

# COLUMN 'FRANKFURT' Gary Lucas as a smiling Buddha and the authenticity of the nightclub

June 11, 2011 by [Peter Bruyn](#)

**They laughed all three lots, the singers Sally Kwok and Gai Jin Mo, and guitarist Gary Lucas. And all three laugh excludes doubt sincere. But there is a difference. The smiles of the two singers is a typical flight attendant smile. A saleswoman smile. You might also speak of a animeerlach. The smile of a guitarist's hand Luke smile. A laugh that is stimulated by every note played and every new idea what he might do with such a note.**

Whether the best guitarist Gary Lucas in the world, is irrelevant. Music is not a competition. Other unofficial title cut more wood. Designations such as "man of a thousand ideas" and "Renaissanceman. If you are doopceel lies with one tablespoon three important job in his past does, then it almost certainly 'guitarist of Captain Beefheart, "" leverage the career of Jeff Buckley' and 'man the solo guitar concert to a new dimension lifted.

Anyway, Luke was last Friday so come to the Amsterdam Bimhuis nearly ten years after the publication of his already exceptional album "The Edge of Heaven 'that project again on stage to present.



The Edge of Heaven

Not only was the music of 'The Edge of Heaven "about three quarters of century ago, including Lucas' own involvement with this ancient Chinese pop music - because that is about - is nearly four decades. In the seventies of the last century lived and worked in Taiwan for a while and had a Chinese friend who came from Singapore. Through her he learned the songs of Chow Hsuan and Bai Kwong know. Both renowned Chinese film stars in the thirties, forties and fifties of the last century, and both also grew into large popstars in Shanghai because in most movies much sung. The repertoire of Chow Hsuan is now sung by Mo Gai Jin, a crystal-clear high voice. Bai Kwong and the songs where it was once famous, now the sound darker and blue decorative "versions of Sally Kwok. Western swing music and Hollywood mix tradition with influences from the Far East. Repertoire with the singers - Luke tells halfway the concert - in Shanghai were often accompanied by European and American exiles who fled to communism or fascism.

Lucas has his band Gods and Monsters plus two Shanghai-based singers brought to Amsterdam and that is interesting for several reasons. First, the American in the last twenty years almost exclusively played solo concerts in our country. Because it financially more interesting than a group of - in interviews he gave freely admit - but also because the idea of 'one man against the world "he appeals.

Lucas is shown in Bimhuis Friday grateful to the Holland Festival this expensive production to the Netherlands had taken. Well, actually it cost a penny - Lucas with his entire, five-man group traveled to Shanghai to the spot where both singers to rehearse. That is, of course 'peanuts' compared to the nearest opera or ballet.



Gary Lucas and Sally Kwok

Particularly it is , this 'The Edge of Heaven' project at the Holland Festival. Particularly in the sense of "curious" that sweet nightclub pop in the tradition of Elvis' "It's now or never" / "O Sole Mio" or Dalida's "Buenas Noches Mi Amor", but sung by two Chinese Trijntien mirrors in a long dress and accompanied by rockers including previously played with Captain Beefheart (Luke) and television (drummer Billy Ficca). The total lack of any authenticity in the atmosphere and the Holland Festival Bimhuis gives this keukenmeidenpop Shanghai from postmodern philosophy just something extra 'artistic' one might say.

It's beautiful. It is especially - for instance if you notice how perfectly the music in unison by the group played - and Luke again turns to his fabulous guitar. And it also lasts much longer than an hour in the Bimhuis. That is really long enough. The singers still laughing and Gary Lucas as well.

Ninety minutes later, Lucas again on stage. This time not in the Bimhuis, but in the 'skyloge' on the roof of a stone's throw Mint brand new hotel located next to the OBA, where you can even get a brighter view of Amsterdam from the time you like Club 11.

