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DANIELLE DE PICCIOTTO

After moving to Berlin, Danielle De Picciotto quickly gained a reputation. Firstly, with Space Cowboys which became an interesting and unusual project in those days. Nowadays, Danielle looks back on it with a certain nostalgia. After many years of living in Berlin her creativity didn't stop. Her recent album - "Deliverance" is something spiritual and authentic and also, something very personal. The record combines ambient and abstract beats with the principal instrument of Danielle De Picciotto - her beautiful voice. A few days after the release of "Deliverance", Peek-A-Boo got the chance to speak with Danielle De Picciotto. In the interview she told us about Berlin in the 80s, her musical background, about Space Cowboys and "Deliverance", about filmmaking and the next hackedepicciotto album.

In one of your interviews you speak about your first impressions of Berlin and the artists you met at the very beginning of your life in this city. The list of them includes Throbbing Gristle, Psychic TV, Crime & The City Solution. In what way did these bands and the atmosphere in Berlin affect your creativity?

I came from America. From New York City. And there was a really interesting music scene there, which I liked but it was very dangerous, and so expensive. So when I came to Berlin, I was pretty amazed by the fact that the city was very rough and poor but it was not dangerous. And that's basically what influenced me most of all because, it's unusual for a city to be poor and rough but not dangerous. Usually, danger is always included. So Berlin was an exception. I could go anywhere I wanted. Day or night. As a woman. And not be worried. That for me was very important because in America you always live in fear. You always think you could get killed, shot, mugged or raped. And in Germany, in the Berlin of the 80s not at all... even now you just aren't scared. But of course, the city was surrounded by the wall. That was second thing I really like about it. That you could actually see politics. Usually, it's always an abstract thing you read or learn about but in Berlin you could actually see the Wall. And you could see the violence of what it means for a country to be separated in this way. So for me, these bands, the bands of the 80s - Throbbing Gristle, which is from the 70s or Psychic TV or Neubauten or The Bad Seeds or Diamanda Galas, they reflected this feeling. They were speaking about the violence we were surrounded with but usually it is not really tangible. Something you can't really touch or see. This for me, it was the most honest music I'd ever heard and I felt liberated. I always feel uncomfortable if I have the feeling that people are lying and this

music for me was completely honest. That is why it changed my life. I realised that through art you can be completely honest. And you can speak about violence and hard things in an artistic way, which makes it bearable ...but still, makes you think.

It's interesting to speak to you about this because, taking the example of two bands from this list: Throbbing Gristle and Psychic TV we can sort out a certain philosophy they provided. "Everyone can be a musician". So at that point of your creativity, did you think about being a musician?

I started doing music when I was five years old. I played piano and I sang in a choir and because my father was in the U.S. Army I moved every year. So my creativity was basically my home. It was my only constant. So for me, creativity, music and art have always been the place where I feel most comfortable and the happiest. I usually feel like an alien outside of music and art.

During that period you were working as the singer of the Space Cowboys band. What do you think about that part of your career nowadays?

Well, for me it was the first time I had a band. I had done concerts before in school with the piano and violin but it was the first time that I was actually performing with a band and writing my own music. Which was important because before that I would play classical music. So when I started Space Cowboys, I started composing and writing lyrics. That was very liberating. Space Cowboys were the first crossover hip-hop-rock-band in Berlin. For me that was interesting. Before you were either a rock-band or you were a 70s band or whatever but they proved that you could mix different elements of music anyway you liked. I became very interested in trip-hop because it was a little bit more surrealist. That's how I started to understand what composing your own music actually means.

In May you released your new album "Deliverance". Could you please tell me a little bit about this record. When did you start working on it and how long did it take?

I write a diary. I always write in my diary and I note down lyrics all the time. So when I start writing an album or working on an album I usually look at my diary and I pick up different things I wrote. I started composing music last Summer in Berlin. It was actually the first time in a long time that I was composing in Berlin. I work very simply. I use my computer and work



with the Abelman Live program and my instruments. So I don't do it in a huge studio. I think I worked on it for four months. So composing the music is something that goes quite quickly with me. I work very intensely. I usually work 24 hours a day. As much as I can. The lyrics are the result of my diary.

There are a number of artists who don't associate themselves with their artistic personality. For example Masami Akita, whom you may know as Merzbow. So let me ask you, what helped you to find the connection with your artistic personality, to understand yourself as musician?

Well, like I said, it's always been my home. To work with music, to work with art, to paint, to draw to write. I'm actually more of an introvert, although I do enjoy performing very much. But I'm happiest when I'm in my studio working on my music because, for me it's kind of a way to be able to digest our world. There are so many things going on that are completely incomprehensible to me. Environmentally, politically, socially. Also, on a personal level, how people ignore what's going on. So there are so many things I just don't understand and

the only way I can somehow try to understand them is to digest them into my art and see what happens if I try to express them in paint, or in music or lyrically. And usually this process helps me to understand and to find ways in how to deal with things. And I notice that if I come to a certain conclusion it is something that other people can relate to as well. So this way, I feel connected to other people because they understand the result of my thoughts.

Listening to this record I found it just incredible, especially your lyrics. They're very abstract, very dark and very beautiful. Especially the line: "Where is the heart if you don't have a home?": So the general themes of your creativity are usually built on your personal experiences?

My lyrics are always very personal.

As artists Alexander and you usually put your main emphasis on the experimental side of things. On "Deliverance" you use your voice as the principal instrument, except with tracks like "My Secret Garden". But when you write, what helps you to form the vision of the final result? Or is it all about doing your best until you think "This is it"?

It's all instinctive. I basically don't know what I'm going to end up with. It's like a stream of consciousness. There are some things I always like - unusual sounds, strange sounds, rough and annoying sounds and then beautiful melodies for instance or abstract thoughts. So basically I do what I like best and see what happens. Very often I do things with the looper. So I just loop and loop and loop... and then whatever turns out is good or it's not good. And then I work with that.

With Alexander you release an album almost every year. So one can say that you work quite productively! What allows you to work at such a tempo?

Well on one hand it's necessity because if I'm not working on music & art I'm unhappy. And also if I don't work I don't earn money (laughs). So those two things combined push me all the time. I mean, I enjoy nature, I like meeting friends but I always feel like I should be creating. I have an incredible urgency pushing me to do that all the time. It's in my nature. So I'm always constantly working... and Alexander is pretty much the same. We're happiest when we can compose together because it's interacting on a subconscious level. You can tell each other things without having to speak about them. So it's a mixture of happiness in doing what we do and of course, we have to survive as artists ... (Complete interview on www.peek-a-boo-magazine.be)

Dan VOLOHOV
Photo © Sylvia Steinhäuser

SIGNAL AOUT - Insurrection (12"/CD/Digital)

(Out Of Line)



The Belgian EBM legend returns after a six-year hiatus, Signal Aout 42 has erupted back onto the scene with a brand new long-player Insurrection. The energy of Jacky Meurisse is relentless, still shining strongly almost thirty eight years since the foundations of Signal Aout 42 were set. Forging a style which in its very essence was revolutionary in the cause of EBM and new beats. On Insurrection we are presented with twelve brand new tracks designed with a behemoth sound. From the outset, the fire starting begins with "Under Pressure", setting the tone and themes of what is to come. A kaleidoscope of sounds erupts deeper into the album with the collision of "Welcome To Reality" and "Out Of Control". As albums go, Insurrection is an adventure more so than a standard conceptual body of work. The broad scope of ideas by Meurisse is breathtaking at times, the seamless flow of tracks is inspired as is the title track and "No Apologies", bass driving, eerie and all times original... [KB]

HOCICO - Artificial Extinction (CD/Vinyl/Digital)

(Out Of Line)



From far away Mexico the new Hocico reaches our continent. Yet again an extremely aggressive harsh / industrial sounding album called Artificial Extinction. Erik Garcia and Oscar Mayorga provoke their machinery again and this to unprecedented heights and aggression. The band that entered the stage for the first time in 1994 meanwhile released lots of music for the electro-loving mobs. Wondering what they have to offer to us this time ... and we don't have to wait long to be sucked into their pitch black dark electro. They seem to have a patent on this style and even more! The melodies, typical of them and cheerful in themselves, are supported by immense dark beats. And they have a go at it ... you can already smell the rubber odour of the dancing shoe soles scorching. We know stage animal Erk does not need much time to take a thorough breath. Pounding harsh electro with a lot of aggression and anger in the vocal parts, lost sense of reality, unstoppably aggressive ... [JB]

