

## NO BEATUY WITHOUT DANGER

The bold history that has been written by Einstürzende Neubauten over the last 27 years now has a dramatic new chapter with the release of their new album "Alles wieder offen" ("All open again").

Einstürzende Neubauten's music has always created its own cosmos, but with "Alles wieder offen" this cosmos is wider than ever before. And the stars within it are shining brighter.

Encouraged possibly by the title of the CD "Silence is sexy" of 2000, the word was that Einstürzende Neubauten have become calmer, quieter even. "Alles wieder offen" blows this assumption out of the water.

It is in every aspect an urgent and compelling album. The reason for this is that the instruments do not, as they used to, exhaust themselves by a consumptive struggle against each other, but instead unleash a previously unknown fusion of conventional as well as Einstürzende Neubauten-typical instruments. Especially noticeable are the vibraphone, the hammond-organ and the clever string sections.

After almost three decades the musicians here seem to be in a state of euphoria encouraged by their own seemingly endless possibilities.

It is the little details that first draw the attention: Jochen Arbeit's whizzing guitar on "Unvollständigkeit", which seems to anticipate the outburst that follows: a rain of falling little aluminium sticks; Rudolph Moser's nervous and yet rounded flowing rhythm which is electronically broken up by Alexander Hacke, and which drives "Weilweilweil" ahead; the combination of the uplifting organ and the almost tender Feedback which rends open the sky over "Nagorny Karabach".....

The growing intensity of the individual elements already begins in "Die Wellen", the grand opening piece. At that moment when Blixa sings: "And from the highest waves, from breaking spume, a thousand voices break away", the strings join in, and all of a sudden 1000 voices become audible. Equally in the final "Ich warte", a piece that is carried by Alexander Hacke's hypnotic biguela: here the right kind of music is employed, one that "note for note eludes rigidity to open doors gates sluices until in a cloudburst – reveille fanfare – unexpected (...) leaps out in ambush." As these lyrics demand the new album delivers.

"Alles wieder offen" is possibly Einstürzende Neubauten's most complete album. One of the reasons for this is that it seems to be an album that's really conscious of the band's history: on the one hand on a textual level: "Unvollständigkeit" is a sister piece to both "DNS/Wasserturm" (1983) as well as "Redukt" (of "Silence is sexy", 2000); "Nagorny Karabach" refers to "Armenia" (1983), which is the sun of the EN-cosmos; "Von Wegen" quotes in a touching moment both the first single and a line of the song "Sehnsucht" of the first album "Kollaps" (1981).

Moreover there are points of contact and references on a musical level: "Von Wegen" mirrors the structure of "Zerstörte Zelle" (1987), and "Susej" has a rhythm guitar as a basis, which Blixa Bargeld recorded in a flood cellar of the Hafenklangstudio in Hamburg in the early 80ies. Here the band communicates directly with their past, the Blixa of today with Blixa of

yesterday: "On the lips the same questions still, about the first things, the last days. (...) your doings alone are what remain of me beneath layers, years, annual rings it is yet still engraved." It becomes clear why Bargeld calls the lyric-heavy album a deeply personal one. Altogether the album sometimes seems like a full grown continuation of "Halber Mensch" or "Fünf auf der nach oben offenen Richterskala". In the meantime many layers have deposited themselves around the nucleus Einstürzende Neubauten, but in the chorus of the piece "Weilweilweil" that goes: "Don't take the advice of those who've long since frittered their winter fat of opportunities", the energy, the rejection and the sheer willpower of the early days is more than present.

"Alles wieder offen" presents itself as the emotionally most affecting and the intellectually most stimulating album of the Einstürzende Neubauten. For the wider public 2004's "Perpetuum Mobile" was the band's last general release. However in the virtual world, beyond conventional mechanisms of production and marketing, more than 10 regular albums have been conceived, recorded and sold in the time between "Perpetuum Mobile" and "Alles wieder offen".

There is the "Musterhaus"-series consisting of 8 parts, where the EN followed a path that wouldn't have been possible to pursue so consequently within the limits of a more conventional line-up of songs.

