



IRASCIBLE MUSIC



Liima (DEN/FIN)

Album: 1982

Label: City Slang

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Web: liima.net

EPK: irascible.ch/releases/liima/1982

LIIMA was born as much of breaking old habits as building new habits, and their second album, *1982* (co-produced with Grizzly Bear's Chris Taylor), provides a masterclass in pushing beyond one's established comfort zones. Starting with the twilight, staccato drama of the title track and ending with the hypnotic simplicity of *My Mind Is Yours*, it showcases the dark tension of *David Copperfield* and the slowly changing soundscapes of *People Like You*, a response to Joy Division's *Atmosphere*, initially inspired by jamming along with the Manchester band's classic single. There's also *Life Is Dangerous*, a 10cc-esque tale of a rich white man for whom nothing is exciting any more, and *2-Hearted*, in which Clausen's Autotune dissolves halfway through, like fog clearing. That's not to mention *Kirby's Dream Land* – its title inspired by the comparable atmosphere of an early 90s Game Boy game, and which, startlingly, samples the sounds of the urinals in the Copenhagen hotel in which it was written – and the peculiarly futuristic, but simultaneously intimate, sounds of *Jonathan I Can't Tell You*, whose payoff line is unusually memorable.

Few things better illustrate LIIMA's urge to shake things up than the tour the band undertook ten months after the release of their debut album. It's hardly unusual for bands to test material in public before they enter the studio, and LIIMA had done exactly that to small crowds at the end of the four week-long residencies which delivered 2016's *ii*. But this time, having put on similar shows at the end of a further four residencies, they arranged to go one step further: they decided, before beginning recording, to take the show on the road. These, though, were the snow-covered roads of the northernmost realms of Norway, where the sun never rises in winter. Furthermore, if the crowds were again small, this time it was because their audience was made up of school children. "It felt oddly familiar, waking up early on Monday morning to go to school," smiles Tatu Rönkkö, "but to perform, not study, in front of 100 sleepy teenagers." Casper Clausen, his bandmate, interrupts him. "It wasn't so good for the self-esteem," he laughs, "but it put us in a good spot for entering the studio a couple of days later..."

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LIIMA's tradition of abandoning familiar routines began before they were even a band. It was 2013 when Clausen, Rasmus and Mads Brauer first met Rönkkö, who, within a couple of years, would prove the catalyst behind its formation. The three Danes – who remain the key components of Efterklang – were promoting the release of their fourth album, *Piramida*, and their search for a new touring drummer brought them face to face with the Finn. “He killed it!” Clausen grins. “He wasn’t only playing the sickest beats, but he’d look up and smile at you, and just keep doing his thing.” Rönkkö performed with Efterklang until February 2014, when they played a show, alongside a symphony orchestra and another ten or so musicians, billed – confusingly, they admit – as *The Last Concert*. “It wasn’t our final show,” Brauer confirms, “and we knew it. We just needed a change.” As if to prove this, they reunited in July to play a Finnish festival, this time under the name Efterklang & Tatu Rönkkö. They spent the preceding week in a small cottage nearby, where they sought to create an entirely new repertoire. Though they didn’t know it at the time, this residency would prove the occasion for the birth of LIIMA.

“We made music from when we woke up to when we went to bed,” Stolberg says. “None of us had ever done anything like that. This was just four guys throwing ideas at each other, jamming it out, recording things and listening back. Everything was written collectively together. There was this energy which was just insane. We immediately decided, ‘This should be a band!’” Of course, there already *was* a band, but this new venture was intuitive, guided by the gut, not the head. “It felt liberating,” Clausen elaborates. “With Efterklang, we’d work inside a computer, whereas now we never look at a screen.” That said, Brauer was, by his own admission, “getting deeper into some of the more nerdy sides of making music. Through software like MaxMSP and Supercollider,” he explains, “I’ve explored the maths behind the music. I’m developing this ‘Fibonacci Clock’, where each note varies by a ratio of the Fibonacci Sequence. This way, the tempo isn’t static, and the feel of the groove keeps developing.”

Like its predecessor, *1982* was written during four residencies, beginning in January, 2016 – before *ii* was even released – at The London Edition, where they worked in a club in the hotel’s basement, sometimes watched by small crowds, much as PJ Harvey was during the making of *The Hope Six Demolition Project* at London’s Somerset House. They reassembled at another hotel in Copenhagen before embarking upon tours of North America, South America, and Europe. Even then, they’d reconvene between trips to continue work, first in the less glamorous surroundings of a music conservatory in Viseu, Portugal, in July 2016, then, finally, in August, at Berlin’s Michelberger Hotel. By the time they gathered in Mankku Studios in Porvoo – again in the Finnish countryside – LIIMA were more than ready to begin recording with Grizzly Bear’s Chris Taylor as co-producer. Their North Norwegian school trip had ended only two days earlier.

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1982 finds LIIMA - musically and lyrically – exploring themes that shaped their youth while looking forward to a future which, they acknowledge, is as uncertain as it ever might have been, and in which we all struggle to find our identity. This latter theme, of course, is one which has always been an issue for LIIMA, especially with Efterklang confirmed as an ongoing concern, but here the musicians stake their claim firmly to both their new name and their new sound. For a band originally founded upon enthusiastic acts of spontaneity, *1982* represents a huge, sophisticated leap forward. The decision to form LIIMA may have been as bold and radical as their new sound, but the consequences speak for themselves.

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