

Moscow Club Hosts David Tibet's Myrninerest

By [Timothy Misir](#)

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Myrninerest is a new project by prolific musician David Tibet, known for his work in reviving the folk music genre.

Over the past 30 years, musician, writer and poet David Tibet has made music with a host of collaborators, with albums like "Nature Unveiled" (1984), "Crooked Crosses for the Nodding God" (1989), "Thunder Perfect Mind" (1992) and "Black Ships Ate the Sky" (2006), representing just some of his more than 50 releases that have been described as hallucinatory, apocalyptic and esoteric.

The Moscow Times spoke with Tibet in advance of his concert in Moscow on Dec. 7, and the artist recalled some of his previous visits to Russia.

Tibet remembered that the last time he performed here, he was approached by a fan named Father Cosma, "a fascinating, good vignette of Russian life ... on a tiny motorcycle with a huge beard." He turned out to be a monk from a central Moscow monastery who was a big fan

of his, so he invited him onstage to say a prayer and bless the audience before the band performed.

This time around, Tibet will be performing as Myrminerest, a band that started as off as a project allowing him to do work that was more personal than Current 93, Tibet's main project.

In the Myrminerest ensemble, Tibet is joined by James Blackshaw, a highly regarded guitarist also known for his solo work, who wrote the musical pieces for the band, as well as Andrew Liles on electronics and Reinier van Houdt on piano.

English folk music has been undergoing a revival in recent years, especially in indie rock circles, with younger musicians having been influenced by the folk scenes of the 1960s and 1970s.

Indeed, Tibet has played an instrumental role in this respect. He explains: "When people had no interest, when it wasn't hip and fashionable music, I worked with Shirley Collins and reissued an album of hers. As Shirley says, I brought her back. Nobody cared about her music then," he says, referring to the 1992 collection of her recordings "Fountain of Snow" that was released on his Durtro label, which led to a new generation of listeners discovering Collins' music.

David Tibet's musical output continues the exploration of themes that have been a part of English folk music: paganism, gnosticism and the occult. Current 93 emerged out of post-industrial music circles alongside bands like Death in June, Coil, and Psychic TV, all one-time collaborators with Tibet.

Rob Young, in his book on the history of British folk music, "Electric Eden," defines this folk-inspired experimental music as "neofolk," or music "in which electronics and concrete music were augmented with acoustic and medieval instruments, drones and lyrics verging on the apocalyptic."

Tibet sees things a little differently though: "I think this idea of categorizing people is just so foreign to me. We're not industrial, we never were industrial or neofolk. Is that because we use acoustic guitars?" he asks me.

He tells me about his biggest influences: writers like Tolkien, C.S. Lewis and Crowley have had a profound impact on his work, as did the music of T-Rex, Alice Cooper, and The Sweet. However, he adds: "A lot of things that inspire and move [me] the most, have been things that I came across when I was 10 or 11."

He explains that growing up in Malaysia in the late '60s and early '70s, he did not have much access to his own English culture. Surrounded by exotic languages and traditions, it was then when his interest in religion began to develop. "I was very interested in religion from an early age, and of course the Christian bible, especially the New Testament. I was fascinated by Hindu and Buddhist culture."

Tibet was born in Perak, Malaysia, and lived there with his family until he left for boarding school in England. His father first went there during World War II, and returned to work as

a mining engineer after it ended as he liked it so much. Tibet also remembers this time fondly and still considers himself Anglo-Malay.

"I think, if you were in Malaysia, as an English kid and you go into an Indian temple or a Chinese temple ... the images are so fascinating and exotic. I was really attracted to that, and you have that in Catholicism as well with the saints."

His interest in early Christianity, especially its noncanonical texts, led to a MA in Coptic language and grammar that he completed three years ago.

Apart from that, he is being kept busy with the upcoming Current 93 album, "I am the Last of All the Field that Fell: A Channel," featuring Nick Cave, Antony Hegarty and John Zorn. With recording completed, he is just finalizing the artwork before its February 2014 release, alongside "Sing Omega," a 560-page book of his collected lyrics.

Musically, he is most proud of the work is doing now. "Our focus has changed, and the emphasis that we've put on various parts of our life and personality changed ... I do not listen to my earlier work, although I'm proud of it and glad that I did it. It is not something that I think about anymore"

Myrminerest will perform songs from their new album "Jhonn, Uttered Babylon," a record about the life, death and friendship that Tibet had with Jhonn Balance of English experimental group Coil. His death at age 42 from a drunken fall in his home left an indelible mark on the British experimental underground, not least on Tibet, a close collaborator with Balance. Filmmaker Davide Pepe will also be in Moscow to provide the film accompaniment to the music, which uses material from Tibet's collection — letters from Balance, photos, and footage.

Myrminerest plays Dec. 7 at 8 p.m. at Teatr Club, 20 Staraya Basmannaya Ulitsa, Metro Kurskaya.

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