



Online magazine for symphonic & progressive rock

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[Home](#)[Search](#)[Updates](#)[CD Reviews](#)[DVD Reviews](#)[Concert Reviews](#)[Live Videos](#)[Specials](#)[Contact & Info](#)[About Us](#)[Links](#)

Halloween - Psy-KO

(2CD 2025, 38:03/ 34:08, Private Release/ MUSEA)

The tracks:

CD 1:

- | | |
|-------------------|---------|
| 1- Transe | (9:03) |
| 2- Crise De Foi | (8:20) |
| 3- Plume De Plomb | (5:20) |
| 4- Nostalgie | (15:20) |

CD 2:

- | | |
|-------------------|---------|
| 1- Frustration | (9:07) |
| 2- Gnomes | (10:20) |
| 3- Cochon De Laid | (7:30) |
| 4- Igor S | (7:11) |

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Halloween is a celebration observed in many countries on 31st October, the eve of the Western Christian feast of All Hallows' Day. It is at the beginning of the observance of All Hallows' Eve, the time in the liturgical year dedicated to remembering the dead, including saints (hallows), martyrs, and all the faithful departed. In popular culture, the day has become a celebration of horror and is associated with the macabre and the supernatural. That is mainly because of *Halloween*, the American slasher media franchise that consists of thirteen films, as well as novels, comic books, a video game and other merchandise. The films primarily focus on Michael Myers, who was committed to a sanatorium as a child for the murder of his sister, Judith Myers. Fifteen years later, he escapes to stalk and kill the people of the fictional town of Haddonfield, Illinois. Michael's killings occur on the holiday of Halloween, on which all of the films primarily take place.

However, **Halloween** is also a French Prog Rock band which released 4 studio albums and one live album. And guess what? This year they have released their 6th album after a long 24 year nap. The album is named *Psy-KO* and distributed by MUSEA. It is a double album with over seventy minutes of music to enjoy. Careful, don't get them confused with the German power metal band **Helloween**. Different kind of music.

Nowadays the band consists of **Géraldine Le Cocq** (lead vocals), **Cédric Monjour** (guitars), **Gilles Coppin** (keyboards), **Jean Philippe Brun** (violin), **Romain Troly** (bass) and **Philippe Di Faostino** (drums). Those familiar with their older work might have noticed that only their former guitarist and bassist are not involved in the recording of the new album.

Their music is very difficult to pigeon hole. Even more difficult to compare their music to other acts. I can only come up with names such as **Frank Zappa**, **King Crimson**, **Gentle Giant** or **UK** who might have been an influence. They certainly belong to the Prog Rock category, but sometimes with flavours from Jazz, fusion and metal. Yes, metal because their guitarist who is influenced by **Riverside** likes to shred his guitar once in a while. But he also sounds like he is influenced by **Allan Holdsworth**. One thing is sure however. Their rather complex music is not everybody's cup of tea so to speak. The music is sometimes difficult to digest and has to be heard several times before you discover the inner beauty of the 8 tracks which are featured on this release. Also, you have to know that Le Cocq sings in her native French language and her wonderful voice might not be appreciated by every Proghead. But I loved it all the way. Also, I am a fan of bands from France who sing in the French language. Bands such as **Ange** of course. But also acts such as **Carpe Diem**, **Atoll**, **Nemo**, **Versailles**, **Mona Lisa**, **Arrakeen** and **Drama** get my approval. Therefore, it's fine by me that they sing in their native tongue.

The band told me that the *Psy-KO* tracks are partially based on former ideas that never went to concrete pieces and on new compositions. There was a lot of discussions within the band to pick up an adequate name for the album. It was done at the end of the process, and the general line was that - if not an intentional concept album - all lyrics were more or less describing mental disorders (except *Igor S.*). They went thru "I(Gnom)inies", "Wonky wonky" amongst others and finally converged to *Psy-KO*, which has to be considered as a rephrasing of "psycho" and also points at the knock out in (mental) boxing. So, in brief, they tried to express some kind of coherence in the different lyrics themes without claiming for a proper concept album.

As mentioned earlier, only the last track on the album doesn't fit in with the general theme of the concept. *Igor S.* is devoted to **Igor Sikorsky**. A Russian inventor of the helicopter, who regrettably had to flee his country in the 1920s. The lyrics are related to his feelings when quitting Russia. He remained nostalgic of his home land his whole life. The song is first sung in the French language before Géraldine starts singing in the Russian language. This is done to make the song sound more convictions. She wrote the lyrics in French, and adapted them in Russian with the help of a Russian friend.

It's as much difficult to go through the songs separately as difficult it was to tell how the band sounds music wise. Therefore, I will not do it. However, I can tell you that each song is of a very high calibre and that's why it is also difficult to mention any musical highlights. For me the entire album is one big musical highlight recorded by some excellent musicians. Musicians that know their way on their instruments. Excellent violin parts are combined with excellent keyboard and guitar parts. Back upped by some great rhythm parts. And on top it off the vocals are of an amazing high level. As for myself I could not have asked for more or anything better.

Therefore, I can only say welcome back Halloween. The 24 year long power nap really worked. You released with *Psy-KO* one of first musical highlights of 2025 for me personally. Please check it out on their Bandcamp page to discover that I am right all the way! And become addicted to it as much as I am!

**** Henri Strik (edited by Dave Smith)

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