



NIKLAS WANDT

SOLAR MÜSLI

CD / LP / Digital

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Drummer, percussionist, producer, radio journalist and DJ, Niklas Wandt's musical path can be traced back to his childhood, signposted by jazz and psychedelia. He has presented WDR 3's Jazz & World programme for a number of years, whilst a growing interest in electronic music has seen him perform live and record albums with bands like Oracles and Stabil Elite. He has even carved a niche as a DJ in the environs of the Düsseldorf Salon des Amateurs. In 2018 Niklas Wandt and Wolf Müller released the highly acclaimed Instrumentalmusik von der Mitte der World album (on Growing Bin Records). Wandt also founded the synth-pop project Neuzzeitliche Bodenbeläge with Joshua Gottmanns.

Further solo and collaborative works followed in 2019 and 2020. Now, Niklas Wandt is about to release a quite astounding album under his own name on Bureau B. The full scope of influences gathered and absorbed over the years coalesce on Solar Müsli – all the pieces of the puzzle fall effortlessly into place. This is not formalism at work, but an exhilarating, freely flowing album which started out as an exercise in improvised percussion and developed into a multidimensional journey, at times both introverted and ebullient. Mere genre tags go out of the window. At certain moments, the listeners will find themselves stopping dead, transfixed in wonderment, before the ride resumes.

Niklas Wandt on Solar Müsli: "As for so many of us, March of last year brought an abrupt end to a hectic schedule. The previous year, I'd spent more time on the road than at home, what with touring and radio productions. The consequences of a return to domestic life were manifold: a considerably easier way of life outside of music itself, long walks of contemplation, taking in the spectacle in the skies, seeing the light fight its way through thick banks of cloud, a sunset, the grass rustling in the wind. The borders of our world seemed much further away than they really were. Deceleration, simplification, an intense thirst of the senses to focus on such fundamental phenomena once again. It was also a year full of tension and conflicts, some conscious but mostly unconscious, in a far livelier dreamworld than before – all of which can be found in the first two tracks. A "complete night" traces an arc from the beginning to the end, a communal journey, a liberating, vivacious experience – all in associative lyrical collages, naturally, which cannot readily be framed in any specific form. But the spoken passage at the end of Solar Müsli sums it up beautifully – »I have no idea where the journey began, but at least I have found the first pieces of the puzzle.«

For a long while, I believed music ideally needed to be performed live, perhaps due to my years playing improvised drums. It has to do with the feeling of sharing something which cannot be repeated, whereas a record holds everything in a fixed state. That never felt quite right to me. But what if this openness can be applied to the musical process in the studio as well? Drums and cymbals are the most intuitive of all instruments and it is possible that a percussionist's approach can also be detected in other, quite different instruments. On Erdtöne, my debut EP (Kryptox, 2020), I improvised one-takes on drums and percussion in my practice room. Solar Müsli began in just the same way; two summer days in the practice room, spontaneous, unaccompanied drum takes to a metronome, with nothing more than rough structures in my head – I left in brief wobbles and interruptions (as I did on all of the tracks except for Solar Müsli and Am Rande).

These takes lent the pieces a structure which I fleshed out with various analogue synthesizers and drum machines in my living room. The summer of last year brought another new twist to my creative process – in all my collaborations, the final arrangement and production had largely been in the hands of my respective musical partners. This time I was on my own.

Although this is a solo record, lots of friends were involved in its making. Some go way back, including certain musical connections which had almost been lost entirely. I'd spent time on the road with our old band Oracles in the company of sound engineer Dennis Juengel and violinist Hanitra Wagner. Arranger and conductor Christian Dellacher is a good pal from school days and we met up last year for the first time in a decade. Nathan Bontrager and Stefan Schönegg on cello and double bass are old compatriots from the improvised scene in Cologne. Sam Irl is, so to speak, house engineer of my band Neuzzeitliche Bodenbeläge.

Thanks to a (government) music grant, the overdubs were completed in December in Cologne, along with marimba and vibraphone tracks which were recorded in my old music school. The room had barely changed since my own lessons there from 1995 to 2009."



Tracklisting

1. Der gläserne Tag
2. Durch den Spalt
3. Lo Spettro
4. Wo es war
5. Küsnacht
6. Solar Müsli
7. Am Rande

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