascible.ch/releases/fabrizio-cammarata/lights

In the summer of 2018, after a year spent touring the critically acclaimed *Of Shadows* around the world, the stars above Fabrizio Cammarata seemed to be aligning: love was in the air, and plans were already set in place to record a follow-up album, to be titled *Lights*. “I felt so ready to work on the album that I started drafting new songs right away,” Fabrizio reflects. “I was in the middle of one of the happiest moments of my whole life, for many different reasons. So I have my 11 new songs, the studio is booked for next month and the band are ready to nail those tracks...”

But even the stars can be capricious – in Greek mythology, Cassiopeia is cast into her constellation as punishment – and with several “major changes” impacting the artist all at once, the project was suddenly on the verge of derailing. Depression? Check. Heartache? Check. Writer’s block? Check. The positive momentum that was about to channel into the recording of a new album seemed light years away. “It was like waking up from a dream and getting back to reality,” as Fabrizio describes it.

Nonetheless, waking up occasionally has its benefits. “I found myself in the personally uncommon position of being in a vortex of emotions, and yet fully lucid,” he says. “For the first time ever I felt I could create a short circuit between my ‘inner now’ and my music. I had a lot to say.” It was time to start again. New songs, new focus, new energy. To everyone’s surprise, Fabrizio announced that each of the songs they’d been working on up to that point would be replaced. “Someone said: ‘Oh, alright, so play us the new ones,’” he recalls, “and I said, ‘They don’t exist yet.’”

By this point, though, time was of the essence. Recordings had to be pushed back as late as possible. Early December, the band – completed by Donato di Trapani on synths, Carmelo Drago on bass, and Adam Dawson on drums – went into ten days of studio sessions with five songs half-written, and

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with Fabrizio on tour with Villagers until the very last minute. They went into the studio with engineer Francesco Vitaliti, located in an endless orange grove close at producer Dani Castelar's home in Valencia, and shut out the world for ten days.

The result came from essentially the same team that recorded *Of Shadows*, but something had changed. The result was an album that retained the original title, rejuvenated with new meaning. "I had planned before the summer to call it *Lights*. Despite the dark months in between I thought to keep that name. We did what we could, and the least I can say is that I'm in peace with myself and ready for whatever might come."

Born in Palermo, the Sicilian capital is imbued in every note of Fabrizio's music. He has previously spoken about the various identities that a place can hold; in the same way that people can show different sides to themselves, one's home town or city is forever revealing different aspects of its character. "Dani, Francesco and I started to work on the new album in Palermo, starting with 'Timbuktu', a song about self-liberation – that's why the song actually made it on the record," Fabrizio says, looking out across his balcony that surveys the ancient city. "Then Paolo Nutini came down for a week to work with Dani, go for a swim in the Mediterranean, and do some late night jam sessions above its rooftops." During that invincible summer of 2018, it seemed like anything was possible. Throughout the record, it's these kind of sun-dappled scenes that inform a great deal of its emotional palette. A paean to how quickly life can change, first single 'Run Run Run' is – ironically, perhaps – an invocation to slow down, a reminder that some truths are borne from stillness. "It's much easier to move fast to have the illusion of renewal," Fabrizio explains, "It's much harder to stand still and read what our own soul has to tell us; the answer is deep down where motion will only make it fuzzier and unclear."

Musically, *Lights* feels like a bold step out. Still driven by Fabrizio's rich voice and acoustic guitar, many of the songs here are undeniably full-band affairs. Sometimes it's a step away from the hushed whisper of earlier material – 'KV' is "a rock'n'roll song about love, sex and betrayal" that sounds built to fill larger venues – though sometimes the instrumentation serves to build emotion in the album's more intimate corners.

'Eileen' is just such a song, lyrically traversing the space between love and vulnerability ("Eileen, you've got your hands around my throat, so be careful what you do now..."). For the songwriter, it's an elegy to the power of free choice. "There's a beautiful metaphor by an ancient Bengali poet: love is like an elephant who wants to be tied to a stake through a thin silk string. It can escape anytime it wants with no effort, but he doesn't do it. It chooses the bond, and yet, it's free." Moreover, the track features one of the album's more prominent use of synths in the recording process, marking *Lights* as perhaps the artist's most sonically expansive record to date.

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In his professional life, Fabrizio had been gathering more love than ever. *Of Shadows* had been released in a Deluxe Version featuring live recordings with Berlin Choir Cantus Domus 2017 and '18 had seen the artist perform headline shows, dazzle at SXSW and The Great Escape, and support artists such as Emiliana Torrini, Lucinda Williams, and This Is The Kit. A few weeks prior to recording 'Timbuktu' that summer, Damien Rice had called Fabrizio on stage to perform Sicilian classic 'Mi votu e mi rivotu' by Rosa Balistreri.

Fabrizio's love of traditional folk and musical classics remains strong, and bleeds into his own music more than ever; 'All Is Brighter' certainly showcases his passion for flamenco, while 'Cassiopea' features for the first time a chorus sung in Italian. Inspired by his performance with Damien Rice, the Sicilian also cites his experience recording *Un Mondo Raro*: "It was my fellow songwriter Dimartino and myself taking my all-time favourite Mexican icon Chavela Vargas' repertoire into Italian, and making a theatre-play and book about her life."

Despite the tumultuous journey that carried the album into the world, *Lights* remains an abundantly hopeful record. "There's not a single depressive moment in the album," Fabrizio says, looking out across the Mediterranean Sea. "It overflows with will to live, renewal and the joy of giving birth to a dancing star within oneself... It's a merciless sentence against selfishness, falsehood and individualism, and an elegy for the concept of 'union'." It's the story of Fabrizio Cammarata, and as vibrantly alive and in love with the world as the artist himself.

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