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ARTIST PROFILE:

Mummer

Klein Records

Salute Mummer - the new amazing versatile project of former Klein act MUM member Stefan Jungmair and vocal goddess Betty Semper, both based in Vienna and both into the high art of equivocating.

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"Soulorganismstate" makes a debut of a special kind & flavour: Sweet and sour, mellow and yellow, high- and lowdown - all the same. The classically trained Jazz musician, composer/producer and the gifted singer have created an album that could be easily tagged soulful at first listen but there is way much more to it than that. Moreover it's soulorganic and way beyond the "It's an eclectic mix of this and that" bull, you'll see. Always on the quest for musical contrasts, the two wizards of sound reanimate and masquerade Dance and Funk genre elements into never-known timbres and are a credit to their name.

After all apart from being the title of an XTC record, a 'mummer' is someone who likes to disguise, putting on costumes - a synonym for 'guiser'. So we're speaking of someone with various faces and someone who can not easily be identified. All in all 'mummers' like to remain a trifle mysterious and unclear, always full of surprises and unpredictable. The Dadaism of MUM is apparent still, it's an album that doesn't want to come across dead serious but still has you smiling if you take those blinkers off your ears.

"Soulorganismstate" is clearly a vocal album which does

Interview

Properly Chilled does the Q&A with...

Mummer's Stefan Jungmair Speaks About SoulOrganismState

Q's by Properly Chilled

Promoting their debut album SoulOrganismState, Stefan Jungmair, founder of Viennese duo Mummer, took a few minutes to chat about working with partner Betty Semper, the Viennese music scene, and drops a list of crucial albums. You can catch the entire interview in glorious audio format in the propercast episode 2.



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PChill: How did you and Betty Semper come to work together?

Mummer: Well we're both working in the Vienna music scene and this is not a very huge scene, so everyone comes to know everyone, and I was looking for a dark scheme of voice and then she was the first to cross my mind and it was clear I wanted her to do this and she was very easily convinced to join the project. So, it just came together very easily, so we are both very lucky about the results.

PChill: And the other singers that you're working with, Wayne Martin and Angela Reisinger, how did you meet with them and how has that been recording with them?

Mummer: That's a little more complicated because Wayne Martin lives in Berlin, and we were like going through all the recordings that were recently done in Europe in the dance field and we were looking for a dark, loose voice. And, we didn't know him before we started this project, so were really trying to concentrate to find a voice that met my imagination. Then suddenly we stumbled across him and saw that he was living not very far away, so we contacted him and he agreed to join in and, yeah, it was another good coincidence that we found him. He was exactly what I've been waiting for. He's a very interesting character. He has lived in a lot of places in Europe and in the States and he's in the mid-50s I think now. I think you can hear all the color in his voice, all that he went through in his life, and, he's a very interesting character.

The other singer Angela Reisinger was a real lucky discovery because she was working as a waitress in a Viennese jazz club and someone told me she's a very talented singer and she'd done some drum n' bass things and I listened to the things she did and I knew I wanted to have her on at least two tunes and I think it's very interesting because she's a good counterpoint to the voice of Betty S...Betty Semper.

PChill: Besides a change of musical partner, is there a way that you approach composing the music differently from Mum to Mummer?

Mummer: Of course there is a change because there has been some time between the two projects and everyone's developing, music is developing. I would think I'm trying to cutting down to very simplistic structure and I'm rather reducing than building up. In the early recordings we were like piling a lot of stuff on, and now I'm trying rather to reduce it, so you probably won't hear it because you think it's all there, but, there's always a lot that is gone already. But you wouldn't notice this of course.

feature three vocalists of a special kind and calibre. Of course there's Betty Semper herself who's already lend her angelic voice to MUM's second album, 'The Szabotnik 15 Mission'. Then we have the guest singers: Adding to the roots share of the album is no one else but Berlin-based Blues crooner Wayne Martin, a real soul man who's cooperated with Boozoo Bajoo / K7 for instance. Also on the vocal cruise ship is the Viennese newcomer, singer and songwriter Angela Reisinger - also known as Angel Rice, she is one of the best young Jazz voices in the country.

If you're a mummer, you're keeping mum:

Stefan Jungmair used to be part of the Austrian duo MUM, who were among the first artists on Klein Records. Two men who had venus on their foreheads, all "duke cut" and got you "caught like a trout". Almost a decade ago, Stefan and Paul Schneider started building thei MUM universe abusing Electro, Jazz, 70s Funk, Hip Hop, Dub, Soul with a little wink in the eye - defying the logic of musical barriers which resulted in strangely hypnotic yet highly danceable velvety soundtracks for imaginary films.