One CD contains piano compositions of the individual members, another one translates Einstürzende Neubauten-originals into orchestra arrangements, a third one is a journey back to the beginnings, represented by collages of band recordings of the very first sound investigations of the band. Other CDs of the series dedicate themselves either to the human voice or to the musical possibilities of a ritualised wine-consumption. The "Musterhaus"-series very quickly became collector's items, due to not only the elaborate packaging and extremely limited edition of copies but also to their high quality.

The most astonishing result of the experimental approach to the recording process is, apart from the "Musterhaus"-CDs, the "Jewels". These are compositions whose creation often only took a day and whose lyrics are based on dreams. The songs were guided by a system of cards: an instruction was written on each card, sometimes it was a clear message ("five keys", "short", "cymbal"), other times one of a more cryptic nature ("cut off underneath", "totalitarian", "fruit"). Each member of EN drew several cards, interpreted their instructions and translated them into music.

This process with its inherent immeasurableness and unpredictability was employed not only in the studio but also on stage: It is a procedure that was especially developed to undermine rigid work mechanisms and was used by the band also in front of an audience. Improvising of this kind naturally always does contain the possibility of failure, but as the EN already proclaimed on their album "Fünf auf der nach oben offenen Richterskala" of 1987: "Keine Schönheit ohne Gefahr" ("No Beauty without Danger"). "Alles wieder offen" certainly lives up to this proclamation.

The CDs were distributed via the internet, but as important as they were for the development of the new material, they are still only a by-product of the revolutionary concept of the web-performance neubauten.org. "Alles wieder offen" is released without any kind of involvement of a record label. The

recordings were financed by so-called “supporters” who gave money via the home page [www.neubauten.org](http://www.neubauten.org) and who in return will receive the special supporter edition of the album (optionally with or without the accompanying DVD). Only through this subscription model could the production happen – without the supporters “Alles wieder offen” would not exist. But this support isn’t just a monetary one: the supporters form the audience in front of which the songs were being developed. The supporters also formed a choir for the “Musterhaus”-piece, they had discussions with the band and demanded the development of already discarded ideas. Even this text was written by a supporter.

The album is thus a rejection of all conventional market demands and structures. It is also this attitude that the title “Alles wieder offen” describes.

There isn’t much of the musical sensationalism of the beginnings of the Einstürzende Neubauten in “Alles wieder offen”. However it still lives up to the experimental reputation of the band. Where the publishing structure and the compositional approach are concerned the album is even more uncompromising than many of the past recordings of the band.

The work with the system of cards (called: Dave) avoids dead-end-roads, and the “Musterhaus” series contributed to the album in their own right – the sound poem which is recited by N.U.Unruh in “Let’s do it a Da Da” was made for the voice-CD of the series; the intro to “Susej” was taken from the wine consumption. “Die Wellen” originally existed as a piano composition on the piano-CD of the “Musterhaus” series. Einstürzende Neubauten’s use of their instruments has matured: rarely was their music more melodic, rarely did the bass of Alexander Hacke sound warmer, rarely was the guitar of Jochen Arbeit more graceful, rarely the metal of Rudolf Moser and the percussion of N.U.Unruh more diverse, rarely was the voice of Blixa Bargeld more variable.

But this is not the only aspect in which Einstürzende Neubauten have matured. Working outside normal record business market mechanisms, Einstürzende Neubauten have recorded a CD during an incredible 200 days in their own studio, whose subject is relocation, change, loss, vanitas or generally the passing of time, and which can still be called entertainment art.

The album is a long glance back, a kind of self-assurance, and it reaches a point where “All (is) open again”. This might be positive, it might perhaps be frightening, but it is above all one thing: brave.

The album is released in October 2007 in the usual elaborate packaging in Digipak with a multicoloured booklet, which contains all the lyrics in both German and English. A Europe wide tour is planned for the spring of 2008. For them the road lies open.

Thomas Kolitsch, July 2007