



ANDREAS SPECHTL

STRATEGIES



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They say that the avant-garde moves faster than light and therefore has to travel under cover of darkness, flying blind, destination unknown. No milestones, no junctions, absolutely no route maps. Ultimately, this only becomes apparent in retrospect, when the light slowly catches up and illuminates the way.

Little of today's realpolitik-related gloom casts its shadow over "Strategies", the new album by restless avant-garde auteur Andreas Specht. On the contrary. Whereas the two preceding albums "Sleep" and "Thinking About Tomorrow (And How To Build It)" documented quietly intimate, personal journeys along the margins of Europe or Iran, casting a sceptical eye on neoteric political shifts, "Strategies" is an altogether more explosive affair, buzzing with beats, effervescent with the energy of techno, dance, a celebration of resistance.

The sense of unease engendered by global politics has given way to a new sense of self, to new strategies, an eagerness to escape into ecstasy, madness, anarchy. Right from the word go, as the first melodies take shape, as the first lines unfold, even as quiet, intimate moments from prior recordings linger on, a piano fades away, a saxophone passes by and then the beats kick in – an almost anthemic "yes, we will change the world / because we've done so / many times before" sets the euphoric tone for the rest of the album.

And oh, the voice! Following its disappearing act on the previous discs, it returns here on a wave of charming dandyism, dancing, screaming, whispering, moaning, striding unwaveringly, casually, aggressively, through techno, tribal and disco beats, scanning lyrics whose palpable, newly-gained coolness might just be a universal antidote against the world's political vacuum, contagious and infectious, nowhere more nonchalant than on The Separate, congenially paraphrasing Max Weber to hit the post-democratic politics of youthful, dynamic, neo-liberal suits firmly on the head, "drilling black holes" as it were. A voice which suddenly switches to Spanish on When We Were Young, joined by Anna Seghers as a ghostly witness of the great European Victim Myth. Confronted with one's past, one cannot take all of them on, uttering in near derisive tones "abre la puerta / está golpeando europa", recalling not only displaced spirits – less than a century ago it was the Europeans who were fleeing across the world – but also the fact that the "world wide wall" was already deployed back then. Communist refugees were denied entry to the USA not so very long ago. It was a different story in Mexico, where the album was actually written – in Santiago de Querétaro, not far from Mexico City. It was crafted mostly on a modular system and two synthesizers, without VST or digital equipment, the computer downgraded to the status of a mere multitrack recording device. The depth of these analogue sounds can clearly be detected throughout the sonically cogent album, with no hint of digital calibration. In fact, one might think these songs had been created in the course of one fantastic session by one big orchestra (out of tune here and there).

Bureau B / BB319

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LP172101 / 4015698254723

Ltd. LP172271 / 4015698601589

Tracklisting

1. Openings
2. The Separate
3. Hot Hell
4. Pretty Views
5. The Time (The Money)
6. When We Were Young
7. Structures

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The live shows will be something to look forward to, an immense, celebratory archive of resistance, moving through history, to Marseille, Mexico City, finally making a stop in Austria's Burgenland, meeting traces of sadness and hopelessness with resolutely dialectic brashness as on *The Time And The Money* where, in passing, a line is drawn through the fatalistic "money kills time" to be replaced with the defiant "time kills money / time will survive" whilst on *Structures*, it breaks out once and for all as the culmination of all the alienation and estrangement with which late modernism haunts us, whispering "it is not your fault" before a final cry of rage takes aim at all the "structures" at once.

According to Michel Foucault, the essential strategy is to face up to these "structures" with aesthetic, resistant, polymorphic life forms, supplanting identity with polyphony, not finding oneself – for fear of not discovering oneself at all – but rather consciously creating a self in opposition to oneself and these structures. Andreas Spechtl appears to have arrived at the core of his own self, all new, as if he had rewired himself amongst all the modules – without having even tried to find himself, yet discovering someone in the circuits who had almost been forgotten or would be forgotten again, someone who only existed right there. With the philosophical and musical activism on *STRATEGIES* he offers us the clearest, most readable signs pointing into the future.

THOMAS KÖCK, January 2019

