

Indie Artists Alliance

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The Nervous Germans – From Prussia With Love

The Nervous Germans enjoyed youthful fame. From 1979 through 1984, they built a five year career of enthusiastic live performances, recordings and appearances that gave them a following on the underground circuit. As most underground bands ahead of their time tend to do, they broke up after a disappointingly short run. It took them nearly twenty years to get back to jamming and the result is this eleven cut album, *From Prussia with Love*.

In this age of cash grab reunions with subpar recordings made just as a basis to tour on, Nervous Germans managed to assemble an album that's more just cash-in retro. It adheres to what they've done in the past because it features several of their older tunes (in newly recorded form, of course) as well as some freshly penned numbers. They obviously wanted to give newcomers a chance to hear who they were as well as get a glimpse of where they're heading.

The songs range from pop to rock but don't shy away from traditional acoustic/blues elements. There's an obvious hit in "Superstars (And Superheroes)", an engaging jam that not only trumps current soundtrack darlings like Nickelback, but also forges new pop ground for the Germans in terms of huge, modern production and the catchiest choruses they've written to date. A track like this wouldn't be out of place in a new Spiderman or Batman movie, although the content takes a darker, downward turn.

They ride high on in your face crescendos and musclebound rock riffs on "Liberation Day." It has a pop-punk infectiousness, but they pull out some pummeling arena riffs in the latter half that are easily the toughest entries in the band's catalog to date. This is foot-stomping, fist-pumping hard rock music at its best and "Summer Rain" trudges the same path while allowing stripped-bare, nearly acoustic guitars and shaggy rhythmic lunges. Rock stays in focus on "Living the Dream," although the pop element is the star of this show with a boisterous chorus vocal, melodic guitar licks and lively time-keeping reining the song into a stalwart groove with purpose, direction, tension and release all accounted for.

"On Fire" is another rocker; smoldering and blues-rooted with excellent lead guitar. The rhythm section indulges in the blues and things really get popping with another equally astounding chorus which defies gravity in terms of its vocal height and exploding guitar synapses. Drawing down the sun but still rocking hard, "Happy Birthday Major Tom" pairs a shuffle drum beat to slinky bass lines and staccato riffs creating a melodic rocker that stops and turns on a dime. Dipping into hippie, trippy flower pop "Hey Mister Sunshine" could have easily been written in the 1960's. The acoustic guitars and slightly psychedelic sounds like a more tranquil version of The Beatles. "Modern People" also struts the acoustic whenever it's not dipping its toes into bleak shoegazer turf and "In My Mind's Eye" is pure German-grown English shoegaze. It's an odd proposition, yet it works and fits with the rest of the record. "Sailing Blind" returns to acoustic 60s groove and closer "Paradise Lost" is the sprawling, penultimate album closer that seems to wind and expand.

Everything about *From Prussia with Love* oozes class, dignity and identity. This is not a band I

would have expected to ever hear from again, but somehow they made an album that's passionate and more than just a cash-in. Fans of experimental rock with big pop arrangements will do well to give this their attention spans.

8 out of 10 stars.