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Bio provided by Klein Records

So this is a rather different approach on the one side, on the structure side, and on the other side I've been using a lot of natural instruments, and I did a lot of recording for this record and in the other recordings we used a lot of samples and of course electronics. Still electronics is one of my main instruments. Still, this didn't change.

PChill: What catches your ear when it comes to music? Is there something just naturally that you find yourself drawn to in a sound, or specific instruments?

Mummer: Very, very nice question, thanks for asking. It's something that I'm constantly asking myself. I think there has to be something, some mystery on the one side, and on the other side some uniqueness... something that makes this part undistinguishable. Some flavor. You think "this is it!" I mean what's the difference between one trumpeter and the other? You can hardly tell what the difference is, except of technical skill but it's always, it's the flavor, one trumpeter has character and the other is just imitating. So you're always, constantly looking for character.

PChill: You have been involved pretty heavily in the Vienna music scene for quite a while. How has it developed from the time that you first became involved in it, to now?

Mummer: From my point now, I can say that the scene kind of grew up. It's more adult. There are a lot of clubs that are in the scene for quite a while, and there is a steady audience that grew up too. It's the same people that went to the clubs 10 years ago. They still go, but they are listening to a different kind of music. So, it's probably not as euphoric as it was 10 years before, but still it's lively, you know there is a lot of activity and a lot of clubs and a lot of musicians and everyone's keen on what the other people do and what the other musicians do. Yeah, I think that's what the Viennese scene is about. There are a lot of young students still in town who go to the clubs, a lot of people between 30 and 40 that go to the clubs. There is a wide range in the age field to the people that are going to hear this new music, and buy music of course on CDs or MP3s.

PChill: In your personal music collection, what are the classic albums for you?

Mummer: Oh well, nice question. Okay, there is one record that was really important for me when I came from the jazz world and I entered electronics, and that's Wagon Christ's "Throbbing Pouch"; really important. Then there is one, I think it was the first Harry B. album. It was really important for me. And lately, there was the last Plaid album, it's called "Spokes", a British electronic duo, it was really important for me.

And before that I would mention a couple of jazz recordings that were really important for me, like the classic Miles Davis albums from the late 60s. I'm a real sax player. [laughs] I would now start to mention my counted sax players that I really adored when I was into sax playing. They were too very important for me because when you study classical jazz and saxophone playing, you get a real clear view to music lines and how melodies can be constructed. This is an important background for me for what I do now.

PChill: What are the most important lessons you've learned about writing music?

Mummer: To rather reduce stuff, not over-build it, so that everything can breathe and have its space. I think that's very important. And to have a very clear imagination of what you want to do before you start to do it. If you're sitting on the computer or if you're recording stuff, there's a lot you can do. You can even start playing without knowing what you're doing, but you quickly lose the idea. You quickly lose the goal you're actually going for, and I think that's kind of a danger. If you have a clear imagination, follow the imagination.

PChill: Have you been pleased with the reactions to your new album? Do you follow reviews?

Mummer: Actually, I'm a little scared of reviews generally. Because it kind of can destroy your relationship with your own album, but the ones that I read I was really pleased with, because they were the good ones. They're the ones that the record company collected for me. I'm really happy that everyone is seeing most of the things that I put into the music.

PChill: Is there any one song, or a particular song on the new album that for you, just captures it all, or that just came together so quickly and easily that that's just the ideal of what Mummer sounds like for you?

Mummer: For me in particular that's the "Willowweep" song, because it was really interesting, when I worked on this with Betty, it was like 10 seconds talking, and five minutes recording and this was it. And that's the truth because it's actually our first take, you can hear it. It was so clear what should be done with this song that I really love it, there wasn't much work to do, because it came so easily and I think this is the atmosphere. You can hear it.

PChill: I will wrap this up with the last question, and that is to know what you've got that's going to come up for Mummer, through either the rest of this year, or for next year...do you have any plans?

Mummer: Oh yeah, we're building on the last concept. Fortunately we kind of elected to do when we worked on the album, and we did already two live shows and planning to do more after Christmas, starting in February. We are working on a kind of interesting combination between computer built electronic stuff and natural instruments, like double bass and natural drums and percussion and stuff. That's what we are working on at the moment, and to do some more music of course.

Full songs featured in audio interview (in order of appearance): "Love To Be", "Baby, Don't You Go" (feat. Wayne Martin), "Every Little Thing I Know" (feat. Angela Reisinger), "Willowweep", and "I Spy".

Many thanks go out to Stefan, Mummer's label Klein Records and zee ever lovely Carina!

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