

PBII - January 23, 2010

De Boerderij, Zoetermeer (NL)

Saturday January 23d promised to be a very special evening. Not only **PBII**, a band from The Hague, my hometown, was playing their new release *Plastic Soup* (see [review](#)), but **John Jowitt** and **John Mitchell** were coming too. Big names in the prog-scene, at least they are to me. In the week prior to the event, I was invited over to their studio, which happened to be very close to where I live. I could literally walk. So I got a glimpse of what was to expect. I also got the album in advance, the benefits of being a reviewer, I guess. I really don't like going to concerts, when I don't know the music. I want to live it, but for that to happen, I have to know it.

The support act, which started very early, was **Marc Besselink**, frontman of **Kramer**. I'm sorry to say, but I was talking during the whole performance, with another reviewer. He told me he was just going to mention him, not review his performance. And because he is from a highly qualified site, I was okay with that. I like Kramer, but Marc solo is something else. I tried to recognise what he was



playing, but couldn't. It must have been one of the first songs from *Life Cycle*. A pity they didn't play with the whole band; I would have come earlier then.

The stage was built with draperies. It looked impressive. When PBII, the artists formerly known as **Plackband**, entered, they looked like family. The only new member is bass player **Harry den Hartog**. They also got rid of their singer, now keyboard player **Michel van Wasse** does the vocals. About three hundred people came to see them. I was a little afraid for

the attendance, because not so many people know their music and nobody had yet heard the album. But they all got a free copy, a great gift and gesture from the band.



They started off with *Book of Changes*, the first song on the album. It didn't take me long to get goose bumps over this one, which is strange. Mostly goose bumps come over a period of time. Nevertheless, it happened again live. What a great song. It may be just a sympho-device, the silence and then the explosion, but it doesn't matter. It still does the trick. It struck me that guitarist **Ronald Brautigam** isn't really a performer. Neither is Michel, the singer. He was hardly noticeable behind his keyboard, to me. Ronald plays very well, but of course I'm used and addicted to world's best guitar players. So, I

waited for John Mitchell, which isn't fair but it is the truth.

The order of the set list was nearly the same as on the album. **Heidi Jo Hines**, daughter of **Denny Laine** (founder of the **Moody Blues**) came to sing not only the song *It's your life*, which is on the album, but also *Stay with me till dawn* (**Judie Tzuke**-cover) and another song she wrote herself. She really has a beautiful voice and is great-looking too. The men especially liked her, but I did as well. Maybe her songs aren't prog, but they are beautiful and they stay in my mind all day. After the show she also turned out to be pleasant in person.

But the highlight of the evening for me was, against all expectations, Harry den Hartog. In addition to his stage-skills, this new guitarist is a virtuoso on the bass. I have never seen anything like that. The song *Ladrillo* is an instrumental guitar solo. I never thought bass guitar could be used for solo's, so I learned a lot this evening! Although it is a very short song, it made a big impression. But most spectacular was his contribution to the song *Fata Morgana*. It is really stunning what he does there with his guitar. On the album I noticed the oriental atmosphere and wondered what instrument that was. Well, it's just Harry's bass. By the way, John Jowitt played the other bass in this song. I expected something great from him, but apparently he was there only as support.

John Jowitt did a great job overall. Not only was he present at the formerly mentioned song, but he also played **Pink Floyd's** *Have a Cigar*. He actually sang on that. I never knew he could, but then again, I'm not convinced now. But opinions about the vocal capacities of Michel, also vary. In any case, *Have a Cigar* was good for most people, because it was the first song they recognised.

Besides Harry, who was the big surprise, there was another highlight - John Mitchell. No surprises there. I forgot that he could sing, beautifully. Goose bumps again when he performed *Here comes the Flood* from **Peter Gabriel**, supported by Marc Besselink from Kramer. If you don't know the band Kramer, go check them out. They're a very underrated band in my opinion. Another contribution by Mitchell, on the album as well as on stage, was the song *Cradle to Cradle*, from *Plastic Soup*. Much too short. Even Ronald Brautigam (PBII) admitted he wished he could play like that.



After the guest appearances and two more songs from the old Plackband, they seemed to be out of material. The crowd wanted more though, so they came back. They played *Book of Changes* once more. I don't know why they picked this song, but I couldn't be happier. This was my moment, again. It was the perfect ending of a great evening. I hope for all the others that they will play again soon, when everybody heard the album. The subject of *Plastic Soup* is picked up by the Dutch government and they will sponsor a videoclip of the titletrack. Prog TV! The whole show in de Boerderij was recorded by amongst others, John Vis. He also filmed Heidi Jo Hines on the bonus DVD which comes with the album. The draperies acted as a decor for the projections, all made in-house.

Holland has yet another great prog band. Which reminds me of another band from Holland, about whom I wrote a review not so long ago. I was very surprised to see them at the door flyering - **Mangrove**. It was great talking to them as well. This was the release of *Plastic Soup* and it had all the ingredients of a party. The best soup I have tasted in a long time. Ronald Brautigam even mentioned me when he was talking about prog and its definition. I said something like prog must be profound, it must have a deeper meaning and layers in the music. Now it has another meaning, its about content, the content of the ocean.

Janke Rijpkema

Pictures by Arthur Haggenburg

Setlist:

Click on the picture to enlarge. Full resolution pictures are available on request (click [here](#) to send a mail to the webmaster).

Set 1:

Intro
Book Of Changes
In the Arms Of A Gemini
Loneliness



The Great Pacific Garbage Patch
Ladrillo (bass solo)
Criticize the Critics
It's Your Life (Heidi)
Fata Morgana (John Jowitt)
Living By The Dice
Cradle To Cradle (John Mitchell)



Set 2:

The Hunch Back (old Plackband)
Weak Turns To Strong (Heidi)
Stay With Me Till Dawn (Heidi)
Here Comes The Flood
(with Marc Besselink on keys & John Mitchell vocals)
Have A Cigar
(John Jowitt vocals & bass)
The Good Earth (old Plackband)



Encores:

Book Of Changes

Line up PBII:

(left to right)

Harry den Hartog:

Bass guitar, background vocals & V-bass

Michel van Wasseem:

keyboards, lead vocals

Ronald Brautigam:

guitars and background vocals

Tom van de Meulen:

Drums & V-drums



Mark Besselink
 (supporting act)

Heidi Jo Haines
 guest vocals

John Jowitt
 guest bass

John Mitchell
 guest guitar & vocals