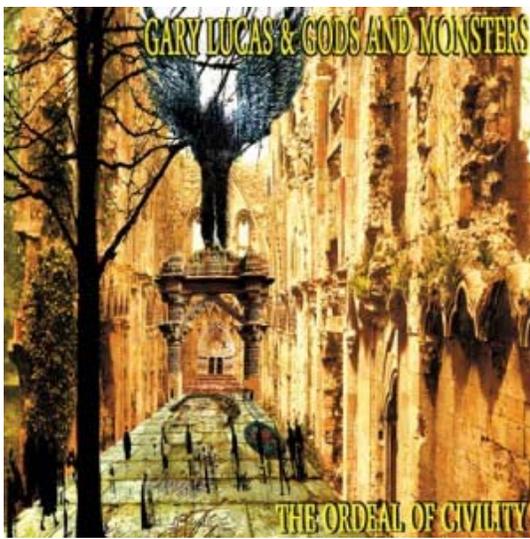
Gary is the central figure as a "jam session" which also announced concert his band Gods and Monsters and cooperate, it is whispered, musicians from the musical "Fela" that same evening in Carré has been. The latter are nowhere to be found, so just open Lucas Gods and Monsters in his current occupation. These are in addition to Gary and Billy Ficca on self bassist Ernie Brooks - a New York veteran who was a long way from The Modern Lovers, Elliott Murphy and Arthur Russell - and relative newcomers Jason Candler on alto sax and trombone / keyboard player Joe Lever.



Gods and Monsters

That means 'rock', but in style Luca. In about three minutes to showcase guitar like few others as what he is capable. Typical New York rock, which he almost casually psychedelic influences, jazz and noise injection. The only thing that Lucas brings live fewer good job is singing. In that respect he can shake hands with the other guitar virtuoso Leo Kottke, on one of his first album his vocal performance compared with "geese farts in oppressive weather."

Instrumental but it is all fabulous what happens. And if the ghost sitting on the roof of the Mint hotel out of the bottle is the group do not stop and should only equal half



### The Ordeal of Civility

Gods and Monsters new album 'The Ordeal of Civility' are played. But other things like "Bra Joe from Kilimanjaro" by Abdullah Ibrahim / Dollar Brand improvise with all stops pulled.

And Gary Lucas laughs and laughs and laughs. A laughing Buddha with a guitar.

A real piece dub peeled, Luke is building a solo soundscape as planned during the concerts in Dutch so often did. And yes, there are also Gai Jin Mo and Sally Kwok. No Chinese in their long evening gowns but casual. This means that Sally wearing jeans in the Netherlands with only Seaman to find Gai and Mo in a kind of lace leotard has stuck. And they both laugh. Still.

The guitarist asks them one by one on stage and sometimes together. And yes, the entire concert, "The Edge of Heaven" is just about done again. But there is one difference: The atmosphere, the ambiance, the informal character. And maybe the few glasses of wine already in the throats disappear.

The best thing is perhaps how beautiful this evening at the core of the concept of 'authenticity' is laid bare. Were both singers with their attendant laughter in the Bimhuis still very conscious of their role as "cultural ambassadors" and had praised Lucas in addition the festival that they generously the fair had drawn for this package 'culture' in the 'Skylounge' of the Mint a few hours later everything is different. Now the singers horsing around as a teenager on a school for girls on the bus may sing a song.

The audience dances and shouts. Gary Lucas has fun for five.



Gary solo, five for fun

And nobody grinds even the Fela-musicians at half past one night still not showing up. It drinks brought to the stage and called to request songs. It's pure nightclub music you can read in any notes to "The Edge of Heaven" and "jam session" is held at a club on the 'panoramic floor' of a hotel like the spitting image of the night clubs on the panoramic floors in major hotels in Hong Kong, Dubai or anywhere else where the strict merits of daily life in those cities as by wiping out - at least for those who can pay - and it indulges in a ritual as a sort of western Hollywood freedom is considered. In short, unlike earlier in the evening is "The Edge of Heaven" suddenly weldegelijk authentic. When the Mint Hotel in Shanghai are much more than clubs like the Bimhuis.

It also provides a piquant paradox - because you can not better this whole concert right here take place instead of that expensive, subsidized Bimhuis? No, that would be absurd, because that would - especially if admission was charged - this concert the same formal character as did the gig at the Bimhuis. Only the ambience might be a little more natural. The great thing is true that in the slipstream of the formal culture such spontaneous situations. On the very day that the government's demolition of a barren culture emphasized Gary Lucas has announced that with subsidizing art is not necessarily creating beautiful things, but especially you the ability to create beautiful things can arise. Which is more important. But keep doing that from a government that is said to want to keep goldfish, but the pond in which to swim with great fanfare mutes.

**June 10, 2011, Bimhuis and Skylounge Mint Hotel, Amsterdam**