

THE RISE AND FALL OF
THE MOTO MAJESTIC

by
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PAGE 1

PANEL 1

Close-up on PHOX, the lithe, androgynous lead singer of the Moto Majestic. They're all glitter and blades with an ergonomic keytar criss-crossed on their chest that blends into their fabulous shoulder pads. They lean close into the microphone as they glance back over their shoulder at CEILID, who readies her alien crustacean-clawed *mbassko* from behind the swoopy emo bangs that obscure her eyes.

CEILID (NARRATION BOX)
I still get nervous just before we play.

PHOX
We are the Moto Majestic.

PANEL 2

PHOX looks over their other shoulder, this time at Xinoq, a hulking figure in gothic attire whose intimidating figure is a sharp contrast to the soft and fluid lines on the funky fungal fret necks of his *melodian*. The backline of the band is rounded out by JEHRU, a sentient drum machine whose spider-like limbs bang out the beat on the shelled backs of some strapped-together space critters.

CEILID (NARRATION BOX)
We've been doing this for years now. And every time, I turn back into that scared little kid I used to be.

PHOX
And this ain't no muzak...

PANEL 3

A half-page splash of the MOTO MAJESTIC absolutely rocking the fuck out on stage. Musical notation blasts from their instruments in a rigid, angular font style, similar to that of Kreska Origen. We can see the infectious joy shared between these musicians...

CEILID (NARRATION BOX)
 Then the song starts, and I
 remember why I came here. To Heir.

PHOX
This is HARD KHOR!

PANEL 4

...even as we pull back, and see the show from the back of the house. There's about a dozen people or so at this shitty dive bar tonight, and not a single one of them cares about the band onstage. The ambient musical notation is still there in the background, but it's small, blending in. One disinterested patron approaches the bartender, HARI, who looks like the love child of Harvey Fierstein and Guy Fieri at a Mos Eisley drag show.

CEILID (NARRATION BOX)
 Even if it's not quite as glamorous
 as I'd hoped.

BAR PATRON
 Can I get another?

BAR PATRON (SMALL)
 Man, it's so loud in here...

PANEL 5

The same angle on the bar, except now an ASSASSIN with colorful robotic raptor wings has burst through the wall, carrying a weasely ROYAL in their talons as they smash through the crowd in a chaotic dustball scuffle. The person at the bar might cast a glance at the melee, but otherwise, the vibe at the bar seems just as disinterested.

PAGE 2

PANEL 1

The assassin duel from the POV of the band, who exchange concerned looks as they play.

CEILID (NARRATION BOX)
We've had a residency here at
Hari's Happy Hut. Same gig, week
after week.

PANEL 2

The ASSASSIN pulls out a gun and shoots directly at the ROYAL, who's standing right in front of the stage and dives out of the way.

CEILID (NARRATION BOX)
It's not the nicest venue. But it
keeps us away from Syndicate
business. So we can focus on the
music.

PANEL 3

The blast strikes PHOX in the shoulder, knocking them off balance. They grab their microphone stand as they fall, and the blast ricochets off their shoulderpads towards Jehru...

CEILID (NARRATION BOX)
Most of the time, anyway.

PANEL 4

The blast cuts through the ambient musical notation font in the air, shattering the notes to dust as it strikes Jehru, blowing off several of their robotic limbs.

PANEL 5

Ceilid and Xinoq, the last musicians standing, look at each other terrified as Jehru's fritzing robot body smolders behind them.

PHOX (OFF)
Do something!

PANEL 6

Close on Phox, who's caught on the ground between the assassin and the royal, blood gushing from their fractured nose, using their microphone stand to protect themselves from any more injury.

PHOX

We gotta play to get paid!

PAGE 3PANEL 1

Close on Ceilid, frozen like a deer in headlights, with her wide-eyes peeking out from underneath her swoopy bangs.

CEILID (NARRATION BOX)
 Maybe it's not everything I'd hoped
 for.

CEILID (NARRATION BOX)
 But it's the only life I know...

PANEL 2

The same angle, only the color palette has changed, and now Ceilid is a child with a trickle of blood dripping down from her nose. We're in a flashback. Behind her, we can just make out the ornate architecture from the Holy City of Akva. We may notice the familiar ceremonial headdresses of the priests, or see warring Akvan factions in the distance. What is clear is that Ceilid is young, surrounded by chaos and esotericism -- and that the only consistent comfort the young girl can find is in the music.