MASSIVE EGO - Church For The Malfunctioned (CD/Digital)

(Out Of Line)



This British dark-wave ensemble, from and with ex-model Marc Massive, first appeared in 1996. After more than 20 years they are still there, this time with an album filled with songs that place religious beliefs and their role in today's society under a dark sky with lots of question marks taking the place of the stars. Their music is still built on a solid basis of 80s electro-pop, reinforced with gothic elements, heavy beats and industrial infusions. What we get served here is indeed some very digestible electro ... With Church For The Malfunctioned Massive Ego delivers a diverse sounding, danceable album with a message that cannot be misunderstood. Like a plea for a new religion, a new kind of church, one that celebrates the lifestyle, pleasure, melancholy and message of the gothic. An institution where "The Malfunctioned" like us, who are sometimes referred to as weirdos because of a music and lifestyle choice, feel safe. And why not?! Amen! [JB]

LISA MORGENSTERN - Chameleon (CD)

(Self-released)



On Spotify there's an album inspiration list for Chameleon, the new CD from the Berlin based Lisa Morgenstern. The list has been published months before the actual album release. A good way to get the attention of the fans! I listened to it intensively and by doing so discovered unknown music. It was exciting to hear what gave inspiration to Lisa while waiting for her new songs. I also found many similarities with my own musical taste: Portishead, Nils Frahm, Max Richter, Soap&Skin, but also J.S. Bach, Debussy or the famous Bulgarian Voices. It did feed high expectations! Chameleon is a fine and ambitious collection of songs filled with expressive piano, 80s synths, dreamy atmospheres and an extraordinary voice. I did miss some German lyrics and a little more Sturm und Drang but that does not have any impact on the quality of this excellent sequel to 'Amphibian'. [TP]



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ANDY GILL / GANG OF FOUR

Each new release from Gang Of Four is something unpredictable. Many years ago, the British collective established their reputation, getting cult status after the release of the "Damaged Goods" EP, following "Entertainment!", "Solid Gold" and "Songs of The Free". Nowadays, the paradigm of uniting light and pessimism still continues to be one of the key elements of their music. Their new "Happy Now" unites uncompromising pop melodies and a very specific kind of mood. A few days before the release of "Happy Now" we got a chance to speak with founding member and guitarist of Gang Of Four – Andy Gill.

In terms of Gang of Four's style, I have always been aware of the influence of such early punk bands as Television, but of course Gang of Four has historical connections with New York. You went there for the first time in 1976. Tell me about your memories of CBGB and how this led to founding the band.

Me and Jon King went to New York in 76 as you said. We stayed with a friend of a friend – Mary Harron. Later on, she became a famous film-director, working on films like "American Psycho" but at that time she was a writer for New York "Punk" magazine. She took us to a lot of the clubs. Quite often to CBGB which was interesting because very often we got there and there was no band playing. But we'd just stand at the bar, have a drink with people like John Cale on one side, Joey Ramone on the other, and had conversations with people. All this was just very normal. We became friends with Patty Smith's band. They would joke with us... I once said: "I think I want to start a band," and we were kind of joking about what name we should give to the band. And then when we got back to Leeds, I started thinking seriously about doing it. I started thinking about creating a band and then it became a problem – how to find a bass player. Finding a drummer. The first bass player [in Gang of Four] was called David Wolfson. Then we got Hugo Burnham to be the drummer. He dropped out for a while because he wanted to be an actor. So we had a different drummer for a bit. Then Hugo wanted to come back and I let him. Mainly, because he had a van, which was very useful for a band when we started. And actually Jon King quit after about nine months or a year. I auditioned a few different singers including the manager of The Mekons. And then again, after... I don't know whether these were weeks or months, Jon said he wanted to come back. So I let him. And that was the early days.

Let's talk about the early years, the period of "Damaged Goods". What helped you to form your sound?

I was trying a lot of different things. And there were different people that influenced me. I think on that



Photo © Elke Bredenbruch

very rhythmic sound, I always liked Steve Cropper. The guitarist who played on many of Stax Records. But also Wilko Johnson, from Dr.Feelgood. I think it's quite obvious on "Damaged Goods" – that influence. It's interesting who influenced whom. I don't know if you know the band called "The Pirates". They were from 60s – early 70s. I think Dr.Feelgood took a lot from them. So everybody borrows from everybody else.

Your first years culminated with the release of the cult track, "Damaged Goods", which became probably one of the most influential pieces of music for many generations of musicians. Could you please tell us how it was written?

Em...I think with all these songs I had an idea – some sort of idea for the guitar and I would take it into the rehearsal room where I told Hugo what sort of drums he had to play. And I told Dave Allen what kind of bass parts to play around it. It's a simple song. I think it's interesting as there is a certain way of working which we did quite often. Where Jon would write a bunch of lyrics and in this case the lyrics are essentially some kind of sex/love song. And then the chorus of the song, which is the middle section, where it goes: "Damaged Goods". I went away and I thought about this. I thought the song needed to expand out from the original rhyme. And needed to somehow connect with other issues. To connect with the rest of the world. And that's why I wrote the lyrics for the chorus – the central section. Which I think expands the song into a more profoundly interesting area than it had started in.

After the release of "Entertainment!" you established yourself as a guitarist with an authentic style using only an amp and the sound of your guitar. With that, you established a certain style of playing, but what have you been searching for as a musician?

Well, I think you're right. With "Entertainment!" it was...I don't know, I didn't really have any effects. It kind of felt that it was right to use just the guitar and the amp; really that was that. There was an amp company called "Carlsbro". It was cheap. It was solid state, which means there were no valves involved. Which I was perfectly happy with. As all these people, the copyists of blues guitarists, they all wanted valve amps because it sounded "warm". I didn't wanna sound "warm". Then Carlsbro brought out a new model, also solid state transistor, that had chorus, tremelo and vibrato. I started playing that and I realised that I liked it. So that was the basis of some of the sounds on the second album – "Solid Gold". It wasn't so much that I was being purist. It wasn't me saying "No! No effects!" It wasn't that. I just thought it sounded good the way it was. And it worked on the songs we were working on at that period. I think on the second album it was different. So what tended to happen is I would

(Continues on p.10)

ANDY GILL / GANG OF FOUR

(Continuation 9)

create songs where parts of the song were dry, perhaps with a tremolo in time with the track, a funky rhythmic line and then it would break into almost psychedelic sustained feedback, almost Hendrix-y; which would then suddenly drop down to the dry funky rhythmic elements.

Talking about Dave's (Allen) departure, you once said that changed the dynamics of the band. Recently, I watched your show at BBC6's Music Festival and I couldn't but notice how powerful it was. So in terms of this stage of your career, what can you say about Gang of Four in its current version?

We work with two different drummers these days. It's just the way it turned out. I like them both. Both of them are slightly different. But they're fantastic. One of them is Tobias Humble. Another - Jonny Finnegan. Jonny played with us at the 6 Music Festival. Little guy. He's very loud, very powerful. But of course, both of them are really really great drummers. In all honesty, I have to say that there are three drummers that I think are absolutely amazing! One is Dave Grohl, who I worked with when I was working with Killing Joke. And the other two would be Jonny and Tobias. They're just fantastic. And Hugo - back in the early days...he wasn't really a drummer. He couldn't do drum fills but he learnt how to play metronomically. And he was always in time. I'll say that for him. It was hard work getting him to play the, shall we say eccentric, drum parts. In terms of bass. I'll say that my two favourite bass players would be Thomas [Thomas McNeice - bass-player of Gang Of Four] and Gail Ann Dorsey, who as you know was Bowie's bass player for many, many years. And she was in Gang Of Four during the 90s.

The "Complicit EP" was the last Gang Of Four release. Now all of us are looking forward to the release of your new album - "Happy Now". Could you please tell me about this record? What we should expect from it and how do you describe "Happy Now"?

Musically it's...again, obviously Gang of Four as far as rhythm. It's funky and rhythmic. With a big kick-drum. And I try to make all these things maximally simple. But there are quite funky tracks. There are elements of a mixture of what people call electronic sounds with real drum parts. That's something I've liked to do for quite a while. There is lots of guitar, and what sound like they may be synthesizers are actually treated guitars. I think there are a couple of songs which will surprise people, such as the song called "White Lies" which is very, very atmospheric and emotional. I think people will be surprised when they hear it.

