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**ONE LITTLE INDIAN NIGHT:
SONGDOG/DANIEL ÁGUST/HK 119**

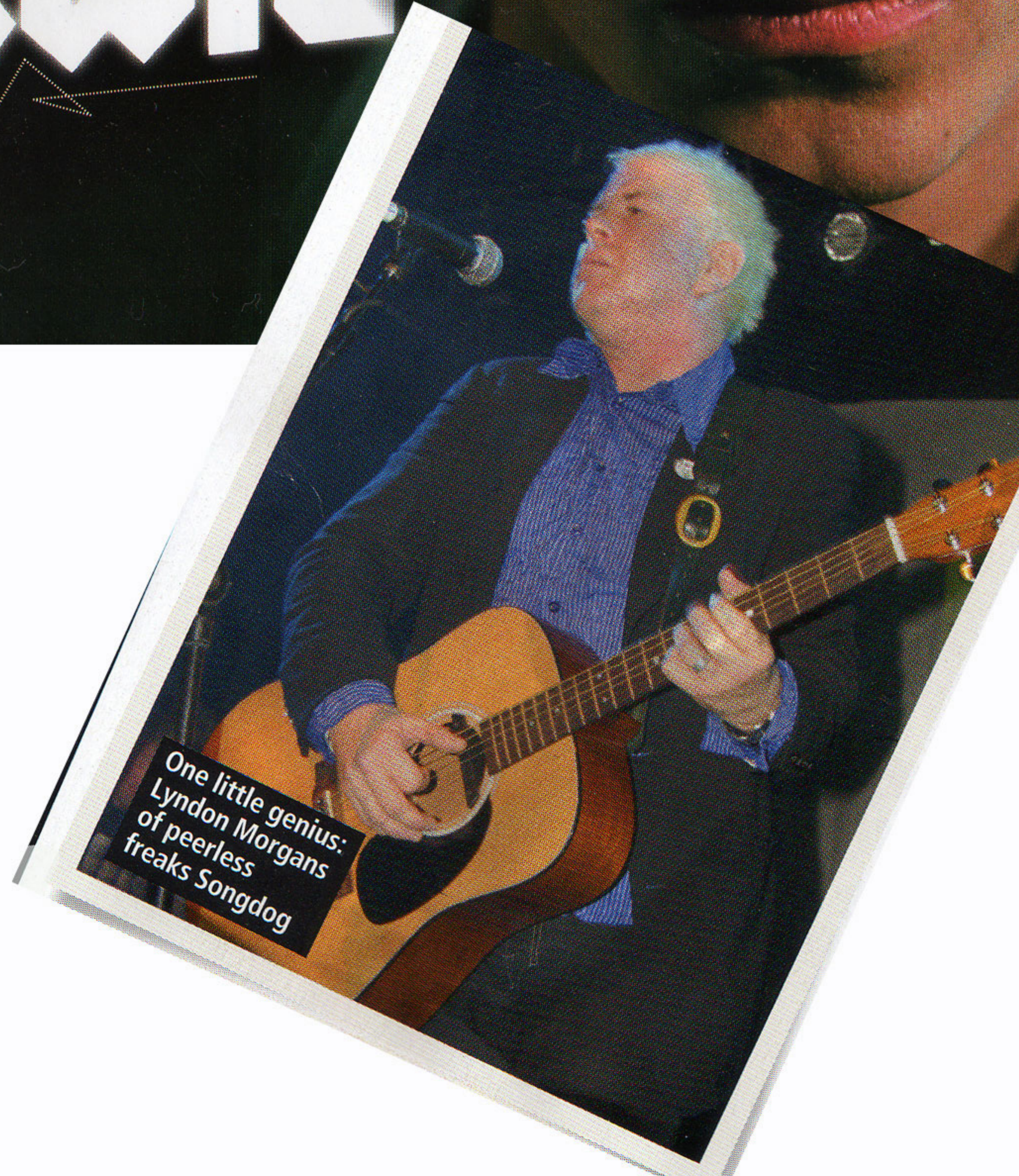
ICA, LONDON

Wednesday October 5, 2005

THIS UNCUT-SPONSORED One Little Indian label showcase is flanked by new recruits to the leftfield philosophy which has made them Björk's happy home. HK 119 is a Finnish performance artist/pop star in black catsuit and bin-bag moth-wings who, if she can fuse her impulses to glamour and its deconstruction, could be special. Icelander Daniel Ágúst, once of 4AD electronica act GusGus, is haloed in neon and wolfishly androgynous. His songs of string-looped existential romance, though, strand him at the Sigur Rós end of vaporous Scando-melancholy.

Sandwiched awkwardly between them, then, come Songdog. After three splendid albums which have barely raised a cult, Lyndon Morgans' band must be the most criminally underrated in Britain right now. His songwriting certainly has no close peers, as he drags the old Beat project through punk's jagged prism into his own south London world of squalid sex and suicide-pact romance. Guitarist Karl Woodward's back-projected images of their Welsh childhoods set the scene, as Morgans' words tumble obsessively out in his clenched scream. "Childhood Skies" sees that voice plead in sympathy for a woman whose life has betrayed her. But it's "Fairytale", taken as a duet with Corrinne Frazzoni, that shows how far his muse goes. She starts it as a prostitute's lament, he cuts in as a greasy spoon drifter, latching onto her for mutual salvation, the outside world turning hollow as they spend their last dregs of affection on each other. Their voices make it sound like Nancy and Lee, left in a south London lock-in, broken glass on the floor. The lulling acoustic guitar and barely tapped drums might make you miss the moment they turn into highway killers, Crystal Palace Bonnie and Clydes, out by the river and reeds.

"The Time Of Summer Lightning" shows the desperate, last-stand adolescence of Morgans' world – "his ring will hit your finger like a cell-door closing", he warns a leaving lover. The Clash's "Janie Jones" is then taken contemplatively, to warm cheers, Morgans not the only one here who once marched in Uncle Joe's army, before they stagger down "Jerusalem Road" on unsteady synths. "The Republic Of Howlin' Wolf" is his definitive statement on loving wild girls who dance on the razor's edge, then shove you off. "You look like a man who had dreams", the girl observes. He still does – fevered ones. Songdog exit to satisfied applause, and another few life-time converts to their cause. NICK HASTED



One little genius:
Lyndon Morgans
of peerless
freaks Songdog

Uncut Presents - Live Review

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