

Bio information: **SCHNELLERTOLLERMEIER**

Title: **5** (Cuneiform Rune 482)

Format: CD / LP / DIGITAL

www.cuneiformrecords.com

FILE UNDER: **EXPERIMENTAL-AVANT-PSYCH-MINIMAL / POST-JAZZ / KRAUTROCK / IMPROV**

There are bands that play beautiful, engaging concerts, take a bow and go home – and then there are others that open up completely new perspectives, make time stop, and whose clear-cut approach burns itself into the audience's memory. **Schnellertollermeier** is such a band. Anyone who has seen them live will attest to the experience and, when trying to describe their music, will use words such as “stunning”, “minimalist”, “brutal”, “decisive”, “monumental”, “angry”, “controlled”, “captivating” or “radical”. Bassist **Andi Schnellmann**, guitarist **Manuel Troller** and percussionist **David Meier** consolidate these extremes, arranging them in a new, unsettled order.

Their concerts are energetic salvos that draw their dynamism from the tension between modern compositional techniques and free improvisation; the vistas they create open up new, uncharted landscapes influenced by minimal, avant-garde and electronic music, suffused with elements that reference krautrock and the directness of punk. Since their debut album *Holz*, released in 2008, they continue to surprise and captivate, leaving listeners riveted to their seats. Julian Cowley of British music magazine *Wire* suspects some form of telepathic wizardry at the root of Schnellertollermeier's intuitive interplay. They follow no fixed concept, just the flow of pure music, which seems to have a mind of its own.

Schnellertollermeier seem unconcerned with managing their egos, perfectly marketing their music or pandering to the sensitivities of their listeners, but are much more interested in eradicating hierarchies. The traditional balance of power between the drums, bass and guitar is consistently subverted. Thus, here and there, the guitar assumes the role of the drums as the melodic, razor-edged heart of the rhythm section, while the drums seem to be following an entirely different agenda. The bass merges seamlessly with adjacent frequencies, or rises to the role of polyphonic protagonist - to the point where it's hard to distinguish where one instrument ends and another begins. There are no solos, only closely knit, highly energetic arcs filled with joyful escalation. In their most ecstatic moments, the band sounds like one big drum machine made of individual human components, and accomplishes what computers cannot: taking risks, developing a rationale of its own, offering unexpected shifts.

The three musicians have followed this path on their four preceding albums. Their genre-defying compositions have put them on the map of renowned international festivals, such as the FIMAV festival for contemporary music in Victoriaville, the avant-garde club SuperDeluxe in Tokio and the Haldern Pop Festival in Germany. Wherever they are, Europe or Japan, England, China, Canada, the US, India or Russia, Schnellertollermeier are always looking for the utmost intensity.

Their new album takes their music even further – which at times unexpectedly leads to silence. On *5* there is more space, more intimacy, more time for dialogue between the music and listeners. The seven pieces, ranging from abstract dance music to electro-acoustic currents of sound, are gentler and more fragile than one would expect from Schnellertollermeier. However, the world has also changed since *X* and *Rights*, released in 2015 and 2017 respectively. By revisiting tried and tested formulas and questioning old habits, instead of running at them furiously, Schnellertollermeier offer a viable musical response to pressing issues of our time.

This is also due to the band's implicit desire to never manipulate their listeners, despite their refined musical skills, nor to offer prefabricated feelings or definitive statements, but rather to engage in conversation. On 5 listeners become the fourth band member – here listening equals collaborating.

Greater intimacy was also aimed for during the recording process: guitars and basses were fed directly into the mixing desk, without the interference of amplifiers and microphones, in order to enable as little distance as possible between the band and listeners. As a result we find ourselves transported directly to the centre of this arrangement of concentrated moments, circular movements and cathartic flashes of liberation.

At times 5 sounds as if we're listening to someone thinking. From the restrained, pulsating opener "209 Aphelion", the delicately orchestrated twitchings in "Before and After", the metaphysical shifting of spheres in "Tectonics / A Sore Point" to the majestically pensive final piece "Made of Thin": here is an arc replete with compositional cross-references, reflections and unplumbed depths. At times there are flashes of the menace encountered in previous albums, at once engaging and reflective, tender and powerful. Authoritative yet never manipulative. Schnellertollermeier pare everything down to the point where all is one.

Andi Schnellmann – electric bass, electric guitar on *Animate Become*

Manuel Troller – electric guitars

David Meier – drums & percussion

WHAT THE PRESS HAS SAID ABOUT SCHNELLERTOLLERMEIER

"The precision with which bassist Andy Schnellmann, guitarist Manuel Troller and drummer David Meier interlock and animate their equally weighted instrumental voices generates an intensity that is consistently riveting and at times overwhelming. (...) Schnellmann, Troller and Meier manage to maintain a level of clarity in their execution that suggests telepathic magic" –
The WIRE (UK) April 2018, Julian Cowley, "Rights" review

"The young guitar-led Swiss power trio Schnellertollermeier struck [Kandace] Springs' mellow afterglow like electrocution. An airline cockup meant the loss of their hi-tech hardware, but despite this, they ripped into frenetically strummed avant-rock assaults, minimally pinging melodic loops over chattering rimshots, threateningly crackling electronics and even Stravinsky (in a piece quite properly named Massacre du Printemps) in a set of noisily virtuosic, spectacularly undaunted fury." –
The GUARDIAN (UK) May 2017, John Fordham, Cheltenham Jazz Festival review

"{...} here are a dozen albums released in 2015 that I savored repeatedly for their musicality, clarity of statement and courage. {...} "X" by Schnellertollermeier (Cuneiform) marries brutality to avant-garde rock and jazz. A classic power trio from Switzerland, the band plays with punk fury and dazzling technical dexterity to create booming, bone-rattling music that stalks, confronts and astonishes. On occasion, the trio steps back and offers wavy, vaguely threatening interludes, but soon the mighty force returns." –
The WALL STREET JOURNAL (USA) December 2015, Jim Fusilli, "X" review