What about the album title - "Happy Now"? Are you making a sarcastic comment about the global process?

I think there is a temptation for people to say that. It isn't sarcastic, like: 'Yeah, you're happy now?! Now you've got your way? Now you're happy?!'. The phrase itself - it's calmer. It's not a question. It's not a statement. It's just there. And I think, what is true is the world right now is more anxious. Everybody seems to be carrying some kind of anxiety with them. And you could say: 'Oh, yeah! It's to do with Trump! It's to do with Brexit! It's to do with terrorism or far right extremism in Europe!'. It's more to do with the psychological and communication world we have made, I think. Nobody knows what to believe anymore. So twenty years ago you had newspapers. And I'm not suggesting, for one second, that you could believe everything you read in the newspapers. Obviously, not. But on some of the basic stuff, they did have people who were paid to check facts. It was a slightly simpler world. Now we're in a social-media world. And nobody's quite sure what's happening and where they're going. It's also another anxiety to deal with. People looking at their lives trying to figure out what it is they're supposed to be doing. They're thinking: 'Am I happy? Am I not happy? Am I achieving happiness? Am I fulfilled?' and at the same time feeling that the world is uncaring and difficult...it works on different levels. You never expect Gang of Four to be very optimistic. Do you?


Finally I'd like to ask you about the start of Gang of Four. Of course Entertainment! was a groundbreaking record, for all of us. But still, you started when punk was transitioning from pure punk, as we all know it, to something more interesting, as represented by Gang of Four, Public Image Ltd, Joy Division. So how do you remember the reaction of your first fans?


It was very, very quick. '76 was the year of punk. And as you say, people were shifting their opinions very quickly, as that was happening. Whether it was Public Image Ltd or The Slits, Joy Division, Gang of Four...I think punk had just blown the doors wide-open. And everybody said at the same time: 'Oh, ok! So anything is possible.' And I think that encourages people to really explore completely different avenues. And I think the bands we've just mentioned - they are all very different from each other. But there's something...there is the freedom about what they're talking about. In a way they approach it. And I think, that's the thing that's fresh and new about it. At the first gigs we played there were many different reactions - sometimes incomprehension, anger even. But then also ecstatic dancing or people just staring, eyes and mouths wide open.

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Complete interview on www.peak-a-boo-magazine.be

Dan VOLOHOV





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Back in the early 80s 'new' musical styles and bands emerged at the surface, one of the bands was Test Department. Their live shows were something unique and are still incomparable. They were pioneers of industrial music, but also reacted against the materialistic, conservative society. The album "Shoulder To Shoulder" released in 1985 together with the South Wales Striking Miners Choir remains one of the ultimate productions featuring the 'political and social' engagement of the band. To fully understand the early years of Test Dept. I recommend the DVD released in 2016 by Cold Spring Records "From The Vaults: The Sound Of Progress". Test Dept. released several productions, which entered into history. After their 80s industrial experiments and major releases such as "Beating The Retreat" (1984), the legendary "The Unacceptable Face Of Freedom" (1986) they progressively moved towards techno-driven experiments. Their last studio album "Tactics For Evolution" was released in 1998. Twenty one years later core members Graham Cunningham and Paul Jamrozky joined hands again to release a new masterpiece entitled "Disturbance" released by One Little Indian Records. The songs clearly sound as an offspring between their early industrial work and later techno experiments. Graham Cunningham and Paul Jamrozky kindly accepted to answer a few questions about the past, the present while giving us

a little view about their future.

Test Dept. has released an impressive number of productions in between 1981 and 1998. The early material remains a real reference in the history of industrial music while the 90s material was more techno-orientated. What did you keep in mind from both amazing periods and what does this new album "Disturbance" mean to you?

Sonically, the new album is at once reaching back into the early 80s work of Test Dept., using the 90s work as a stepping stone, and coming to today with a new and dynamic sound which references and reflects on the past while forging a new path to the future.

I have always experienced Test Dept. as 'total art', but also as a collective with a strong and clear humanistic involvement; a reflection about society and the world we're living in! The global approach of the new work hasn't really changed and you mentioned a quote of Bertolt Brecht 'Art is not a mirror to reflect reality, but a hammer to shape it'! Back in the 80s you've been unto surveillance of the British government, which clearly didn't share a similar meaning of 'artistic freedom'. What has been the impact of this all on your personal lives and how do you see the situation evolving today?

We do indeed try to reflect and comment on the world

around us, as it evolves and changes; but we do not seek to be didactic, in the sense of trying to preach or teach specifically, rather we seek to inform and open up strands of ideas to research and question. It is always most important to question what you see and read and hear, from all sides of the debate. To not do so is to remain ignorant and open to the influence and control of darker forces, to be gullible to fake news and outlandish conspiracy theories, as well as the manipulation of our lives in the global market place. Today the surveillance is done by each and every one of us on ourselves. 'Surveillance Capitalism' is the new techno church. Keep your mind open and clear and reserve the right, and ability, to question, learn and adapt to what is happening in the world around you.

The 80s had something fascinating; on the one side it was an amazing decade revealing new and creative music styles and artistic formats; underground music really exploded! But on the other side it was also a decade characterized by a kind of decline, political crisis, wars, fanatic regimes, unemployment... but it seems even worst today! What's your perception about this evolution, the current situation in the UK and do you also see positive trends?

The 80s were an amazing time for musical development. So many different strands of music were

born or expanded upon then, and experimentation was much more readily accepted within the mainstream. That seems difficult in today's market-led environment, although on the fringes there is still a great deal of sonic exploration. The disparate strands, and tribes, in music seemed to come together over the late 80s/ early 90s acid house time (in Britain at least) and the techno revolution was born. But then the mid 90s saw a kind of revisionist movement, led by the anti-punk rock of Oasis and others which seemed to reflect the homogenisation of culture and politics under Tony Blair's New Labour 'Red Tories'.

The times now seem so crazy and disconcerting, deeply rooted in the political and social doctrine started in the 80s by the Thatcher-Reagan axis -the laissez-faire neo-liberal free-market global economy. We are currently living through its end-game today, but as the wind of change picks up, and the Establishment begins to feel threatened by the collapse of the system that it has profited from so richly, its grip will continue to tighten for a while to come in order to hold on to power for as long as it can.

It is maybe hard to see positive trends amidst this collapse, but there are many grass-roots movements happening across the globe, albeit swamped in the

Photo © Estelle Vincent

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TEST DEPARTMENT

(Continuation p13)

news stakes by the sensational-seeking private press and the vested interests of the corporate state. But in the end, Climate Change will be the great leveler. All will become meaningless by the need to tackle this existential threat to our world – although all these problems will also be greatly exacerbated by it initially. We have to hope that very, very soon, when reality hits home and the threat is fully understood, the divisions between us start to disappear and we come together to find a solution. We don't have much time left.

I've always been fascinated by how artists are transposing themes/messages/concepts into music, the real meaning of it all and the impact on the audience. It's interesting to see people dancing on a song while the lyrical content of that song deals with a serious subject. I would like to get your opinion on that.

From the beginning of time, music across the globe has reflected and commented on the social, political and the personal experiences and ideas of the societies that have spawned it. Most, but not all, music has rhythm at its heart which therefore inevitably leads to dancing. You can dance out demons just as much as welcome in gods or seasons in delirious celebration and bodily movement. In the West, folk music has always commented on outrage and oppression while people turned a mighty jig. Punk opened a generation's eyes to the injustices of the system while they pogoed the night away, and Blues, Jazz, Soul and Hip Hop have been the call against discrimination and persecution of the black diaspora for successive generations. Music and rhythm are simply the most direct way to express feelings and the easiest way for people to connect and empathise with those feelings, be they beauty, love, sadness or anger.

The basis of the new album "Disturbance" comes from the band's archives. You next reworked these songs, but can you tell us something more about the original versions (demos). When were these songs originally composed and by whom plus what did you finally add, change, rework?

