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MUSIC VIDEO: Louis Philippe Eno

June 8 - August 4, 2011

Over time, the language of the music video has evolved through the various approaches – illustrative, narrative, technological and conceptual – of successive waves of young directors for whom the world of the video clip provides a rare space of aesthetic and professional freedom and a great way to learn the ropes. In 2003, Spike Jonze, Michel Gondry and Chris Cunningham, the first generation of directors to acquire reputations as *auteurs*, founded Directors Label, a collection devoted to those “who helped redefine film and music videos.” At the time, Louis Philippe Eno was finishing his film studies at Concordia University. He hoped to promptly gain as much experience as possible and master the art of working with a film crew. Happily, Eno’s friendship with Steve Dumas, for whom he had crafted the visual look of early shows, led him to NúFilms, where in less than a decade he has made nearly a hundred music videos. He works with Dumas, Malajube, Les Trois Accords, Pierre Lapointe, Plants and Animals, Les Cowboys Fringants, The Hidden Cameras, Mickey 3D, Les Dales Hawerchuk and many more.

Eno quickly explored every approach: the eye candy of extreme pop visual effects, animated sequences, the possibilities of postproduction and stop motion, dense superimpositions and montages timed to the beat of the sound track. His register ranges from a childlike playfulness to a more sombre dreamlike atmosphere. In 2005, two of his works received ADISQ nominations for Video of the Year: *Vénus*, for Dumas, and *Saskatchewan*, for Les Trois Accords, which was also nominated for Best French Video at the MuchMusic Awards. For *Saskatchewan*, Eno divorced the visuals completely from the music. "I wanted to break the pattern, the one we always get, with the artist performing in environment x and a little story running alongside." Instead, he turned the members of Les Trois Accords into ninja warriors demonstrating their prowess in the martial arts. No one is seen to sing. In 2006, Eno took part in the inaugural edition of Music Video at the Musée with his *Montréal - 40° C* for Malajube, a gently humorous video with a sound track that bears repeated listening. And, in 2007, *Pâte Filo*, also for Malajube, won Best French Video at the MuchMusic Awards.

"Quite apart from visual inspiration, I think it's possible to do a good clip with a song that's, say, average, but it's impossible to do a great clip without a great song. It all comes back to that, the basic reason for the video clip. It's all about the song."

Eno compares the song that forms the basis of each project to his canvas. Making a music video requires a maximum output of energy in a short period of time. "The music gives a good structure to start off with, and a defined time frame." Each Eno project starts with the question: "Where do we want to go with this?" Looking for the idea that will be true to the song. In this, Eno joins other concept-centric directors, such as Spike Jonze, a definite reference and source of inspiration for him. One need only think of Jonze's work for *Sabotage*, by the Beastie Boys, 1994, and the performance of his Torrance Community Dance Group for *Praise You*, by Fatboy Slim, 1998. "There is in his sense of humour, his disorder, his unorthodox desire to explore the medium of the video clip more in terms of concept than technique, something that is extremely generous, skilful and true."

Étienne d'Août, the fourth music video Eno did for **Malajube**, opens on a battlefield on a snowy hillside. There are arrows, blood and injured men, lost warriors from some distant past. Knowing that the Montréal French rock group was not very interested in the idea of a music video at the time, Eno proposed a short film. "The guys liked the idea and gave me a free hand." The result is a very cinematographic music video in which none of the four musicians appear – quite unlike what the Beatles did with *A Hard Day's Night*, directed by Richard Lester in 1964, and *Help*, in 1965, from which excerpts were taken (hence the word "clips") to be shown on TV when the band was not available to appear live. **Étienne d'Août** shows the character of a grieving Viking in what could be an excerpt from an epic film, in a different register altogether than the music by Malajube.

In 2009, Eno's work with **Plants and Animals** for **Feedback in the Field** put him in contact with Brian Burton alias Danger Mouse and a few weeks later he found himself in Los Angeles for the **Dark Night of the Soul** project, a musical collaboration between **Danger Mouse & Sparklehorse** and David Lynch. Eno had to quickly dive into this universe and improvise. With his super-8-mm camera and garden lights bought at the last minute at the local hardware store, Eno filmed 13 sequences in the two days David Lynch spent on the photo shoot. The unique context of this project, the do-it-yourself element, rekindled his interest in experimental film and the work of Stan Brakhage. "For me it was a new angle on a certain aspect of the music clip. We created a video which isn't really a clip, it's more of a teaser.

with 30 to 45 seconds devoted to each song on the album." The hybrid and driven nature of the project, coupled with the intellectual and artistic relationship with David Lynch, had a profound impact on Eno. "It may have been the strongest creative experience of my career. I was, and still am, deeply affected by it."

That same year, his short film *Jonathan et Gabrielle* won the Focus Grand Prize for Best Canadian Short at the Festival du nouveau cinéma in Montréal. Now, when Louis Philippe Eno is turning more toward making shorts, this sixth edition of our Music Video series will present seven of his most important music videos, revisiting his early professional career when he was in his 20s and working in "a milieu and medium that were perfect for that age..."

