

Music Emissions

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The Nervous Germans - From Prussia With Love

It's a familiar narrative. After years apart, critically respected musical acts reconvene and release a new album that touches on past achievements while shining a light towards the future. Most reunions are not creative achievements, but rather bank on prevailing nostalgia. The Nervous Germans enjoyed a successful, but brief, initial run from 1979 through 1984 and departed the scene with a feeling that they had never truly realized their potential. For their reunion effort *From Prussia With Love*, the band opts for re-recording choice selections from their past and juxtaposing them with new original compositions.

The opener "Superstars (And Superheroes)" has a jangly main riff that's punk rock played at an indie pace. The vocals are strong and anthem-ready, while the rhythm section wraps around an infectious beat. With a soaring chorus that really hooks the ears and lyrics speaking of the unnecessary excess of the rock n' roll lifestyle, the message and music really hits home.

"Liberation Day" kicks off with an infectious, downbeat blues riff played with minimal distortion as the vocals rise up like smoke from a volcano. It's an alluring intro and the band ups the ante with some a bone-crunching rock beat and heavy guitar riffs that give the track tremendous ballast. Vocalist Grant Stevens pushes hard and harmonic back-up vocals join him to make for some sublime catchiness.

Drummer Sabine introduces "Summer Rain" with a groovy, polyrhythmic beat while droning guitar chords and sparse, funky bass lines build the mood for some flame-scorched punk. You can tell the age of the band here as their punk chops come off as far more mature than their peers. "Living the Dream" is comprised of twang-y, low-slung guitar chords and rural rhythms befitting of the late, great Seattle scene. It cooks with a country n' rock influence with sturdy guitar solos and tricky drum flashes rounding things out to perfection.

"On Fire" toys with electronic FX before launching into the most well-written rock grooves on the album. This baby really swings and Gary Schmalz bends every note with great feel that refuses to let of its hold on the listener's cerebral cortex. The chorus is shot straight skyward thanks to Steven's complete command of his pipes and bassist Micki Meuser deserves a special mention for his low-end swagger that keeps everything tightly glued together. A Talking Heads influence comes into play on "Happy Birthday Major Tom" with the percussion adopting a traditional German motorik beat and the riffs shifting and shaking with an upbeat, staccato shuck. "Hey Mister Sunshine" reverts to country and slight blues influences with a surprisingly Neil Diamond-esque approach. A serene acoustic intro launches "Modern People" into a two-step beat; the energy maintaining restraint while diving into an auburn hued rock jam that substitutes aggression for catchiness.

Offering up a straight-forward, poker-faced ballad "In My Mind's Eye" is a showcase for Grant's vocals with minimalist instrumentation holding down the fort around him. "Sailing Blind" relishes buoyant pop-rock elements with danceable guitar lines, while closer "Paradise Lost" is a sweeping, orchestral ballad that is cinematic in scope and positively arty in its many layers and threads of sounds. It's an epic you won't want to miss.

The Nervous Germans have scored a winner of a comeback with *From Prussia with Love*. It could use some of the harder-edge of the opening tracks later on down the line, but this band is also very adept at making a softer ballad stick with you for the long haul. This is a great album with a lot of passion in the songwriting department.

8 out of 10 stars.