



Moscow, August 2004. Albert Kuvezin has just checked into a hotel, having spent 24 hours on a train from Budapest as the result of having been forcibly deported from Hungary along with the rest of his band. Their passports had been stolen from the dressing room of the gig the previous day. Their plea for help from the Russian Embassy resulted in them being frog-marched to the railway station and sent home. Before he can relax he receives a phone call from his co-singer, Radik Tiuliush, telling him that he has had enough of the rigours of travelling backwards and forwards from Tuva (a 3-day journey just to get to Moscow before an international flight takes them to start a tour). There are only 2 days to find new passports and a new singer before they are due to begin a US tour. This proves impossible and Albert retreats to Kazyl where he is immediately hassled by mobsters and corrupt government officials. He then crashes his car and ends up in hospital.

Whilst convalescing Albert ponders his band's future and listens to his record collection. Having spent many years being persecuted under the Soviets for listening to and playing rock 'n roll he contemplates the long journey that his love of both Tuvan Folk Music and Western Rock has resulted in. He had toured the world many times playing at some of the great festivals such as Glastonbury, Roskilde, Bloomington, Monterey, Transmusicale, and Sziget. He had played hundreds of club shows and listened to and met some great bands along the way. Bands like his thrash heroes Slayer, folk heroes such as the Chieftains, contemporary artists like Billy Bragg and many more.

And now Yat-Kha was due to travel to London in October 2004 to record a new album that Albert had been busy writing earlier in the year. As he lay there with music from all around the world blaring out from his newly-acquired PA system, Albert decided that he would commit his musical and spiritual journey to tape instead of his new songs. His new album would reflect how music took him from one of the world's more remote regions to international recognition. Remote, yes, yet central enough to pick up the currents of international music, even if the international music scene was not yet hip to the growling waves coming from Tuva. He would revitalise himself by re-engaging with his loves of country, blues, rock and just all things music. Although he was due to self-produce his new album Albert made a last minute phone call to the legendary world music producer Ben Mandelson, who immediately made time to take over production duties. Justin Adams, producer of Tinariwen, joins him on a couple of tracks.

The band began by jamming many of Albert's favourite tunes and from this came the new album, **Re-Covers**.

This is what Albert has to say about the album:

"The influence of rock on my music and life is obvious, but anyway I'll try to explain a bit more why I have chosen these songs for the covers album. Actually they are relatively to what I try to do for long time since I began to mix Tuvan music and my singing with Western rock:

1. **When The Levee Breaks** (*Led Zeppelin*). It is just one of my favourite bands of all time and I wanted to record more of them though who can compare with them even today?
2. **Man Machine** (*Kraftwerk*). Remember that time? They were very fresh and unusual between the dominance of rock and punk. Plus very progressive. It is about our relationship with machine world. Almost folkloric.

3. **Kambui Man** (*Frank Williams*). I don't like when there is too much text in songs but this one is just about my self and my brothers - musicians. It is very close to our souls and spirit of freedom. Actually we are all the travellers on this planet.

4. **In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida** (*Iron Butterfly*). Great song because it is simple - I respect talented simplicity. Good voice and a guitar riff which always make me interested as a guitarist my self.

5. **Love Will Tear Us Apart** (*Joy Division*). This band wasn't well known in Russia but some band made big name and good career during USSR time copying and imitating the likes of JD. I like the mood and guess our manager Jim likes them very much.

6. **Her Eyes Are A Blue Million Miles** (*Captain Beefheart*). Of course, 20 years ago I didn't know about this man but when got listen it for the first time I thought that it could be me if I was born in USA at that time. But luckily I live in Siberia and like to say: ³Hello! ² back to those funny days.

7. **A Song About A Giraffe** (*Vladimir Vysotskiy*). The cult figure of Soviet Culture. The actor, poet, and singer he died in 1989 but is still very popular in Russia. His songs are full of sarcasm and humour. They are about the defects of human society and full of love and pain when about native land. This song is just one of hundreds he wrote.

8. **Orgasmatron** (*Motorhead*). I always liked music full of energy. Years ago I liked such kind of lyrics and wrote such my self. Also this is good possibility to remind to politicians who they are.

9. **Will You Go, Lassie, Go?** (*Mc Peake Family*) When I played with the great Chieftains I began to like Irish music and found some similarity with some Siberian people's music.

10. **Toccata** (*Paul Mauriat*). When I was little boy this melody by the French composer and conductor was played by his orchestra on Soviet t.v. and radio every Sunday and that gave us a very clear and nice holiday emotion for the whole day. This is a kind of connection to that happy time.

11. **Black Magic Woman** (*Carlos Santana* version). One more my favourite artists. This song is somehow connected to Siberian black shaman women whom I like very much.

12. **Exodus** (*Bob Marley*). Again, I love freedom and independence which are also possible through the movement and travels. I love to read about historical peoples movements. Plus I like Bob and reggae.

13. **PlayWith Fire** (*Rolling Stones*). I never liked very much RS and even less The Beatles. In this song I got good motion that gave me feeling to play such riff in the style what I like.

14. **The Song of Mergen** (*Alexei Tchyrgal-ool*). The composer Alexei Baktaevitch Tchyrgal is a great of Tuvan Symphonic music but he also wrote a number of nice songs for different ensembles and bands I am lucky enough to have been working with him and living in his neighbourhood. This song was written for the first movie about Tuva - "People of Blue Rivers".

-Albert Kuvezin - Kyzyl , Tuva Feb 2005