

All Whats Rock

9/18/15, By J. Lafferty

URL: <http://allwhatsrock.com/blog/category/reviews>

Nervous Germans – From Prussia with Love

Some music becomes heralded and displayed for all to see; singers, songwriters, bands, artists, etc. Other music is obscured by the fickle tastes of an impatient public or else receives fine notices, but never seemingly enough to increase the music's public profile. Nervous Germans are of the latter category. They just couldn't cut through the thick pack and got lost in the smog. It's unfair and a shame for a group whose sound is so comparable to several artists working in the same timeframe. These guys were trailblazers, but never got to show it. With the release of their first recordings in 21 years (From Prussia with Love), they just might get their chance before it's too late.

You can picture Nervous Germans working right alongside huge artists of the time including The Talking Heads, English Beat, Dire Straits, Tangerine Dream and others that achieved significant notoriety. They don't have much in common with many of the aforementioned bands (Talking Heads and English Beat, perhaps... the accented vocals remind of the Beat), but they have a knack for glistening, hook-laced tunes that pack just enough meat to fill you up.

The quartet ascends the Mt. Olympus of pop rock on the opener, bringing back a doozy of a jam in the form of "Superstars (And Superheroes)." While limp mainstream rock tries to achieve these plateaus, Nervous Germans make it look easy. There is a blaring chorus, an enchanting guitar melody and enough gusto in the rhythm-work to keep things from imploding. The heavier, rockier "Liberation Day" maintains similar pop traits but flexes big, brawny rock muscles and highlights a hard hat rhythm section. It's actually a sound the band excels at and it's nice to hear them mess with more rough stuff on the bruised n' blown out "Summer Rain." They have a talent for making pop tough.

They've also got a talent for making pop, well, pop and doing what it does best. They get the toes tapping, body moving and the head shaking like on the astral chorus and fluid, unthreatening grooves of "Living in the Dream". "On Fire" takes that pop aesthetic and rams a fistful of gravelly, bluesy rock riffing around the hooks for a song that's the best of both worlds. "Happy Birthday Major Tom" is a pop song disguised as a punk rocker. It has that agile drum beat going and burgeoning bass lines along with melodic guitars painting color around the group vocals. This may very well be the album's best piece. The album's somber, sepia final quarter is also of note for boasting a lot of acoustic guitar melody, in-depth texturing and myriads of tiny sounds combining into one as heard on "Hey Mister Sunshine," "Modern People," "In my Mind's Eye," "Sailing Blind" and the bewitching album standout "Paradise Lost".

In summation, From Prussia with Love is an album that simply has to be heard to be believed. A few more aggressive moments would be welcome, because the band does them so well on record's first six tracks and that fire seems to die down a little bit later on. As it is, this is a very well-performed album meant for refined ears.

8 out of 10 stars.