Unlike the more angular Kreska Origen musical notation font that we saw the band perform, these musical notes are rounder, more fluid, with a glowing resonance or mystical aura surrounding the notes. The music carries through like a river of song, spilling out from Ceilid's memories of the past, splashing through the gutters in between the moments of time ...

CEILID (NARRATION BOX)
 At least since I left home.

PANEL 3

... And into the present day, where we return to the same angle, with an adult Ceilid standing on the stage. Her eyes are closed now, in a moment of spiritual meditation, as the melodies from her past bleed across the panel and pour forth from her lips.

PANEL 4

A wider shot of the band (minus Phox, who is still sprawled out on the floor). Ceilid sings, eyes still closed, as those

mystical melodies pour out of her. Xinoq looks confused with a raised eyebrow, but tries to follow along in the moment anyway. Even Jehru, missing half their limbs, suddenly finds control of their electrical faculties and begins to lay down a steady, gentle rhythm on the back of the animal drum shells.

PANEL 5

From the audience's point of view, just like last time. Except now, they're all standing mesmerized, staring at the stage as the rounded, glowing musical notation swirls through the air around them. Even the Assassin and the Royal are captivated by the song, completely oblivious to the fact that Phox is still there on the ground, clutching their microphone stand.

PANEL 6

The same shot, except now the Assassin is holding a smoking gun, having just blown the head off of the Royal. Otherwise, the Assassin is completely engaged with the music and staring at the stage, while the Royal's freshly-headless body crumples to the ground next to Phox, who scrambles to their feet.

PHOX (SMALL)

Xaac dammit not the blood, not the blood.

PAGE 4PANEL 1

Phox is at the bar in the back of the club settling up with the bartender. They're holding an icepack or bandage for the wounds they received during the brawl -- but they've just removed it from their face for the moment, too in shock at how much money the band just made. The bartender Hari might be carrying sacks of khoin, or handing over a credit card, or however our currency exchange system here might work.

PHOX

I don't think I heard you right.
How much?

PHOX (OFF) (NARRATION BOX)

"Harmonio decides how much our work
contributes to the Higher Path..."

PANEL 2

The Moto Majestic, gathered together at their cramped rehearsal space, strewn with hardware, gear, and boxes. Phox stands, talking to the group. Xinoq works on repairing Jehru with some new and improved limbs. Ceilid sits in the corner, trying to hide behind her bangs.

PHOX

...and somehow, last night, it paid
out more khoin than we've ever
made. Total.

XINOQ

How is that possible? We barely
played three songs before we had to
fumble through Ceilid's stupid
improv jam.

XINOQ (SMALL)

No offense.

PANEL 3

Close on Ceilid, who's clearly nervous and uncomfortable, as Phox and Xinoq speak around her.

PHOX (OFF)
 Maybe it was divine intervention.

PHOX (OFF)
 Maybe the assassin duel meant
 something bigger. Maybe the melody
 Ceilid came up with just resonated
 with the algorithm.

XINOQ (OFF)
 You're saying it likes the boring
 songs?

XINOQ (OFF)
 No offense.

PANEL 4

Back to the bigger group shot, with Phox standing tall as they pitch their big idea. Xinoq is still only half-engaged, focused more on repairing Jehru's arms. Ceilid is still... Ceilid.

PHOX
 I'm saying maybe it wants us to
 listen. To each other, and the rest
 of the room.

PHOX
 Find the spark that happens when we
 all lock in, and follow the Higher
 Path wherever it wants the night to
 go.

PHOX
 Not just for the band. For
 everyone.

PANEL 5

Xinoq finally stops fixing Jehru and gives his full attention.

XINOQ
 I'm not gonna lie to you, Phox.
 This sounds more like muzak than
 hard khor.

XINOQ
 But fine. If you think it'll work.

PHOX
 Ceilid, what about you?

PHOX
We might need your voice again.

PANEL 6

Close on Ceilid. Still hiding away, but a small smile sneaks across her face.

CEILID

...

CEILID

Yeah. Okay.

CEILID

I'm in.

CEILID (NARRATION BOX)
Sometimes songs are the only thing
that make you feel like home.