



PRESS /

"When we went to the companies in France," she fumes, 'they said 'maintenant c'est la chansons Francaise', gotta sing in French, and I said I don't want to. The Government said that all people singing in French will have more opportunity to go on the radio and stuff. They don't want another invasion of Americans or English."

While Mona has dabbled on vinyl in occasional French and Spanish she sees no change in her spoken loyalties just yet. As for Spatsz, I really couldn't say. He sits in his chair smiling and nodding sagely. A charming man.

KaS returned to France two days later, to dominate and thrill. In truth, England hardly noticed their passing, but next time it will be different. Or I shall eat mon chapeau.

infusions, behind yet more adroit, knowing vocals, as though Billie Holiday has corrupted Gang Of 4.

'Tina Town' is gloomy, scary and poignant simultaneously, while 'T.M.T' is perky electro-punk, 'Devil Fellow' packs piano and growling noises into a gleaming missile fuselage from which leaks dangerous vocal fuel, and 'W. Infatuation' is another curious noir tale with its own twisted elegance. 'Taking Shape' is a jittery mover, submerged in morose madness, and 'Tape' is a bumpy oddity years ahead of a similar approach The Creatures might take, with the guitar uncoiling amidst the nervous tension, which was always a key to what made them work.



KAS PRODUCT

BYPASS

Les Disques De Soleil Et De L'Acier

With the advent of Punk the record industry's defences fell away and it was a frenzy of activity everywhere: any band incapable of releasing several singles or an album a year as well as playing a hundred gigs was sluggish bordering on atrophied. KaS Product followed up the sonic, sizzling 'Try Out' with this album and while it has its sleeker moments it still crackles with an upright agitated energy which was essential then, and is something a lot of fey layabouts could benefit from now.

'Loony Bin' is a wonderfully chaotic opener, with the usual brittle sense of dynamic attack, which actually holds back from dominating the song, knowing that Mona's vocals are mightier than any musical sword and with tiny guitar sparks fizzing it follows her delivery into left field pop territory, and when it stirs it becomes a whirlpool. 'Seldom, Often' caters well for its off-kilter vocal storm, and they wrestle the seething rhythm into shape as ideas just flood a simple premise. Often stern, Mona softens during 'Smooth Down' and very raw electronics are used as shading in a deranged, slipper song, and it should amaze you how they can make something so simple sound so different. (Next to them Soft Cell are the Bee Gees.) 'Mingled & Tangled' then has a strolling bass, with slight guitar

The extra tracks are a mish-mash, from the yelping jaunt that is 'Scape', or the strangely relaxed 'Sweet & Sour' where the vocals strength languidly, through to back to basics cavorting in 'Crash' which is more poppy-punk fare, albeit judiciously creepy, and 'Party' which is trained but tempting.

After this album they evidently released their final one, "Ego Eye", which I have never heard, and that was it. Gone but never forgotten and much treasured by collectors, these album still glower and tower over much of what passes for electronic music today, which seems more to do with hoping for commercial success through generic familiarity than having even a hint of attitude or character.

Really, you could put everyone from the EBM scene in a vast hall and their combined cool quotient would be less than one tenth of Mona and Spatsz, their musical charm requiring an even smaller figure. More recently, after the duo's unproductive comeback in the very early 90's as Extravaganza, Spatsz is rumoured to have done some minimalist electronic work, and Mona has worked with triphoppers Zend Avesta, but really we need them back as a unit, recording again, and receiving their just recognition.

Living legends.

**KAS PRODUCT
TRY OUT**
Les Disques De Soleil Et De L'Acier

Some bands simply defy time. It is quite fitting, and remarkable, that I have yet to meet anyone who once confronted by Kas Product's work hasn't either got the point immediately (during the 80's) or been awed by how far ahead this duo were, when hearing it so long after their demise. For any band handling dark electronics, especially with a basic form, this band are like the original source. Where they differed and excelled was their ability to bend the music to fit their mood, which is the one thing modern electronic music fails so spectacularly to achieve. The reason the Goth-Industrial hybrid throws up so many faceless entities happens for the same reason, and only the more human sounding singers are the one closer to the Goth scene. With EBM you find an ocean of mush for people with laborious, dull tastes. It's just the way it goes. With Kas Product you had a band so good that even the lumpen dullards of RCA swooped to sign them, and then had no idea what to do with them.

These are sparse songs which seem big beyond all expectations, with the poisoned honey voice of Mona Soyoc, and the lethal, fractured electronic stabbing of Spatsz. They impressed people to a remarkable degree during the early 80's, and despite having an album in the mid 80's in France then seemed to all but vanish, despite very, very occasional, and depressingly inconsequential, sightings ever since. In fact even their website is a testament to a total lack of activity. It's rubbish! If they came back as a duo now and still had it, the electronic scene would fall, quite rightly, at their feet.

