

ANTYE GREIE / CRAIG ARMSTRONG / VLADISLAV DELAY

IN COLLABORATION WITH HUUME RECORDINGS PRESENT:

THE DOLLS

In the beginning there was solo music. Interest in music.
Three different persons, all of them music admirers and explorers, eventually somehow met and became friends..

Craig Armstrong had heard AGF's (**Antye Greie**) solo album and become a fan. He invited Antye to sing on his second solo album, "As If To Nothing", and they performed few successful shows together and realized there's a lot going on. Inspiring and challenging each other. Sharing and exchanging musical ideas and wondering about the life they lead.
At some point **Vladislav Delay** was having the time of his life being invited not to play but to be a groupie on few of these shows and it became apparent that one of the only things different between Craig and him was their age. They met well.

A little later Mr. Armstrong was about to do his next solo album, "Piano Works", this time dedicated for the solo piano, and came to Berlin to record few of the songs at AGF/Delay's home-become-studio.
While doing that, again a lot of time was also spent on talking, sharing ideas and exchanging music until it became clear that they should be jamming and making some fresh new music together.
They recorded hours of piano played by Craig while the couple tried their best to not let him play too straight, bringing in their computers and all the studio toys young engineers loose their saliva for.
And at times when the machines didn't do their thing anymore then the piano itself became a platform for something new.
We won't go into details here what was done to a very expensive Steinway piano (courtesy of Steinway&Sons) but it was sinister.
It went well beyond "treated piano"

Then came other things. Some time later that year 2004 Antye and VD put their skills together and made an album (**Agf/Delay "Explode"**) which was both new and brave move from them; abandoning their "established" and known-for mediums and going for something different instead.
Also, in addition to both producing other artists and setting up labels for themselves they also managed to produce their own follow-up solo albums; **AGF3** and **Vladislav Delay "The Four Quarters"**
The recorded "trio" piano material was decidedly left to age like a good wine for a while before they even begun opening the session files.
Little bits were done here and there but it wasn't until 2005 when Agf/Delay really begun going through the recordings, and producing and composing songs around what was once captured in Berlin.

For a long time there was a plan for Agf/Delay to produce the album from the recorded piano material without further collaboration with very busy Mr. Armstrong, but when the couple had progressed a bit with material and played it to Craig, he wanted to join "**the band**" and play more piano and be involved in the whole process.

"I like this stuff", he said.

They met again for some sessions to produce the music and even played in front of some 6000 audience in Lissabon, Portugal for standing ovations.

The rest of the story about "**The Dolls**" and their debut album was pretty straight forward and what you have now hopefully playing on your CD, not on your weak-ass mp3 booster, is the result of what these three unique artists could combine together when there was no lack of inspiration.

"We turn into dolls, with beautiful clothes."

Yes. But why sing stuff like this? Who needs this kind of stuff these days with terrorist threats and wars soon taking over every continent?

Well, at least these authors do believe in soothing qualities in music, both as a catalyst for themselves while making it as well as while listening to any music which reaches something real in them.

It feels better with this rare kind of music around.

And so with their musically enhanced minds these dolls take over something, anything, and everything they like.

Sometimes with child-like seriousness and then again at times with adult-like nonsense. Consciously. No blind-folds here.

"Lonely and concentrated. He doesn't hesitate to break the daylight"

The album also deals with something we maybe know better than our neighbors and sometimes even ourselves; characters and actors from the movies we all know so well and the stories we've all been told about and living with throughout our lives. But like music and life itself, it often takes more than a few moments before it all begins to open up, to realize where the stories are coming from and where they might be leading to.

You come across very sensitive and intimate personal stuff here as well as violent outbursts of them dolls. Multi-layered musical fantasy? You bet.

But as always, trying to describe something like this with words is not just, it just needs to be heard.

And neither there is much music to compare this album to, so it's increasingly up to each and every listener to look for an individual connection and reaction this music creates.

Different generations with various backgrounds, musical ideas and visions meet here.

Meet here, mix-and-match there and then leave behind something you haven't heard before.

These drums, piano and vocals will be heard. They tell stories extraordinare.

There's so much music at the crossroads it takes a while to realize you've been taken back in time when it was still possible to hear surprising and uncompromised musical events, live or on tape. Bliss.