We started to remix the older tunes from "Beating the Retreat" and "The Unacceptable Face of Freedom" albums as an experiment some years ago. Those two albums – our first two official studio albums, were quite ground-breaking, in terms of ideas and sound. When developing the new album we decided to just take germs of ideas from those albums, from the tracks

we felt still had a resonance with today, mainly in the political/social themes, but also sonically. They are a re-working, a re-imagining, in a broad way, but really they are new pieces, crafted from new raw-materials with a sprinkle of spice from earlier. This gives it the feel of something intrinsically linked to our past, but new in its feel and of this time and place.

Sound-wise "Disturbance" is the perfect fusion between your 80s industrial sound and the more danceable/technoid approach from the 90s. This album could be a kind of sonic epitaph to make people clear what Test Dept. has been all about! What does this work mean in the band's discography and might we expect some more new work?

Yes, it is an important milestone, for sure. It joins other key works which marked vital moments and transitions in our story, in particular: "Beating The Retreat"; "The Unacceptable Face of Freedom"; "Gododdin"; "Pax Britannica" and "Totality". We will continue to develop new work and we have a few different project ideas in development, including the continuation of the Prolekt project, a collaborative venture with the kinetic sculpture artist autoPneumatix from Manchester, which we initially performed at our "Assembly of Disturbance" festival in London 2017. We are also continuing to develop our hybrid electronic performance/DJ set "Kontinuum" for different environments.

You're actually playing live again. I've read you don't want to bring a best of performance so what might the audience expect and how does the act look like?

We are currently performing a live version of "Disturbance". We have built new percussion and trigger equipment, thanks to our brilliant live sound person and producer Lottie Lou Poulet, alongside the electronics. We have the amazing Zel-Kaute providing a solid and powerful rhythmic base on drums. We also have a dynamic new visual backdrop created by our visual director David Altweiger. An intense all-encompassing live experience.

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JAKE BURNS / STIFF LITTLE FINGERS

Almost 40 years ago Stiff Little Fingers released their cult masterpiece - "Inflammable Material". The album that later became the cornerstone for the Irish punk scene. But among their greatest achievements there's not only that record. A certain kind of attitude cultivated on it. Following the aggression and esthetics of first wave of punk-rock, Stiff Little Fingers created their own, authentic sound that broke the charts with the release of the band's first album.

Punk-rock is also associated with a sort of Englishness... Firstly, because London was the main center of the punk-movement. But talking about "Inflammable Material" I can't but notice that there are quite a lot of references to your life and Northern Ireland from those days. So can you say that you wanted to bring some sort of Northern Irish colouring to your music? Or you just talked about actual things?

It's where we grew up. I don't think any of us thought about writing songs about other parts of the world. At that moment of our life we hadn't been anywhere else. Belfast was all we knew. And like you just said, it was a center for us. The Clash been writing songs about their life in London. So basically what we were doing - writing songs about our own rights. It's like some people said - they heard our first record and said that "It's an Irish record". Well, partly it was, because like I said, we all were still living there. After that we moved on. Away from writing songs about Northern Ireland because we no longer lived there.

You were asked about this record quite a lot. This year "Inflammable Material" celebrated 40 years. Could you please tell me a little bit about this record? How it was made and in what a way you changed your attitude towards it, during those years?

We wrote these songs...We weren't thinking in terms of writing an album! Because before we got a record deal - we weren't even thinking in terms of a record-deal. We were just writing songs. It was a way of expressing yourself. I don't think any of us really thought seriously that we'd have a chance to record an album or something. But, we got the chance. When people speak about "Inflammable Material" they refer it to some sort of classic. They ask me: "At that time did you realize that you were making this classic record?" - Of course no. I mean, you're just in there. Recording the songs you

wrote. So by that time, we just thought: "Yeah, this is gonna be something cool to play!" We didn't think that we would make another record (laughs)! We thought that would be the only one. So to be talking about this record 40 years later it's kind of bizarre...But I've been asked these questions when it reached 20 years old. When it reached 30 years... Now it reached 40. So I think the fact that people still listen to the record and still like it is a testament to the songs. I think the songs were obviously good. "Inflammable material" captured something by the time, I guess. But, to be honest with you, I don't really think about it so much. Like I don't really think about anything we recorded. And I always try to look forward to the next thing.

One of the first songs recorded by Stiff Little Fingers was "Suspect Device" which you sent to John Peel. Could you please tell us something about it? How it was for you to hear this song on air?

Well, again, growing up in the UK or Ireland, John Peel was hugely important. I don't remember very much about the radio-set...As it was in the UK at that time. But there was really BBC ran all the radio-stations. There were some local stations, but they didn't really care for sort of younger musicians at all. BBC then got only one station, broadcasting pop music. But the way they structured the station was: they went for readings during the day. And Peel was on from 10 of night to midnight. I would argue that John Peel was the single, most influential figure in British rock music from mid-60 right. He passed away much too early! When you think you give the first radio-sessions at BBC people has referred us to Punk Floyd, Led Zeppelin, T.Rex, right to all the punk-bands. Right to post-punk bands. Joy Division was famous. The Fall was the huge. We all were the huge fans of Peel. We just didn't miss his programs. Even when you should go to school and later go to work, the next morning. So you've been taking a radio to the bad and being listening to Peel, before going to sleep.

John Peel was a big influence on punk. When we sent him the record, the fact that he first of all, liked it, was huge. And secondly...yes! The actually to hear that DJ respected your music, and hear him announce your songs on the radio was immense! We've been told he was going to play it. So we were grabbing and holding the radio and being listening to this thing. Just sort of screaming and jumping up and down, like 7-year-old kids for Christmas. "We heard it on the radio!"



Photo © Stiff Little Fingers

Talking about actuality of problems you're speaking about...In fact punk artists were the first who started criticizing record industry. And we all know the story about EMI which was written after Sex Pistols had their break with record company. In your case, you have "Rough Trade" track. Could you please tell me how it was written and what reaction the representatives of Rough Trade had when they heard it for the first time?

The song wasn't actually written by Rough Trade records. The song was written for Island Records who promises us a contract. On the basis on this promise we all left our jobs and later moved to England. Only for them to change their mind at the last minute. So basically, we just used "Rough Trade" to describe the entire music business. A hard industry to be part of. It was a kind of fun that we were recording for "Rough Trade" records. I think they thought it was funny as well. We really need to ask them what reaction they had, 'cause I don't remember any sort of reaction at all, from them. So we just used the proper name as a euphemism for the music industry. That's all.

Despite the chaotic-ness of "Inflammable Material" lots of critics notice that it's probably one of interesting features in your music of that period. I remember myself when I heard it for the first time - I had a shock! So can you say that it's all about chaos? Or there were also searches for a balance?

By the time, I remember myself trying to describe what I wanted the record to sound like. If you can imagine something going dynamite inside. But just managing to stay on the track. That's what I was aiming for. That's what I heard in my head. And I think it was basically my try to define, just to hear this roll excitement, rock-n-roll give me when I firstly came across it. That's what Stiff Little Fingers do for other people - to excite them. And like you said - to shock them, when they first heard it.

I haven't listened to that record for many years. But I

do remember its being a very rough record. Because we were rough at that time. We couldn't play particularly well. We were recording in a very small studio with a producer who had never produced a record before, as far as I know. So all of us were trying to capture something that was near to the excitement everyone felt while we were playing live. We pretty much plugged in and set up as we were going to play a live show. And just run through the songs until we were happy with them. So we were get there and record these songs - that's it.

Answering the question at one of your interviews you said once that "Nobody's Heroes" is some sort of continuation of your debut. With it, if we'll compare those two records - stylistically, I'd say that "Nobody's Heroes" sounds...softer...Was it affected by the influence of dub or changes in the band also played an important role there?

We still were on complete control on what we should sound like. There was number of factors, at that time. I don't think that this record is particularly softer. I think it's better recorded. And it's better produced. We recorded "Nobody's Heroes" in a top class recording studio. I think that was the main difference between the second record and the first that we were a year older - we could play a little bit better. We also toured, quite extensively by then. Also, we had a different drummer. Jim (Reilly) brought a dynamism to SLF, that Brian (Falcon) didn't have. So from that point of view, the whole band played and sounded better. But, obviously, you lose a bit of rough edge, I guess...

