



DEUX FILLES

Space & Time

LTM / LES DISQUES DU CRÉPUSCULE

Picking up where they left off for a third outing, two guys pretend to be two girls all over again

The transformation of Simon Fisher Turner from youthful pop star to an award-winning soundtrack composer, via a stint as Derek Jarman's go-to composer, is one of music's most intriguing stories, full of chance encounters and collaborations. Turner's work with electronics dates back to the tail end of his nascent pop career, when he began fiddling around with a Revox tape machine, arriving more or less at the same time as he began playing around with his own identity, adopting names like the King Of Luxembourg to separate himself from his earlier path.

In a career filled with all sorts of partnerships, from Terre Thaemlitz to Factory Floor, one of the most enduring Turner projects was Deux Filles, a band that saw Turner and former The The member and esteemed producer Colin Lloyd-Tucker create a whole storyline and mythology and assuming female identities. The product of a opportunistic meeting in a watering hole while both were visiting the Cherry Red label

HQ, Deux Filles was a beautifully odd proposition. As Gemini Forque (Lloyd-Tucker) and Claudine Coule (Turner), the pair developed a whole narrative around these "characters", one involving disappearances and suspenseful intrigue, while also allowing them to don dresses and confuse audiences without ever once revealing who was really behind the project.

Deux Filles released two albums at the start of the 1980s, 'Silence & Wisdom' (1982) and 'Double Happiness' (1983) and the pair would eventually come clean about who they really were. It's therefore perhaps of some surprise that, despite the cheeky fraud of their backstory being exposed as a deception, they would need to use the moniker for 'Space & Time', a long-awaited third album.

Very much picking up where they left off, 'Space & Time' is an expansive and frequently arresting collection of 24 discrete and varied pieces taking in all sorts of sounds from around the globe. Aside from audience manipulation, one of the most interesting things about Deux Filles was the sheer breadth of Lloyd-Tucker and Turner's musical scope, from experimental pop to soundscapes, both collaborators being capable of picking up more or less any instrument and making it work in a brave and unexpected context.

That same spirit of unbridled experimentation runs through the short segments of 'Space & Time', with tracks ranging from ambient texture ('Horsebox Parade'), distorted saw-wave buzz ('Mouth Popsicle Explosion'), maudlin Latin guitar-laced with subtle electronic sequences ('Soft Crushed Love') to gospel reverence ('Happy Clappy') to menacing pseudo-classical structures forced into new, almost Cageian shapes by aggressive processing and manipulation ('Twinblade Sofa Cull'). Though occasionally playful, somewhat like the metaphorical journey taken by Messrs Bill Drummond and Jimmy Cauty

on KLF's 'Chill Out', there is a vaguely sombre tone to many of the pieces here, with tracks like 'Treasure Trove Of Memories', with its pretty synth filigrees, carrying a delicate, fragile and mournful quality that is sweetly evocative.

Projects covering so much musicological ground can often appear peripatetic and elusive, and 'Space & Time' is most definitely both of those. It's almost as if, after sloughing off the mask of assumed identity, Lloyd-Tucker and Turner went all-out and loaded these vignettes with even greater levels of musical intrigue and impenetrable mystique. In doing so, 'Space & Time' acts as a wonderfully quirky next chapter in the weird story of Claudine and Gemini.

MAT SMITH





VARIOUS ARTISTS

Still in a Dream:
A Story of Shoegaze 1988-1995
CHERRY RED

Gotta spare seven hours? Boxset propels you back to the genre that fashion forsook

Of all the strains of vintage indie, shoegaze rarely finds itself basking in the warm glow of reappraisal, but the recent return of both Ride and Lush makes this bumper five-disc set seem rather timely.

Budding shoegazers must've found it hard to shake the feeling that the odds were always stacked against them, being named after their propensity of staring awkwardly at their own Doc Martens on stage. Alternative monikers were equally damning: The Scene that Celebrates Itself is a tag that could easily be levelled at most (anyone remember Romo?) and Dream Pop feels woefully inaccurate, since little of the genre's output has the shiny, accessible veneer we associate with the word "pop". Even shoegaze's champions did little to help to cause, with their talk of "sonic cathedrals" and the rampant over-use of the word "ethereal".

And so it falls to Cherry Red to exhume shoegaze's chequered cadaver with this

exhaustive 87-track collection, complete with a 12,000-word booklet. Not all the usual suspects are present and correct: My Bloody Valentine are conspicuously absent, but Moose, Pale Saints, Jesus & Mary Chain, Slowdive and of course the Cocteau Twins are all on board. The 4AD contingent is surprisingly light here, but the real joy is suddenly alighting on names you'd long consigned to your mental recycle bin: Catherine Wheel, Dr Phibes And The House of Wax Equations, The Honey Smugglers... it's like brushing the cobwebs off a copy of NME circa 1991 or tuning into a lost episode of Gary Crowley's GLR radio show. Many of these prove their inherent forgettability on a fresh listen, but lost gems include Kitchens Of Distinction and Ultra Vivid Scene.

Cherry Red deploys a fairly loose definition of the term, meaning there's a good number of American bands represented too. Heartening to see the likes of Boston's Galaxie 500 alongside Mercury Rev and Flaming Lips, which brings home the point that, contrary to the oft-trotted out Britpop rubric, the cultural gap between the oceans was narrower in certain quarters. By the start of the 90s, the barriers between "traditional indie" and the dance/electronic genres were already being broken down. shoegaze was a key part of this revolution. Plenty of noiseniks were donning the Joe Bloggs' paisley-

bottomed jeans of the indie dance scene, turning to the likes of Andrew "Andy" Weatherall to give them a snare shuffle and funky wah-wah-flavoured rebirth.

Bands grew up incredibly quickly at the time. Consider the cavernous gap between Primal Scream's 1987 'Sonic Flower Groove' and 1991's 'Screamadelica' or the Shamen's 1988 'Jesus Loves Amerika' and 'Progen' in 1990). And in certain cases artists evolved from the protean shoegaze sound of guitar distortion and muddy vocals, towards something more melodic, as you can hear with the Boo Radleys' 'Kaleidoscope' on the album. In a sense, shoegaze encapsulates everything you might love and hate about the preciousness of "indie" simultaneously. It was sonically challenging and uncompromising as well as being unashamedly arty. But it was also elitist, blinkered and overly reverent towards a bygone era of late-60s psych and garage.

They were the worst of times, they were the best of times. But you can't deny they had some blisteringly blissful tunes. For ardent proof that we're not just looking back at it all through cider 'n' black-tinted spectacles, just drench yourself in Spacemen 3's 'Hypnotise' or Curve's 'Ten Little Girls' and let the dreams snap you out of your wakeful fog.

JOOLS STONE