LOUISE SIMARD, Head of Multimedia Events

Les Trois Accords, **Saskatchewan**. "Our first idea for this video was to put the band on the Moon. We had ordered the costumes, but the following week a video came out based on the same idea, so we had to revamp our concept. We wanted the energy of the visuals to be perfectly aligned with the energy of the song. Then we came up with the idea of the ninjas. The band members rehearsed their *katas* with a coach who was on site while we were filming. For the masked ninjas we used real martial arts experts... although the final result is essentially absurd."

Ton avion. "We then decided we would show, in a physical way, the most noble, classical attribute of the music. The band prepared a symphonic arrangement specifically for the video. We wanted to keep it serious, and showed a philharmonic orchestra with 28 musicians, all played by the five members of the group. It's one of the clips I'm most satisfied with. It doesn't reinvent anything, but it makes subtle use of all the codes in the music video lexicon while remaining spare and concise."

Dumas, **Alors alors**. "Dumas is first and foremost one of my best friends. He is also the artist I can connect with and work with most easily. I know what he likes and he knows what I'll try to do, and he always subtly realigns me through his own tastes and needs. The clip is a very experimental one where I tried a technique that I hadn't seen anywhere else, shooting with seven cameras positioned at 180° angles. We filmed everything with video cameras and then took images from them to create a stop-motion effect, shifting from one camera to the next. We then morphed the images to create a kind of fluidity between the bodies, as if they were all the same organism. But at the same time I didn't want it all to be about technique, I wanted to give Dumas space to deliver a good performance. It's one of his great strengths when he's doing a show."

Malajube, **Étienne d'Août**. "I allowed myself to imagine a film inspired by the song. I had a clear picture of the Vikings, a story about twin brothers, one who dies on the battlefield and the other who survives. It's still one of the best experiences I've had making a video. The idea was to convey the emotion of the song, not directly illustrate it. The clip is in a way closer to film than music video. The image of the man who finds his twin brother dead on the battlefield still moves me. I think the hyper-cinematographic nature of this video helps it withstand the test of time."

Pierre Lapointe, **2X2 rassemblés**. "Pierre is someone who knows what he wants. He's very sensitive and has a clear direction in his head. He arrived with references and I knew right away that visually he wanted to go somewhere completely different than for his first CD and music videos. We based the clip on a performance choreographed by Manon Oligny. We hired non-professional dancers to make sure the style was completely organic, with a disjointed feel that would blend in with Pierre's style and create a look that was both free and instinctual.

Plants and Animals, **Feedback in the Field**. "For this clip, I suggested a stop-motion approach. We wanted to show life on Parc Avenue, where the band members lived. We built a mock-up of the buildings on the street, including the old Rialto cinema and the dance bars and restaurants, the most popular spots. We created a mini-Mount Royal and the people of the neighbourhood were represented by brightly coloured and fantastical creatures. It was important to in some way illustrate the multicultural and eclectic side of this part of Montréal."

Danger Mouse & Sparklehorse, **Dark Night of the Soul**. "The two days of filming were essentially one photo shoot, directed by David Lynch. I worked with the same set-ups, shooting material for both a video and a website. Lynch improvises a lot. He would take breaks during the filming to meditate. So I'd spin off from his framework to create my own stories in the midst of it all. I had to improvise a lot too, and fast. It was a bit like jamming, but with visuals. It's really inspiring when the musicians are great like Lynch! The ideas came quite naturally from each of the scenes."

PROGRAM

Saskatchewan, **Les Trois Accords**, 2005
NúFilms/Indica Records, 4 min 26 s

2X2 rassemblés, **Pierre Lapointe**, 2007
NúFilms/Audiogram, 3 min 48 s

Étienne d'Août, **Malajube**, 2007
NúFilms/Dare To Care, 4 min 22 s

Alors alors, **Dumas**, 2007
NúFilms/Tacca Select, 4 min 18 s

Ton avion, **Les Trois Accords**, 2007
NúFilms/Indica Records, 3 min 17 s

Feedback in the Field, **Plants and Animals**, 2008
NúFilms/Secret City Records, 3 min 16 s

Dark Night of the Soul,
Danger Mouse & Sparklehorse, 2009
Album *Dark Night of the Soul*/
Danger Mouse & Sparklehorse, 9 min 15 s

This looped video program lasts about 40 minutes.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We wish to thank Louis Philippe Eno for his attention, generosity and making himself so readily available. We also wish to thank Paul Barbeau and NúFilms; Jean-Luc della Montagna from Jet Films; Marie Claire Lalonde from the production house Voyous Films; as well as everyone who helped us obtain the licences for this program, with special thanks to Amy Schmaltz of Monotone Inc.; Paula Carvalho at Sodrac; and Janet Turner with AVLA/Audio-Video Licencing Agency Inc., Toronto.

PHOTO

Saskatchewan, **Les Trois Accords**, 2005
Courtesy the artist