Complete interview on www.peak-a-boo-magazine.be
www.facebook.com/pg/StiffLittleFingers/
<http://www.slf.rock>

Dan VOLOHOV

CABINET OF MILLIONAIRES - Theresa, Vol.3 Ep (Digital)

(Self-Released)



Just when you think the revolutionary spirit of protest is not reaching the section of the music world, the Huddersfield-based Cabinet of Millionaires release a third volume in their spit back at the state of British politics. The 'Theresa, Vol. 3' ep is the right call to arms at the right time. There is an anthem of revolt found in the five tracks across this enjoyable execution of sound. Leeds-based award-winning DJ/producer Mark EG and American piano composer and synth addict Chad Stegall kick proceedings off with a stylish display. Vocalist-supreme Pat Fulgoni is on hand to drive forth the intense emotion of every syllable. The assassination of austerity continues over the five tracks as each compliments perfectly the one preceding it. The deep, soulful sound of Fulgoni is interwoven within the addictive beats. Renowned producer Steve Whitfield (The Cure, The Mission) delivers an in your-face version, though highly enjoyable and reminiscent in style of Giorgio Moroder ... [KB]

DEF ROBOT - Makers Of Mountains (CD/Digital)

(Self-Released)



British based Def Robot have just released their debut album Makers of Mountains, an effervescent dive into modern alternative rock and indie greatness. The duo of Paul Taylor and David Hancox, are the heart of the band, pushing forward with a blending of genres and building a sound which has a unique, enjoyable quality. The tracks on Makers Of Mountains are extraordinary broad strokes of sound, colliding with an urgency reminiscent of early Pixies or even Wilco. Opening with the stomping "Falling Apart Again", a melodic driven, Americana inspired track. The dual vocals are addictive and soothing with power. "Mover And A Shake" is a distorted, bass driven crash, fruitful head shaker with a punk delivered attitude. Throughout the album the intensity soars and pulls back to a graceful emotion. The guitars are something of a cross between The Edge (U2) and Joey Santiago (Pixies). But as much assault they can summon, "Sweet And Sour" balances all their styles perfectly, with a mellow verse and a wall of noise rock injected chorus ... [KB]

RADARKRAFT - Smart Control (Digital/Vinyl)

(Die Blinden Records)



This is the project of the Dutch/Amsterdammer Willem Stinissen. Radarkraft is purely minimal. An arsenal of analog synths performing a swan dance and resulting in musical gems. Namely 4 on this EP. Smart Control excels by its simplicity. It sounds retro, like early eighties. Minimal covered with distorted vocals sounding cacophonous and yet still symphonic. Same thing with Sonne. Beauty without frills. You can perceive some slightly more contemporary tones, but with arrangements from the past. In Hinter Den Bergen you will hear some more introvert and deeper sounds, as well as more recent synthwave. It gives you a kind of trance feeling and completely pulls you into yourself. Then the wonderful outro song of this EP. Du Bist Meine, rolls out like a TGV. Tight tempo, dry analog drums producing a nicely danceable rhythm. On top of that a good supporting bass line and a melodic synth parade of endless beeps. A song that may last endlessly once you get into that state of surrender. Radarkraft has everything that makes minimal so beautiful.... [JB]

WISEBORG - From the Cradle to the Coffin (CD/Digital)

(Danse Macabre)



After the opening track serenades your lighting of the candelabra and setting the table for your spectral soiree, complete with tinny gramophone piano, the rest of the songs sound very similar - similar in that they are all darkly melodic, powerful anthems of regret, despair, and remorse... and loud, gloriously loud. The vocals are often over the top romanticism and audible histrionics. But the emotional outpouring is undeniable. For instance on "Spirits that I Called," we hear Konstantin succumbing to the realization of the pain that he's caused and, no longer able to bare the guilt, emotionally crumbling before our ears. Likewise, on "The Reaping," an 8.5 minute opus, he shouts, begging for his soul's relief. The piano reappears in several songs, holding the creepy element firmly in place as the tempest of heavy synths, deep bass lines, and crushing guitars swirl around it... [CM]

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JAZ COLEMAN

Jaz Coleman is a person who needs no introduction. For the last 30+ years his name has been associated with Killing Joke. The band has inspired not only generations of musicians but also a certain sort of attitude they cultivated in their music with Killing Joke's incredible ability to change lots of forms and not forget their background. After a few years of hard work on symphonic music Jaz Coleman is ready to present the result of his work to listeners, two albums recorded in St.Petersburg. We had the chance to speak with Jaz Coleman about mysticism and punk-rock, about "Night Time" and "Pandemonium", about early years and current activity, about coming records and the new Killing Joke record.

Speaking in terms of your inspiration - you always noted that, feeling anger, you decided to form a band with Big Paul (Ferguson). That was the factual start of Killing Joke. Of course lots of people know you as the band that criticised the politics of that period but how has your relationship towards these things evolved through the years ?

When I met Big Paul, he lived in this house, full of people living there. There was an interesting man who worked for a human relations institution. I don't know what exactly he did there. It was behavioral science. We were 18-19 years old, respectively. We learnt shocking things about the modern world. We learnt about corporations that became the dominant force in the world we were growing into. And of course, it was Mussolini who said that economic corporations are fascism. We learned many things from this individual who was working...I guess it must have been classified because he signed the Official Secrets Act. He would talk about not just a corporatisation of the world but technocracy and the way the world was going. Basically a high mind if you like. This was when we were 18-19 and add to this, we had a different world from most bands because of our involvement in studying ancient mysteries and magic basically, in many of its forms. So we had a very different understanding of the world. And we had an access to different knowledge. For example, my view on the current religious establishment was shaped by views on the historical Christ and different things like this. So anyway, we had access to different information and most of the scholars we were studying at that time...and I can tell you them! Alice Bailey, Blavatsky...but Alice Bailey in particular. I worked with Lucis Trust. She talked openly about evolving to one-world-government. So we had a good idea which way the world was evolving. There was another writer called Nima, who started the Maath. She talked about

KILLING JOKE

the high and about the high of mind. Crowley and Manly P. Hall later told us the same, stating the world is evolving. Before we were even 20 we had a good idea of the way the world was moving because we had access to different streams of knowledge, basically! And I'm very thankful for that! Killing Joke must have been realized from that. We signed a record deal in 1980. Killing Joke got the attention...and I'm very grateful for it...of one very high-ranking initiative mason. Basically, that bank-rolled another seven years of our development. We've got a very interesting and unusual background with the band...I'm trying to explain why we had such a different worldview to other people. Let me be frank about Killing Joke and its function for me, on a personal level. You might have discovered by now that human genes are flawed. There is a reason why young men are conscripted to the army at the age of 18-19-20 ...it's because we have a war impulse in us because of our maker. Our DNA-maker put a mixture in there...so anyway, to cut a long story short. Killing Joke has been an effective surrogate for war impact in myself and certainly in Big Paul. With our energy and anger we could have easily become criminals. And I think that Killing Joke is a force for good. It helps us to confront the centuries...that can be described as Leviathan. If you'd look at the force in our world for mass-centralisation, it's a scary thought. So that's a kind of background to it. Anger...I still feel anger after all these years because fundamentally I believe that all men are equal. And of course, we use the phrase 1% in industry and media but it's probably 1% of 1%. It's like saying: "We use 60% of world resources!" And yes, I do feel it. Every day of my life when Killing Joke processes the way everything is going.

Many times I've asked people about the influence of punk-rock on their creativity. So I'd like to ask you about it as well because, as a critic, I can't help but notice the influence of punk rock on your debut album. Can you say that punk became the key element of your music or you were more inspired with the aesthetics of the movement ?

Oh...it was massively influential. Let's put it into perspective! The first wave of punk was manufactured. It was manufactured as a boy band but what came out of it was very interesting. Then, we got the second wave of punk. Which is when Bob Marley came to England and we heard a fusion of reggae-bass-lines with punk music. That was second wave of punk. The third wave of punk, in my opinion, was when mysticism was added to the equation.

>> p.22

Photo © Jaz Coleman / Killing Joke

JAZ COLEMAN / KILLING JOKE

(Continuation p. 21)

Joy Division took this part and Killing Joke, etc. Punk was hugely influential on all of our lives. It allowed you to be and do anything you want. Like if you want to be an actor, the best way to start is by saying: "I'm an actor!" and believing in it. With punk there was a philosophy of no fear of failure that came there as well. And I owe punk so much because it allowed me to become a poet, a priest, an architect and actor. A performer, a conductor, a composer. Just few of the activities I think of, I can keep going on. But it was punk rock that gave me that sense of no-fear of failure and have-a-go sort of attitude.

