

Band Blurb

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Nervous Germans – From Prussia With Love

Nervous Germans are a musical curio if there ever was one. On their reunion record, *From Prussia with Love*, they play a mixture of their older repertoire from the 80s and brand new compositions from the 2000s. One thing is for certain, had this band continued their initial career and kept the fire burning, they may have very well turned some heads. The sound is ahead of its time for that period but strangely doesn't feel dated in the futuristic now.

The sound does have that hip-shaking, shoulder swaggering 80s feel with some influences borrowed from post-punk, new wave, rock and hippie music, but sounds completely different than most bands that were doing it back then. "Superstars (And Superheroes)" has enough firepower to light up a stadium and you could imagine Nervous Germans playing this tune to a packed house and everyone wanting a piece of the microphone. It's shamelessly pop, yet possesses a retro arrangement and soul that you're not going to find in the modern sea of studio-slick trickery. "Liberation Day" is a merger between English punk, riff-rock and the captivating hypnosis of American space enthusiasts Hum. Gary Schmalzl lays down elephantine riffs against a backdrop of Micki Meuser's plummeting bass lines and Sabine Ahlbrecht's breakneck drum heft. This is a heavy song, but singer Grant Stevens elevates its intensity with monstrous vocal prowess that fuels the powerhouse melody. "Summer Rain" has a twanging, arid guitar intro that melts into some driving classic rock with punk and indie ideals wielded from the hip. It's another full-bore attack where the entire band digs into a groove and never let up. They do lower the octane on "Living the Dream", a big top pop epic that many 80s post-punk bands resorted to during the later stages of their careers. The boiling, pyre blaze of "On Fire" is equal portions blues and singer/songwriter flair with a knack for monumental chorus melodies. That main guitar lick is like butter on a baked potato under a 90 degree sun; bubbling, trouble and ready to be savored.

Dire Straits could have popularized and penned the idiosyncratic, hook-fest that is "Happy Birthday Major Tom." It has an aura about it that's tailor-made for single status and a gruff edge necessary to eliminate any fluff or duff arranging. The gang vocals backing up Stevens' lead melodies are golden and give the song a snap that you just want to nod your head to. "Hey Mister Sunshine" is almost entirely acoustic with very folksy playing; the kind of song you'd expect to hear played by hippies in a field. It has above average composition for the style and with lyrics that ode to more than just pot and the psychedelic experience. "Modern People" begins acoustic then turns to a driving, bass-centered post-punk number with atonal guitar flourishes and rumbly little grooves. Stevens recalls Geddy Lee during the chorus vocals, but this is hardly a prog band. "In My Mind's Eye" is the bleakest, slowest burning jam on the record and dwells in a mire of morbid lyrical imagery. An acoustic ballad in "Sailing Blind" rocks gently on the waves, giving way to the tidal rush of the soundtrack worthy "Paradise Lost."

This record is very close to perfect and puts on a clinic in terms of showmanship, songwriting and performance. You can tell the players have known each other a very long time and are familiar with each other's playing styles. *From Prussia with Love* has endless treasures to discover.

8 out of 10 stars