

The Return Of America

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Where do you fall when your're already on the floor? What does the world fear when death has subscribed to prime time tv? What follows the end of an idea called America? Questions, that not only Tori Amos has asked herself after september 11th.

Wherever the journey may go – it has definitely begun. Tori's new album "*Scarlet's Walk*" is a journey into America's past and Tori Amos' past herself. For both of them it starts at Ground Zero and ends in a better place: "We were on tour in America last september. After the happenings in New York countless events were cancelled. Very few artists wanted to perform. It felt as if a whole country had closed its curtains. We got a lot of email, people asked us to carry on with the tour. There were few places where you could go, meeting other people, taking your mind off things. So we continued to perform."

Maybe that's why Glassjaw's Daryl Palumbo certified the woman with the firehair played the "hardest music in the world". After all Pantera had stayed home in Texas. Today Tori Amos is situated in a place that couldn't be more contrary to those terroristic pictures. Newquai, an idyllic place at the coast of Cornwall is the new home to Tori, her husband and their daughter since their marriage. The elf has landed is what you think when you listen to Tori telling stories about talking her daughter out of drinking the bathwater. Even the endless fight between sexes, central model on "Boys for Pele" now stays in the background. There are more important issues since september 11th that need to be dealt with apart from tragical stories between men and women.

"A girl called Scarlet who may be the land and may be a person and may be a trail of blood" – these words found in the booklet of *Scarlet's Walk* summarize that here's a story on two levels. At least. There are personified pictures, real or not-so-real meetings on mentioned tour through post-11th-september-America. [...]

Tori says the album is a present to America. To her. "America needed that album. I personified her, made her a being, an entity. I myself have been in New York september 11th. After that my journey from LA through the US took off. It reflected the impression of that day in a variety of ways. People reacted to the happenings influenced by their habits, belief and culture in very different ways. But they were all united in the new awareness of America as a being, not an object that gives a name to a country." [...]

"I have so much blood of my mothers in me, that I had to return to them. The soul of America is in me also. And that's the point. The looking back into the past won't be spared for anyone. Not for the inhabitants of America anyway. She is so much more than her ideals. She is more than this scaring thing she turned out to be during the last centuries. All the ideals of America have been questioned in one day only. The Irish for example have a strong binding to their country. Americans have this binding to the ideology which had to fill the vacuum of their missing identity. Now there's space again and something else may fill the vacuum."

What could that be in the best case? Television, Money and War were not enough obviously. "Indians have looked after America's treasures for a long time. They are her roots. But they were not integrated, arrangements have been broken – that is the agreement the actual America is based on. The history of America shows that it has been written with the blood of her original inhabitants. If there really should be a healing of her, if you want to justify her status as a superpower in the sense of a responsible nation, you have to look at what America used to be. The betrayal has an effect from the inside, it effects the life of every american citizen. Because everything is based on that tacit understanding of breaking agreements. We can not close our eyes to this any longer. America has a great spirituality in herself. We should rediscover it."

A step back into the past in order to step forward to the future. This return to the self is taken up as an issue in the lyrics on *Scarlet's Walk*, especially in the first song "Amber Waves". In allusion to the Grande Dame of Porn from the movie "Boogie Nights" Tori speaks of the way of a woman into the porn business due to family violence and ill relationships. The storyboard is the same as that of America who has to pick up the fragments of herself to get back to be whole again. "This woman says that you can see a part of her in those movies that doesn't have anything to do with her as a person. She was used to violence and abuse because she lived through this her whole life. Someday she reaches the point where she just can't go on living cut off from herself. She has to return to all those places where parts of her are still resting and pick them up and integrate them to be whole again." Tori Amos tells a wise tale of a woman named Scarlet who could be a woman, herself, anybody or a country. [...]

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