You once said that being in Killing Joke was a system of self-education. What was the first important lesson you learned being in the band?

The first important lesson I think we all learned was media-studies (laughs) because, we could play as headliners ten weeks after we started. And that was due to what I call "Two Johns". It was John Peel – the DJ, who could be playing our new EP non-stop every night but there was a Peel Session. And then there was John Lydon, who was talking about Killing Joke in the press, at the same time. That's why Killing Joke sold out its first concert in London ten weeks after we formed. It's because of media studies (laughs).

After the release of "Revelations" you started your work on "Fire Dances" which became a landmark album for Killing Joke. Firstly, because of your collective changes, on one hand – you lost Youth, on the other – you got the brilliant Paul Raven. And of course, the result you got on that album. Could you please tell me a little bit about the process of work on that record? If you really want to know the ambience about this record – there is no better person to answer than John Porter. Cause he'd seen EVERYTHING (laughs). At the time we used to go to the studio during "Fire Dances" there was never any less than 20 people around us. At that time we had this very kind benefactor, his name is Terry...and he just came out of prison. He'd been a part of a well known crime syndicate. He was there during "Revelations". He knew how to move straight and softly but he still had all these people around him who we didn't really think much about at that time. They were like the mob. I wasn't aware until about the last couple of years how much terror we used to strike in people when we used to go from place to place. It was still 1983-84...so "Fire Dances" period. We had some interesting ways in Killing Joke, different from now. In terms of our devotional and spiritual activities we always celebrated the Full Moon. Which is funny – I still do that now! Of course I do that

with Lucis Trust – Full Moon meetings basically. We always used to do this, "Fire Dances" was basically our pagan kind of spirituality. We've always said in Killing Joke that we're ruled by ancestral forces. And I'm serious when I'm saying this – this is the truth. We're a band that are completely UNMANAGABLE. For instance, in music, there is always a strange force that seems to provide everything for us because, it's my personal opinion that Killing Joke has the most holy mission AHEAD of it, never mind the past. There is always an "ancestral spirit" as we call it. You can hear it on songs like "Song and Dance" which is really about invoking the ancestral spirit. When we're talking about it we'd talk about ancestral spirit but the first thing that comes to mind is my Dad (laughs)! I've been in the band so long...we watched all our fathers dying, going to the next world. But as he believed – consciousness survives death. Our fathers all would get together managing us. To govern and shape what's happening in this world. So in terms of ancestral spirit...it's still what we're doing up to this day. When we do a concert, for example, we always do it invoking, calling the spirits of the place we're in to be with us and to help us in what we're trying to do with music at that particular time. One thing that separates mankind from the animal kingdom is ritual. And the way we present our music is both ceremonial and ritualistic. We basically use rock-music to provide that sanctuary. We consciously do this with the band.

Last year you celebrated 41 years of Killing Joke. In this connection I'd like to ask you about your forthcoming record. What it will be like?

I think...it would be the record of records because, we all know in the band that it has to be...a monster. We start from a phrase that when you create the music, anything you think is good – is shit! And anything you think is coming from God is not even touching the stand...so I have high expectations. And, let me tell you something, I'll tell you a secret! The best way to write music is to forget about music. To make your life colourful, to make your life exciting, to travel to all the places you want to go to. To fulfill the boxes and all the things you want to do! When you're living – this is how you write music. And when you get together, music comes out of you! Whether it's classical music or it's Killing Joke. I just sit down to piano...and I don't really think too much about it! In fact, again, the cerebral process using the mind, I don't use this for writing music. I use the mind for arranging music but not writing it...

Complete interview on www.peak-a-boo-magazine.be

Dan VOLOHOV

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CONTAINER 90 - Friendship and love (7")

(Self-released)



Container 90 are back again and for the first time on 7". Those familiar with the usual electro punk - EBM sound of Container 90 can expect something slightly different. These tracks are actually quite old and are kind of a leftover from producing their albums. The songs did not fit the sound of the albums but were still good enough to be released, so the single format was the way to go. We love 7". The song Friendship And Love is a homage to the early electronic sound of Germany and Neue Deutsche Welle. The lyrics are translated fragments from DAF lyrics and ended up as a tribute song to Robert and Gabi in all aspects of lyrics, instruments, sound and artwork. On the flip side you find a slow track inspired by the cold war era and nuclear power. [JB]

L7 - Scatter The Rats (CD/Digital/Vinyl)

(Blackheart Records)



The scream of the Riot Grrrl machine returns with a stylish call to arms, L7 have just released an album, which is twenty-years in the making. Scatter The Rats is the follow-up to 1999's Slap Happy, and it has been well worth the wait. This sub-genre of alternative-grunge with a punk attitude, has been in the spotlight of late, with activity from the groundbreakers who laid its foundation. With reactivating of Bikini Kill this year, along with more exploits from Sleater-Kinney, L7 themselves reformed and toured since late 2014. The fire of Riot Grrrl has been reignited again into the spectrum of the current music scene. The original line-up since 1988 of Donita Sparks, Suzi Gardner, Jennifer Finch and Demetra "Dee" Plakas are all present and correct. Driven with a hunger and that sustainable gift of punk-delivered-rock with a vibe of the revolution, Scatter The Rats does not miss a step, it is in reality as if L7 never went away, exploding from the start with "Burn Baby". Aggressive, thrilling and delivered in their unique style of feminist angst ... These heroines of punk can still rattle cages and sculpt addictive songs effortlessly. [KB]

THIS CAN HURT - Worlds Apart (CD)

(Self-released)



The Belgian band This Can Hurt have released their second LP Worlds Apart in June 2019. Some old and wise music foxes hide behind their bandname: JP De Brabander (ex-LoopLizard / ex-DelaVega), Sven Vande Neste (70's Tush) - and Jack Noise. They named their music style Industrial Post Wave. Why? Because they couldn't find any other name that suits their own sound influenced by so many different styles. Their first LP, Nothing Matters, was often compared in reviews to great artists such as Muse, Type O Negative, Sisters Of Mercy, Massive Attack... not too bad if you would ask me. Should we agree with this? Should we compare? I don't think so, it is just box thinking, something we refuse to do as it is pointless. We discover here very nice indie-rock songs, with a sometimes hard base, and sometimes more intimate. Those who are into hard rock will enjoy River Runs Deep. Masterful compositions with nice tempo changes and guitars that are hunted by loads of cables and millions of pedals. Love for guitars can be felt, the album is filled with great gothrock-80's songs ... [JB]

DAVID J - The Auteur Ft. Rose McGowan (Digital single)

(Glass Modern Records)



Recently there has been a hive of activity from the David J Haskins camp, which is both welcoming and refreshing. Whilst touring the anniversary of his gothic milestone along with Peter Murphy, David J released the anti-arms inspired Thoughts And Prayers 7" for RSD. Following on from his acoustic-driven masterwork, he has now announced a follow-up single-The Auteur (Redux / The Starlet's Cut). Similar to his last release there is a message within the single, David J continues to project his activism through the music. Whereas 'Thoughts And Prayers' hit out at America's gun laws, now he speaks alongside the MeToo movement, reinforcing the agenda of equal acceptance. This is reworking from 2002, The Auteur, given an updated twist in the form of actress and activist Rose McGowan. Her vocals are intertwined with the sound, alongside David J's and are built upon a background of ambient sounds and assaulting noise similar to his original gothic musings ... [KB]



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new album 'THERE WILL BE SOLUTIONS' : CD SA122

DOUBLE EYELID



Photo © Mandi Martini

Double Eyelid was formed in Toronto in 2009, as a vehicle for the songs and vision of lead singer and central band member Ian Revell. Now joined by guitarist Sky Shaver, Double Eyelid is currently gigging regularly and working on the long-awaited follow-up to *Seven Years*, which is tentatively titled "Skeleton Key." Meanwhile, Double Eyelid has just released the single "A Means To An End" featuring a remix by legendary ebm/industrial pioneer Claus Larsen of Leaether Strip. We'd like to thank Ian Revell-Double Eyelid's mastermind for his time.

For the readers who perhaps might be unfamiliar, could you give us a background on the Double Eyelid name and a brief history?

