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THE LP COMPANY: WHEN IMAGINARY RECORDS AND FAKE REVIEWS CREATE REAL MUSIC

This musical and cultural project in Switzerland aims to redefine the very essence of the creative process.



For the LP Company, "Imagination is Music" - (The LP Collection website)

By Caroline Stevan
LE TEMPS/Worldcrunch

LAUSANNE - An iPhone sitting on a desk. An Ethernet cable, a window with a view on a building, and an espresso coffee capsule lying around – a sad and ordinary environment. Yet two men from Switzerland, Laurent Schlittler and Patrick Claudet, managed to build a creative world out of this. Welcome to the world of the LP Company.

"We have been sharing the same office for five years. We listen to a lot of music, and talk about music in our free time," explain the two men from Lausanne. "About a year ago, Patrick took a picture of the



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radiator with his phone. We told ourselves that it would make a nice album cover – and so we decided to turn our whole environment into album covers.”

There are pictures all over the desk: they are often close-up and colorful; it can be a detail on a jacket, a picture of the Ethernet cable or the coffee capsule. Sometimes it’s a landscape, or people taken from the pages of the hotel magazine for which the two journalists work. Laurent Schlittler and Patrick Claudet have a box filled with potential band names and another one filled with album titles. They draw the band name and album title randomly, and then [assign a photo](#) to them. Then, they take a minute to pick the titles of the vinyl’s ten tracks. Then finally, they write a review of the record they just created.

“From that moment on, the album’s existence is undeniable. We wrote the songs and imagined what the music would sound like,” explains Schlittler.

These hidden gems of underground music were first published on the Internet, and have now been gathered in a book (“[Les trésors cachés de la musique underground](#)”). The songs and reviews “are an homage to the discreet but groundbreaking albums that are redefining the global musical landscape,” says the presentation. Featuring: Klee, “the new indie prodigy from Austria” and their album: *Kill Your Darlings*. There is also Suzy Packs, one of whose tracks is described as “a bizarre cacophony that echoes the bizarre [album cover](#). A failed tribute to Luigi Russolo.” The Sophists are from Croatia but their pop music is “so British.” The musical references are very real, just like the anecdotes from [concerts](#) or from musicians, giving these unknown talents an undeniable feeling of authenticity.

“We are obviously very fond of fiction,” admits Patrick Claudet. “Aside from being journalists, Laurent is a novelist and I write movie screenplays. It’s fascinating to create magic out of such a desolate place. The office, as boring and functional as it is, has a huge potential – the very same potential we could find in a prison cell, a hospital or a cheap hotel room. And now, every piece of furniture reminds me of a band and its specific universe.”

Finding that rare gem

In order to make sure the creative process is perfect, the two 40-year-olds asked international musicians to cover their songs, which will be reviewed for a second time. Marc Devigne, Ray Wilko and Fauve all agreed to participate to the first “real album,” now available on the [LP Collection website](#). Fauve chose to cover *Between My Legs*, by O’Gonzo, an industrial [rock band](#) from Cincinnati. “Doing a cover gives me license to do a lot of things, in the end. I wanted something completely different from what I usually do, something on a whole other level,” claims the singer from Lausanne. And it certainly is a whole other level: “Industrial metal with riffs that are sharp as a circular saw,[...] influences grinded to pieces, [...] a chorus barfed into a megaphone,” according to the review. This is definitely a departure from Fauve’s distinctive soft lyricism.

The musician read the album’s reviews, listened to the groups that were referenced to, and added his own references. The result is “gloomy Black Sabbath chords and sweeping formulations,” that cannot seem to erase Fauve’s gentleness. Lausanne band Talc provided an [existing song](#) to be added to Alligator Demented’s album, and then made an alternative version for their own album. “It’s a strange phenomenon; something different came out of our song,” explained Talc band member Vincent Verselle. “We didn’t have time to compose something new but we wanted to be part of the project. It’s fascinating to see how much care is given to the whole process, which was built on something that was not real. The level of dedication impressed us.”

This innovative technique will be presented at the Palais de Tokyo [contemporary](#) art museum in Paris. “The goal is to create new stuff all the time, very quickly, without judgment or research. This method can be applied to anything from cinema to sculpture... as long as it is in a written format as well. The copy validates the original and the format creates the content,” explains Schlittler. It’s another way to mock the critics’ and the fans’ obsession with finding that ‘rare gem,’ that 1970s Portuguese vinyl or that promising, still-undiscovered Canadian musician.

Read the article in the original language.

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