



Steve Dalachinsky and The Snobs

ec(H)o - system

Bam Balam Records / September 2015

Four years after *Massive Liquidity*, Steve Dalachinsky and The Snobs are coming back with a second collaborative record called *ec(H)o - system* on Bam Balam Records. The French label from Bordeaux, run by Jean-Jacques Arnould, initiated the project in 2010, willing to release a spoken words and psychedelic rock record.

The artists

New York poet Steve Dalachinsky is active since the eighties. Inspired by William Blake, Antonin Artaud and the beat generation, he publishes poems, sometimes associated with collages. Using some of them on stage, he often performs with jazz musicians. Words become material for improvisation - both sonic (onomatopoeias, theatrical intonations) and narrative - mixing the poems and structuring them instinctively. His recordings with Matthew Shipp, William Parker, Joëlle Léandre and Dave Liebman among others show his musical talent, bringing voice and instruments conversations in a free and hypnotic spirit.

Founded near Paris, French duo The Snobs self produce experimental rock records since the beginning of the twenty-first century. Singer and producer Mad Rabbit provides song structures to multi-instrumentalist Duck Feeling's recordings. From Can's instant compositions to David Bowie and Brian Eno's synthetic textures, the band showed deep European influences with a hint of electric Miles Davis' grooves.

ec(H)o - system

ec(H)o - system takes *Massive Liquidity*'s creative process a step further. The Snobs recorded some riffs and beats for Dalachinsky to hear and perform some poems over them, while in Paris in September 2014. In one afternoon - first takes only -, he added his voice to the music ("near death in a concrete plant / language is an organism" and "the rape / particle fever") and performed a series of other poems without music. Rabbit and Feeling took the recordings in their studio to select the best performances and composed new instrumental pieces. Lots of overdubs helped shaping the pieces, accompanying the voice and interplaying. The result is a mix between the poet's spontaneity and The Snobs' psychedelic postproduction.

From onomatopoeias on "near death in a concrete plant", whirls on "the rape / particle fever", the contrasted "yo, where did you get your asian from" to the restrained "a promise is a promise", Dalachinsky shows great expressiveness - serious, angry, ecstatic, mad. His performances influence the music filled with ambitious developments. Choosing electronic sounds to compose - beats

programming, synthesizers sequences and chords - The Snobs are willing to add some noisy guitar, romantic piano, free saxophone and funky bass here and there.

With three musical suites divided in eight poetic segments, *ec(H)o - system* is the sound of mutual listening and trust between Steve Dalachinsky and The Snobs. Different from what they have done before, together or separately, the record is once again released by Bam Balam Records, with a cover art by Yuko Otomo (poet and painter) and a booklet containing all Dalachinsky's poems used for the record and a selection of his collages.

Credits



Steve Dalachinsky

voice, words, collages

Duck Feeling

guitar, bass, piano, drum machine,
synthesizers, saxophone, percussions

Mad Rabbit

effects, production, editing,
mixing, artwork

Contact and media

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The Arty Semite

'Massive Liquidity': Poetry and Art Rock

"All art constantly aspires towards the condition of music" Walter Pater famously wrote. While this statement is usually understood in terms of an author's subconscious intentions, and an artwork's ability to transcend its form and content, there are some artists who purposefully make their works musical.

This is certainly true of Steve Dalachinsky, and not merely because he is a poet-performer with great jazz chops who often collaborates with musicians. There's something intrinsically musical about his work: the language, the images, and the structures these images add up to.

His latest work is an album titled "Massive Liquidity", created with a French art-rock group called The Snobs. "Abducted", the opening track of the album, is a telling example of poetic musicality. The poem weaves its way through urban imagery, building clusters of associations, all of which are ultimately slammed down with the refrain, "it must have been abducted by aliens". Far from a sci-fi fantasy, this is a story of alienation and disassociation, a quiet paranoia. If perception of the city is an intuitive primary gesture of the narrator, the second thought is always that of its disappearance:

the light surrounding the last stinging leaves
the light it must have been abducted

and then:

the stream says something it must have been abducted
the trees the obsessional behavior converting dollars to demons
counting over and over and over again
my sleep my very sleep
it must have been abducted the wind abducted

By creating and taking away, the poet sets up a tense juxtaposition between the imagery and the negative space, freed from this very imagery by "abduction". A constant sense of movement, the fugue-like tug of forces and counter-forces, and effective use of repetition all create a sensation that is very much in line with musical experience.

The album's third track, "The Garbage Man", captures the voice of someone who talks to himself a lot, often repeating, mumbling, and who is, in many ways, what one might call "not entirely there". Dalachinsky's performance of the piece certainly intensifies that impression. Yet, his repetitions are also akin to jazz variations. His practice of slightly modifying his phrases, coming back to what was previously said, is a jazz-like stream of consciousness, and it intensifies the already theatrical impression of the piece. "Garbage Man" is a more downtrodden cousin of Walter Benjamin's flâneur, traversing the city's underside and its discarded trappings. The poem is surreal, yet the surrealism is starkly vivid. With their textured industrial sounds and numerous looping riffs, The Snobs provide effective interactions with the poet's words, much in the tradition of Sonic Youth. Dalachinsky sends his audience for a ride through a complex maze of urban and inner landscapes, and ultimately confesses:

i am stuck somewhere between being & non-being
in a book of recipes for the unknown
favorite recipes of the unwanted
favorite recipes of the non-being

Jake Marmer - *The Arty Semite*, Décembre 2011
<http://blogs.forward.com/the-arty-semite/>

Steve Dalachinsky: Weaving Poetry with Jazz



Described as "an unreal post-apocalyptic anti-opera in two acts," Massive Liquidity is a collaboration between Dalachinsky and the Snobs, a French art-rock duo comprised of brothers Mad Rabbit and Duck Feeling. Dalachinsky reads six poems backed by a fascinating musical mix, an amalgam of wide-ranging strands including trumpeter Miles Davis' free-funk period, the post-industrial group Einstürzende Neubauten, psychedelic soundings, not to mention smatterings of singer James Brown and composer Arnold Schoenberg.

Combining poetry and music is a delicate affair that requires sensitivity to both elements, and happily Massive Liquidity is a highly successful collaboration. Certainly it helps to work with a poet like Dalachinsky, who has decades of experience working with musicians, not to mention a gift for phrasing and emotive expression. In addition, the Snobs create exhilarating music that supports Dalachinsky at every turn. The music varies immensely while slipping smoothly from one idea to another, including sudden bursts of dissonance, distorted electronic flamenco chords, funky grooves that turn menacing, and wild wailing reminiscent of Polish composer Krzysztof Komeda's brilliant score for the movie *Rosemary's Baby*.

One of the best moments on the CD comes about halfway into the second act. The Snobs electrify Dalachinsky's voice, turning his words into echoey electronic syllables, then layer his voice with his voice. It's all backed by music that sounds like the Batman TV show theme song turned inside out and splintered. Eventually Dalachinsky's voice deconstructs completely, the electronic strands weaving with scorchers and screeches and metallic outbursts. It's a funky electronic songfest that has a wild beauty and powerful originality.

The classic image of poetry set to music involves an overserious poet, bongo drums, and possibly berets and sunglasses. Dalachinsky and the Snobs blast that stereotype into a million pieces, creating something fresh and exciting that's sure to appeal to enthusiasts from both the literary and musical realms.

Florence Wetzel - All About Jazz, Octobre 2011

<http://www.allaboutjazz.com/>