In the early 2000s I sort of burned what had been my life to the ground and went to South Korea to teach English with someone I'd fallen in love with - I stayed for somewhere between 3 and 4 years. 'Double Eyelid' is a phrase the Koreans use to describe eyelids that have a crease; most Asians don't have that naturally but most Westerners do, and plastic surgery to give your eyelids a crease was fairly popular there at the time. So that was just an odd expression that stuck with me because it was used to describe a way that I looked different there, as the stranger in a strange land. It got added to the list of possible band names for future use and eventually its number came up. The project just started as a way to get my songs out there. I recruited a couple of old friends to help me (Benjamin Mueller-Heaslip and Karl Mohr) - we'd previously been together in another band - and then later grabbed another old friend (Sky Shaver) when Karl wanted to shift away from playing guitar live.

Actually, in one very early incarnation of the project Sky had been the drummer, but then he insisted on taking a holiday from the band to make a solo album when this gig I really wanted to play was coming up ... so I got a drum machine and the rest is history...

It's been three years since your remix album and five since your last full-length. What's been going on since then?

Lots, my life is very full! When we made 'Seven Years' it was a complete statement. It was a weird document of a life in crisis at the time and even the whole recording process - it sort of felt like it was being made against the odds, there were just all of these disparate elements and things that didn't quite fit together but somehow Karl and I managed to drag it over the finish line. And then we were exhausted, we were done. But I knew it was good and I thought 'well at least I've done a good record now, I can go to my deathbed knowing I did that'. We did the remix album next because we knew the songs on the record were mostly too weird to get played in clubs, so we were trying to get different takes on the songs and hopefully appeal to the DJs. That was a real outreach exercise and it was really cool, I'm glad we did it. But when we started that, I had this idea that it would buy us some time to let me write the next record ... I was so naive - it really just became this all-consuming project that tied me up for more than a year. It's the disadvantage of being independent, I guess - but the flip side to that is we got a record that I love out of it, I'm proud of the way it all hangs together.

(Continues p. 28)

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DOUBLE EYELID

(Continuation p24)

So since then ... we've been playing gigs when people ask us to, and working on new material. We just released a single but there's a bunch of other stuff still in progress. And we've done some interesting shows - Karl and I did a live, improvised soundtrack of all new music for 'The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari' and I'm proud of what we did there, I'd gladly do it again if someone wanted us to remount it. Sky and I have done a bunch of gigs together including one with David J. The train keeps a rollin' ...

Your new single features a remix by the legendary Claus Larsen of Leaether Strip. How did that come about?

I'm sort of allergic to releasing a song all by itself - I grew up buying vinyl so every single has to have a flip side, you know? There were a few other options for how we could have released this but in the end I thought a remix was the way to go - and I went to Claus because if you know anything about him, you know he's a huge Depeche Mode fan and this song had that influence and sensibility, which I felt like maybe he could bring out in a way we couldn't. He did a remix for us before so I had his number so to speak ... I just reached out and fortunately he had the time. I'm so absolutely thrilled with what he did - he put a ton of love into it and I enjoy listening to his take on it.

You have an interesting fusion of sounds, especially evident on your debut. There's almost a combo including some noire and even modern classical influences. Can you talk about the inspiration that might find its way into your songwriting? Your "Black Box" video has a bit of a noire feel as well. Is this genre of inspiration to you?

When we started we didn't really know what genre of music we were doing - the effort was just to get my songs out there. So then people told us we were goth and we believed them. Everything I write is coming from a dark place usually because that's what's interesting to me. So it works. And my voice just sounds a certain way, so for better and for worse that defines what we do. But with regard to how it sounds as a whole, I have to credit that mostly to the brilliant musicians I work with. Karl Mohr listens to things in a level of detail that is beyond the comprehension of most, including myself. Benjamin Mueller-Heaslip is brilliant - he's a completely intuitive and wonderful pianist. And Sky Shaver is great at synthesizing all of it and making it work in the live context - with one guitar he can build atmospheres that are equal to things we spent weeks multi-tracking.

But I sidetracked a bit there. Yes - I go for tragedy over comedy every time. That's where we're at.

You have a unique, very personal-sounding list of tracks on yr. debut release. Could you talk about the track "John"?

Wow. No one's asked me about 'John' for awhile. I'm glad you enjoyed it, but 'John' is actually a cover. But it's a cover of a song that I'm one of maybe less than 10, 20 people who actually remembers the original, I think. So ... in the mid-90s, I lived in Kingston and played in a band that sounded like a mix of Stone Temple Pilots and Tom Waits. And I was not the songwriter in this project - I played the bass. But I was committed to it and put a lot of myself into it, and was seriously disappointed when it didn't go anywhere, because the guy who was driving it I thought was a brilliant writer. But we were all young and volatile, there were too many bad drugs and conflicting personalities and we couldn't make it work. So ... here's the thing. People have asked me about this song before and I've said things like how I felt like this band I was in before never got its due, so it was my responsibility to put 'John' out there. And that's true - but it's only half the story. The truth is that when I started Double Eyelid, I didn't believe in my own writing, so 'John' was like a suit of armour that I put on right at the very beginning of all of this. Because I knew it was good; my own stuff. I wasn't so sure about. It served its purpose at the time but we don't really play it live these days. Maybe we'll play it live again if we do a set where we play the whole album or something like that.

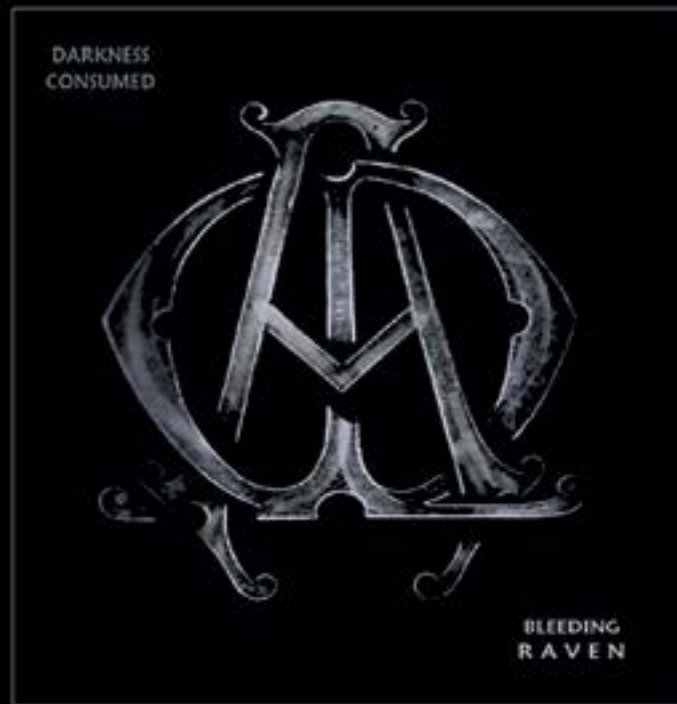
Have you ever written a track that came from such a place emotionally that you felt it unsuitable for public release?

Yes, and in some cases even unsuitable to share with close friends. You have to remember ... once you release something, there's this chain of things that happens where you promote it and then people listen to it and write about it and interpret it for themselves and want to tell you and everyone else what they think about it ... you have to be psychologically ready for that. And sometimes I'm just not, so it doesn't come out. Those can still be worth writing though ...

Complete interview peek-a-boomagazine.be
www.facebook.com/pg/doubleeyelid
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APSÜRDE



Photo © Ákos Szénási

Set up in 2006 and hailing from Budapest (Hungary) Apsürde last year released their official debut full length entitled "Inglorious Heroes" (ScentAir Records). The previously released EP "See Me Coming" was an interesting teaser revealing a talented synth-pop formation inspired by Depeche Mode. The album only confirmed their talent... and their main source of inspiration. The trio Gábor Csonotos - Ádám Szakács - Ákos Szénási will appeal to lovers of 'classical' electro-pop music. We had a chat with Ákos.

Can you briefly introduce us to the sonic universe of Apsürde? What have been the main purposes and accomplishments so far?

Back in the 80s, I grew up as a child in the Eastern Block and Depeche Mode had a real big impact on me. Then, when Alan Wilder left the band, I felt emptiness, which I was trying to fill in with the creation of Apsürde - as a therapy... (lol).

Your music indeed clearly sounds inspired by electro-pop and more especially Depeche Mode. What fascinates you in the electro-pop genre and what makes the magic of Depeche Mode?