For the record they initially had two bleepy, mild seven inches singles, like a vastly improved Ludus, before the albums, the debut "Mind" containing 'Mind', 'Seven', 'Black & Noir' and 'Doctor Insane', with the following "Take Me Tonight" having 'TMT', 'In Need' and 'Malena'. These were included on the "Black & Noir" album (and CD) issued by New Rose, along with 'Crash', 'Mezzo', 'Electric' and 'Party'. Then came this "Try Out" album, and it still sounds magnificent.



Kas



And it is partially insane. Mona drags a torch style into her opening line, 'Don't wanna hear another lie...' and then the beat canters in behind her, linear and angry. An absurdly fast and ugly set of backing vocals blunder in, but it doesn't matter. The way the synth line and vocals coalesce and bulge is melodic glue sucking you into the sound. Some of the best spindly guitar outside of Bauhaus starts 'Man Of Time' and you can see the punk energy flowing through the seedy canal of their direction, brittle pulses and scratchy sounds pulsing beneath the dark vocals and every thing is Spy Noir and you won't hear a better stark electronic song throughout 2005, so why even bother?

'No Shame' is coquettish and drowsy, 'Countdown' nips at your ankles like Blondie undergoing ninja training, 'Never Come Back' is a hungry post-punk fusion with a crazed dialogue and a wonderfully catchy curvature, 'Underground Movie' goes for the cinematic jugular, and 'So Young But So Cold' is an adrenaline cocktail. 'Digging A Hole' is more open, with the simplest beat shuffle, frisky guitar scrappy funk and deeper vocal control, 'Sober' is a disturbingly bitter tale, with amazing vocals dripping from the ceiling. The album is worth it just for that display. 'Break Loose' is slacker, with more conventional commercial charms, clanging with a potent force, and 'Pussy X' minxes the album to a close with a creepy cat conversation over a gently strolling tune.

Now the album, has been reissued in digipack form you also get 'Mind', 'Seven', 'In Need', 'Malena' and 'Doctor Insane' included. Tomorrow I review the equally amazing "Bypass" album, which later spawned a 12" single version of its track 'Loony Bin' with 'Sweet & Sour' and 'Scape', both of which are included as extras on the new CD issue, along with 'Crash' and 'Party' from the early days, which just leaves 'Mezzo' and 'Electric' to find I guess, along with a "Shoo Shoo" single featuring 'Shoo Shoo' and 'Ain't It So Good.'

<http://www.dsa-wave.com> - both CDs available at a special combined price.
<http://www.kasproduct.com>

Mick Mercer eventually plucks up enough courage to talk to KaS PRODUCT. PIC: KEVIN BERNSTEIN



KaS PRODUCT are a classic example of an amazing band who never got where they should have because their tastes so far outstripped what the musical public were ready for, or appreciative of. I was lucky enough to interview them at the time, in what was my first serious piece for Melody Maker, and so I shamefacedly reprint it here, in all its unglorious state

The shame of it! There I sat in a Bond Street public house with four dreary hours ahead of me. Hours of avoiding drunken eyes and conversation with 'liberated' businessmen of this city, my only solace being that the finishing line was now in sight. Impending implosion loomed.

KaS Product, the fearsome twosome from Nancy in France, were making their UK debut at London's Embassy Club. All those besotted hours spent listening to their album, 'Try Out' would be polarised into something sharper when they took the stage. Adrenaline coursed the veins and a thousand questions seethed the mind. Well alright, hardly a thousand, but a good half dozen or so, as I sat on the red velvet chair in the cosy hostelry.

Suddenly to my right I become aware of a French invasion as voices bubbled and strange liqueur was obtained. KaS Product were at the next table. In fact half of France seemed to be there. Cautiously peering over my litter of sparkling beer bottles I perused their gentle faces and dried up. Dead throat, toilet visit, double vodka and still no courage. They drained their glasses and left the pub. I was too nervous to speak to them.

Pathetic!

The moment they'd gone, the inevitable old man wandered over, and while he didn't actually try and sell me a treasure map he was strangely intent on demonstrating his alcoholic

capacity. Drunk? Me? Not a bit of it! Down he went and, to the annoyance of the lonely barman, I suddenly became engrossed in the Cynthia Lennon biography, therefore unable to help him shift this heavy sleeper. When the time was finally nigh, I convinced the border guards in the Embassy that my papers were not forged and gained access to the creepy coven. The racy French play was about to begin. Breath baited, educated, we all waited.

And KaS Product did the impossible. They got the Embassy crowd to listen! Usually bands playing there will experience a mass exodus when the first note is struck. Poseur-packs head straight for the downstairs bar for mirror masturbation. But tonight they stayed, tapping manicured toes, risking stains under the arms and actually calling for more. Novel to say the least.

KaS, in case you don't already know, have done in Europe for the term 'duo' what Yazoo have done here, removing the novelty tag and displaying quality and interwoven emotional facets of modern songwriting. KaS are both virtuous and exciting.

With darkness as their mentor they stalked the stage. Spatz (le crunch in all but appearance) stooped casually over his synths while Mona Soyoc took up an ambiguous position behind a plastic sheet. As the opening strains of "So Young And So Cold" rent the air she embellished the screen with white paint