

We've come to a converted synagogue (now a recording studio) in Bethnal Green to meet up with heavily punctuated London four-piece Ox.Eagle.Lion.Man.

Frederick Blood-Royale (the fittingly eloquent stage name of the articulate Frontman Frederick Macpherson) has been joined in this band by fellow ex-Les Incompétents members Thomas Gunnzs and Jareth. They reprise their roles here on bass and guitar respectively, with newbie Eduard Quarmby on drums. We conduct the interview around a wooden dining table in the kitchen. They're crowded around the G2 crossword collectively guessing at words, minus Jareth who is lost in the, erm, Labyrinth of a building.

This seems an apt venue for a band who reference so much religious and mythological imagery. A track from their first Opus is entitled 'Thanatos' after the Daemon personification of Death and Mortality in Greek mythology. But they still manage to feel like the achingly cool Sunday school in the attic. The band are here to record their second Opus – a new term for the approximately ½ hour EPs they will be releasing every six months.

"Everyone's complaining that no-one's buying music anymore, but no-one's trying to find new ways of putting out music. We can release more consistently, but maybe not as much." Fred says. He admits that this style of release won't get them into the charts, but that doesn't really seem to be his objective. He doesn't like the structure of releases these days. We all laugh for a while about the obligatory Justice remix which I suggest is the norm nowadays, but Macpherson isn't led off course for long. But he is witty, suggesting far worse outfits than Justice for a remix.

There is the issue of pricing as well: will they be doing a give away à la 'In Rainbows'?

Not quite, but he tells us that the new 30 minute Opus will only be five or six pounds and even cheaper on download. "I just think basically people need to feel like they're not being cheated when they're buying music. I'm not for illegal downloading but I can understand someone being charged £12.99 for 10 tracks of turgid music and some shoddy booklet and they know they're going to have to wait another 2 years before the next album, it makes you feel slightly disenchanted."

He's not too picky about format, as his beloved religious artwork will still be available with downloads. This hard sell is not because of the money, he assures us, but just because he wants to be able to make music again, and that will "require people to buy it...or I'll get a job at H&M". Funnily enough I can't imagine him flogging slim-fit shirts at

Brent Cross if it all goes belly up.

As for the material itself, Macpherson comments that “This is darker yet also lighter [than our past projects]...like a child buried underground, but its parents know it’s still alive.” (Hopefully the infanticide was a joke). He happily contradicts himself as he speaks of the band being “less poppy but also the most poppy stuff [he’s done yet], more rocky, more alternative [than his previous bands].”

But Ox.Eagle seem serious enough about their music. What collaborations, musically or otherwise, are on the horizon? “Werner Herzog... and Phil Redmond,” Fred says, definitely. The group agree both times, and although it’s often hard to tell whether Fred’s being sarky, he seems to have a genuine obsession. “Just put Jordache down, NME readers will understand” he assures us. As he muses on how he is the proud owner of the VHS one-offs to Brookside, it is easy to sense his lighter side coming through. The child buried underground is one he seems to have borrowed from a Brookie storyline, too.

Despite all this weirdness, and the fact that they want to have a secret launch party for their second Opus at a branch of Chariots Roman Baths (not a Roman bath at all but a gay sauna), Ox.Eagle.Lion.Man seem a remarkably interesting, and interested, collective.

- The second Opus from Ox.Eagle.Lion.Man is due out later this year on Transgressive.

Interview conducted at Empire Studios, 33a Wadeson St, E2.

Check OELM out at [myspace.com/oxeaglelionman](http://myspace.com/oxeaglelionman)