

BEN LEE – DEEPER INTO DREAM

There's a quote out there that says, "Dreams are only thoughts you didn't have time to think about during the day." Aussie-born singer/songwriter Ben Lee reaches beyond such a notion and turns it upside down in order to grab a hold of the unconscious. And on *Deeper Into Dream*, his Dangerbird Records debut, he examines the intricate layers of dreams, looking to make sense out of life's most complex questions and ideals.

"I find dreams to be incredibly honest despite the kind of world we live in," Lee says. "[Dreams are] proof that every single person on the planet is an artist and is completely creative. I really don't like that elitist attitude to art – I like the idea that we are all creative and dreams prove it because people create entire worlds every night."

The ARIA award-winning musician's fascination with dreams and the mysteries behind them has long been a part of 20-plus years in the music business. But only now does the former Noise Addict singer, whose early years saw releases on the Beastie Boys' Grand Royal label and Thurston Moore's Ecstatic Peace! imprint, feel it's the right time to explore that. In the last several, three of which were spent working with the late therapist Jan Lloyd, Lee fell in love with the mysteries that dreaming presents. And after he and his wife, actress Lone Skye, welcomed their daughter, Goldie Priya, in 2009, Lee thought it was time to re-examine things, especially the hidden messages inside his own dreams.

"After having such a long career in music, and having had a baby, I just felt like music, in a way, it's sort of become a job that I could have just maintained at a certain level by doing it in a way that I knew how to do it," he explains. "And that became sort of terrifying to me. Music for me has always been a tool for working out exploring myself and exploring the world. It literally took me out of Australia onto a journey around the world. Or internally, it's the creativity – it unlocks things inside you and the audience. So I just wanted go deeper with that and I found working with the dream really powerful for that."

No longer interested in trying to compete for a radio smash hit, Lee felt he was finally comfortable with the idea of producing this deeply personal set entirely on his own. He already spent the last few years co-writing and producing with other artists such as comedienne Margaret Cho (his first role as producer for her 2010 release, *Cho Dependent*, earned a Grammy nomination). Additionally, he's collaborated with Mozella, Tim Myers, The Silver Lake Chorus and Appleonia. So with that experience, Lee decided it was time to give self-production a real shot. However, such a decision wasn't met without a little nervousness. And combining that with the whole dream idea, Lee says making *Deeper Into Dream* was downright terrifying.

"The making of the record was really scary," he says. "For me, that's part of what dreams show: how innately terrifying the experience of existence is. In a way, I'm not sure I've ever made an album that hangs together as well as this. I think I've made a record that's honest to me about where I'm at."

He continued: "And with dreams, we're all hearing the same message, which is 'listen to yourself.' I just want to do that more and more creatively."

Joining Lee for this dozen-song set are his longtime musical collaborators Nic Johns, Lara Meyerratken, and Petra Haden, as well as mixer Noah Georgeson (The Strokes, Devendra Banhart, Joanna Newsom). While recording at his Laurel Canyon home studio, he also got a little help from his friends and family.

For the last year, Lee has been recording and collecting their dreams, all of which are spliced into three mesmerizing dream collages.

"I felt like people reveal more than they realize they're revealing in telling you a dream," Lee says. "If you say to someone 'Hey, how are you doing?' they'll say 'fine' or 'ok' and not give much away. With a dream, despite their greatest efforts to conceal all their vulnerabilities, it all comes out in the mythology of their dream."

From the earthy acoustics of "Glue" and the celestial synth-tinged "I Want My Mind Back" to the pop grandeur of "Pointless Beauty," *Deeper Into Dream* comes at you from all sides. On the vibrant rush that is "The Church of Everybody Else," Lee's resistance against conformity has his heart wide open, and more than ever before. "Get Used to It," a riff-heavy surge mixed with lush string arrangements, finds Lee contemplating death, particularly the death of Jan Lloyd. He ponders the moment of leaving this world, and the fear that must accompany that transition. "Once you jump in," he sings, wondering if the journey into the unknown might be easier than you think.

"We think that life is simple and or we may think that life is black and white, and dreams often open up the complexity and the ambiguity and the uncertainty," Lee says.

Prior to bringing *Deeper Into Dream* to life, Lee also signed on as the band director and leader for Barry Sobel and Fred Willard's Internet chat show, *3 Minute Talk Show*, which was produced by Tom Hanks. "My job was to be the backing band and write goofy little intros for each celebrity guest or segment," Lee says. "I just loved it."

An 8-years-in-the-making feature length documentary – *Catch My Disease* – from director Amiel Courtin-Wilson, premiered at the Melbourne International Film Festival in August. The film captures Lee's life and career up until his daughter Goldie was born. "It's been very liberating [to see it] because it allowed me to put some things into perspective that I couldn't see before. I became a man. A better artist. And a kinder person. A warmer person."

Ben Lee Discography:

2011 *Deeper Into Dream*
2010 *Noise Addict – It Was Never About The Audience*
2009 *The Rebirth of Venus*
2008 *The Square (Original Motion Picture Soundtrack w/ Jessica Chapnik)*
2007 *Ripe*
2005 *Awake Is The New Sleep*
2004 *The Bens – The Bens*
2002 *Hey You, Yes You*
1999 *Breathing Tornados*
1997 *Something To Remember Me By*
1996 *Noise Addict – Meet The Real You*
1995 *Grandpaw Would*
1995 *Noise Addict – Young & Jaded*
1993 *DEF*