Generally speaking I think when you're about to deal with a music genre, you'll get influenced by that sound giving you the greatest feelings in life or that can get you away from the greyness of the daily life. I personally think electronic music has these aspects; and particularly Depeche Mode could influence me in that way. I'm getting in the mood instantly, even today when I listen to their earlier records.

80s electro-pop music was characterized by the magic of analogue equipment, which also is an important aspect in your music. What can you tell us about the importance of this equipment in the writing process?

This question is more like one for Gábor as he's experienced for decades now with the world of analogue equipment; additionally he has numerous analogue synthesizers. However, we all agreed from the very beginning, that in order to get this warm, but extremely dynamic sound, we would need analogue instruments and had to use samplers for the guitar sound while VST plugins were out of the picture.

Last year you released debut full length "Inglorious Heroes". How do you look back at the composition of this opus, was there a main focus and what's the title about?

We've been working on this album for 5 years. None of us are music professionals, I mean it's not our daily job. We also had to face many challenges like one of the band members who left the band, another one lost his job, one of us got a child or is building a house etc. Next to this, we didn't have a manager or a record label that could give us a push to finish the album but at the other side we also were lucky because this way the album expresses our real sound and spirit. Deadlines often makes the process go a lot more smoothly. In terms of the content, the album is very colourful; the songs are moving from playful synth-pop (cf. "Endless Race") to the 'dark' technocratic "Intro", but there are also meaningful and mutual ballads on it. That was our way to express those 10 years of moods, feelings and the golden age of synth-pop. Relationships are one of our frequent topics.

>> p.30



APSURDE

(Continuation p. 32)

The title of our album reflects it all. We were aware of the fact that what we were going to create would more likely be hitting a particular scope of people.

"Inglorious Heroes" is a well-crafted and mature production, which I really enjoy listening to, but sometimes I get the feeling the Depeche Mode influence is too explicit and maybe suppressing a more personal sound and style. I would like to get your opinion about this point?

I agree you can definitely link our sound with Depeche Mode but I think this is because of Adam's voice. He's not trying to sound like Dave Gahan but he indeed has a similar timbre of voice. And when it comes to record the backing vocals in a higher tessitura, he sounds like Martin; amazing isn't it? This said and no matter what we do, we will always sound like Depeche Mode but, we think this is just fine. Nevertheless we agreed to go in search for a different sound. It's a process of experimenting to one day find our way. As a matter of fact, it is a great trap to start making music as a Depeche Mode fan. To give you an example, if someone plays the guitar and gathers a drummer and bass player to make music, they'll rarely be perceived as they totally sound like Metallica or Guns'n'Roses. And what really makes this dilemma interesting is that I think that rock or metal music are a lot more restricted than electronic music. In other words, if you make music by using particular synths and samplers plus additionally you have snares in your drum track and you spice it up with a male baritone singer who is an introvert melancholic type of person; you'll be sure to get as feedback: 'oh, this sounds very much like the Depeche Mode'.

Our aim is not to copy the music or the sound of Depeche Mode with the exception of "Endless Race" as this is our way to honour and show respect to Vince Clark and that special decade. These songs were like born in us, obviously hugely influenced from our childhood as we used to listen to Depeche Mode on our walkman all day and night long.

How difficult is it for a Hungarian formation to reach a wider audience and what's the importance/impact of social media, live shows and the clips you've made?

Early in the beginning we wrote our songs in Hungarian. Then Gábor joined us and we instantly realised that with his skills and his marvelous synth collection we could consider making an international career. Thanks to one of my friends we got in touch with Adam. We heard his



Photo © Laszlo Szabo

Depeche Mode cover version of "Home", which was featured on an official tribute album. When I heard him singing the first note of the song I knew we needed him and with him on board we can start to dream. Then we met Linda, our songwriter, who excels in English while she's experienced writing lyrics in English, in fact, she's also singing on our album, a duet (cf. "Going On") with Adam. She's involved with soul and jazz but I thought it could be interesting having her on board.

The music videos shown at our performances and in the video portals are my work and I'm also responsible for managing the band's appearances on social media. I think social media enables the bands to reach out a larger audience however it's kind of 'full' now and does not really help to distinguish your music, your band from the others. If you don't have a massive record label and financial support behind you, it is extremely difficult to reach a wider audience.

Due to the fact that I'm a Depeche Mode fan, it was nearly inevitable for me to have a vision similar to Anton Corbijn's one during these years. I don't think that I'm copying him but I'm simply expressing myself with the help of his styles, visually. It just happened you know...

Hope to speak to you soon and don't forget - "Back To The Future!"

www.facebook.com/apsurde
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ENZO KREFT - Control (CD)



Dystopia is getting closer and Enzo Kreft has understood that very well because 'Control' also has this concept. A vision focused on a future without ones own input. It is no longer science fiction. Before you even realise it, it becomes a reality. This line of thought therefore serves as a guideline for 'Control' which, since the resurrection of Enzo Kreft, succeeds albums such as Turning Point and Wasteland. Conceptual being, the robot, the chip and all kinds of electronic cabling, reproduced in a comprehensive way by, yet again, electronic sounds like only Enzo Kreft has been able to display ever since. Once the chip is implanted, 'Scanned' immediately provides a solid build-up in order to transform fully into the same evolution Enzo Kreft himself illustrates musically. 'Cyborg' is almost instrumental, where words are superfluous and you can actually hear the robots marching A better soundtrack to a dystopian world is almost unthinkable. [DJ]

ZWEITE JUGEND - Elektronische Körpermusik (CD/Vinyl)

(Brandsatz Records)



The duo Zweite Jugend is Marcel L. (drums) and Eli van Vegas (vocals, sequences). In 2015, they produced some 'demo videos' named 'Up the Cups! And 'Love Is Luxury', and the EP Kleines Vorspiel, that was made in a hurry and only 100 copies were made. Now they bring us Elektronischer Körpermusik. How clear can an album name be? The ever - Im Rhythmus Bleibende - EBM crowd has with Zweite Jugend yet another band that will make their bodies drip and sparkle from sweat while dancing on those tight rhythms. This work could easily start a spontaneous moshpit at any party. Because we press play we only have to wait a few seconds before the first aggressive, short synth sequences, with a snare drum forecast the coming of some hard-core EBM. It surprises me over and over how old school EBM keeps up with the beauty of minimal sound patterns ... Zweite Jugend succeeded in delivering some good Elektronischer Körpermusik indeed. Maybe very basic, but straightforward EBM with the occasional fun escapade to its neighboring music styles.... [JB]

MECHANIMAL - White Flag Single (7" Digital)

(Self-released)



Mechanical is an industrial audio-visual unit hailing from Athens, Greece, and founded in 2011 by Gianni Papaioannou. Mechanical's musical language draws influences from a wide range of genres, and features male (and female) vocals against a backdrop of mechanical repetitive beats, shoegaze guitar drones and pulsating synth sequencers ... With the White Flag Single, which prepares the release of their fourth album ... The two new songs of White Flag Single do not raise the white flag that states an unconditional surrender but the one that sets the end of all personal, social, secular warfare of the past. In Easy Dead, the world's innocent history is written from the outset - as a warning for the future, and in Red Mirror the only force for survival is revealed: the one that takes the form of a redemptive disaster with the sole purpose of starting everything from scratch. Both songs carry some heavy guitars, in addition to the characteristic voice of Freddie Faulkenberry. In Red Mirror the synths play a bigger role, and the song is a bit more modest ... [JB]

VEIL OF LIGHT - Inflict (Digital/Vinyl)

(Avant! Records)



The Swiss/Zurich duo Veil Of Light returns, two years after releasing 'Front Teeth', with another full fledged long-player, 'Inflict'. Their overall synth-based post-punk gets here a more industrial touch at moments and is supported by somewhat stronger beats. 'So Hard' is more than just the song title and immediately demonstrates, with bone-dry rhythms, how hard things can get. Pour a voice soaked in chemical stuff over it and you get a great cocktail that goes down very smoothly. Without knowing what we did wrong, we get an accusing finger pointing in our direction, 'You Done Me Wrong'. Fortunately, the accusations are packed within a great song, which eases the pain. Without pity a sledgehammer called Fact2019 throws us back to the eighties. A solid layer of Depeche Mode sounds are played, and without shame, because these guys simply continue their so far great album In Europe we can dig this sh't and I ... I just can't get enough!n [JB]

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