

Bittles' Magazine

Like any right-minded music lover I fell a little bit in love with *Mod*, the debut album by **Jonsson/Alter** upon its release in the cold autumn months of last year. It was the type of record that drifted into your consciousness and resided there unobserved until you came to realise how completely empty your life would be without it. So when news emerged of a follow-up I have to admit that I punched the air in delight (for me as a typical working-class male that is one huge display of emotion. Seriously!). By **JOHN BITTLES**



The problem with following up an album that was so cherished and adored is that it is notoriously difficult to satisfy us reviewers/fans who maintain exceedingly high expectations for whatever may come next. We are a fickle and testing breed who will be unbelievably upset should the next record not sound similar to the first. Yet, we will be equally dismissive should the new album not push the originals sound further since, as we all know, in the world of house music, it is a crime for a producer to musically stand still.

The good news is that *2* is every bit as marvellous as *Mod*! The great news is that in terms of production values and dancefloor appeal it is even better! The album positively brims with melody and features some of the cleanest, purest production I've heard all year. It is hard to pick highlights since the overall standard is pretty darn high, yet *Lyftet* soars gloriously with beautiful synths from heaven, *Brevet Hem* is a heads down disco delight, while lead single *Ein Melodi* is quite simply sublime.

The Berlin-based duo who are made up of **Henrik Jonsson** and **Joel Alter** bonded after discovering a mutual love of old synths and have been releasing melodramatic house and glistening techno together ever since. Not much is known about the band so when offered the chance to throw some quick-fire questions their way I literally leapt at the chance. And you can read the results below!



For those unfortunate people out there who haven't heard your music yet, can you tell us a little bit about who you are and what you do?

We are two artist from the Swedish west-coast. Working with sound and experimenting with melodies trying to make the very best house music that we can do.

Your previous album *Mod* is a stunning listen and a real favourite of mine. How does 2 compare to your debut?

Thank you! More defined and balanced.

What made you decide that the time was right to record a follow-up to *Mod*?

We never really stopped working and after a while it felt natural to start thinking in terms of a new album. There was still a lot to explore musically. And we also did grow as a band.

For me the production on 2 is a lot richer and fuller than on your debut. Do you agree? If so, were there any changes in the production process that may have effected this?

We agree. The first album was recorded much faster and in a bedroom. This time we made it slower and let ourselves go deeper into every sound and detail.

The record is a gorgeously deep affair which makes it perfect both for clubs and home listening. Was there a plan to strike a balance between the two styles?

Yes.

Lyftet seems to have subtle rave influences! What do you feel about how the return of rave is being hyped as the next big thing?

Rave is part of our history, we were out in the woods as kids. At that time dance music was allowed to sound in many different ways under the same roof. We love that. *Lyftet* is a song about friends having a good time.

You work with **Kazumi** who provides some pretty lush vocals for the track *Brevet Hem*. How did you find working together with a vocalist?

After recording this song we felt that it demanded a beautiful vocal. We know **Kazumi** from earlier but never worked together before. She lives nearby and we did one perfect session. The session lasted for the time we finished a bottle of prosecco.

Do you think you will be working with more vocals in the future?

Yes. Hopefully.

What's your favourite song on the album?

There are a few. But for us the whole is the importance. Every song has its moment.

Are you looking forward to performing these new songs live?

Yes. We just performed our first live with the new material in Stockholm.

It felt very natural and the response was great.

Do you have any plans to play in Germany (or London) anytime soon?

We are currently booking our album tour. Looking forward to play all over.

What was your first introduction to house/electronic music?

Henrik used to listen to his Mom's **Kraftwerk** and **Brian Eno** records as a kid.

Joel was given a tape of **Jean Michel Jarre** from a friend of his parents.

It was the 80s, it was great.

How did you first meet? And what made you decide to team up?

We first met in Gothenburg. Later we both moved to Berlin and became neighbours.

What are the best and worst things about working as a duo?

One good thing is that we don't let ourselves get stuck [in] a bad idea too long. We both have a veto that we use a lot. We are not in the business of creating Frankenstein's.

We are both emotionally driven human beings, finding the right time and moment to work free from stress can be hard sometimes...

Do you think that being based in Berlin has in any way affected the **Jonsson/Alter** sound?

No. We have our roots in our record collections and memories. We are both seeking something and always looking ahead towards the horizon.

In England when people discuss clubbing in Berlin the conversation tends to be dominated by the club *Berghain*. Where else should discerning clubbers check out on a visit to Berlin?

If you enjoy electronic music and travel to Berlin, it's very difficult to not have a good time. Explore, enjoy and find your paradise!

Finally, what does the future hold for you both?

Alongside our Jonsson & Alter work we both have solo releases scheduled for next year. Fun never ends, this is our life.

And if that wasn't enough to whet your appetite then head over to their label *Kontra's* [Soundcloud page](#) to hear a preview of the album. The record should also be available for purchase right about now! Enjoy!

| JOHN BITTLES