

TERESA ROTSCHOPF

Messiah

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"I am open. My Flesh is red. You can see through me. My skin is gone."

It's been a while in the making, but "all's well that ends well": the long-awaited »Messiah« has arrived, in the shape of Vienna-based musician Teresa Rotschopf's debut album. Fans of fondly-remembered electro clasher Bunny Lake, whose voice and face she used to be, might expect more neon-colored pop and dance songs, but the former Suzy On The Rocks has opted for an entirely new approach for her solo project: intense, melancholia-drenched songs that embrace listeners and pull them into their deeply personal worlds where they keep resonating.

»Messiah« is indeed an unusually intimate album that grants listeners a glimpse into profound emotional worlds and whose bittersweet ballads relate unvarnished tales of love and life, of emotional deception and release. The songs are given wing by Rotschopf's distinctive voice: alternately theatrical and fragile, it oscillates between a velvety croon and a rough expressiveness, occasionally conjuring up echoes of both Patti Smith's raw honesty and Nico's poisonous majesty. Muted minor modes and moods predominate, while the songs themselves encompass various styles from trip hop, soul, r&b and electro to romanticist singer/songwriting, bathed in a mystical aura inspired by Gregorian sacral chants. Contributions by no less than 18 guest musicians give the album a wide musical scope in which drum samples alternate with percussion, synthesizers with pianos, saxophones and guitars with laptop electronics. It's all the more impressive just how organic and homogeneous the album sounds as a whole. Produced by Viennese sound wizard Patrick Pulsinger, »Messiah« presents artfully arranged expressive downtempo songs – laconic chants from the nocturnal side of pop, dark soul music with the intensity of an intimate confession.

Underneath The Surface

The grass is parting. There's something that pushes up from deep underneath, unstoppably towards the surface, ready to burst into the light: *Messiah* is the long-awaited first solo album by Austrian musician *extraordinaire* Teresa Rotschopf. The cover image celebrates an all-embracing (re)birth — life as metaphysical experience. *Love, I want to be taken ...* and that's just the start. Yet this song is so much more than a mere love song: *Love* embraces us akin to a religious invocation. A sound that pierces our hearts.

Anyone undertaking a voyage with emotions so all-encompassing had better know what they do. And indeed Rotschopf, formerly the successful face and voice of cult electro pop band *Bunny Lake*, has taken her time for her new project. Not to be idle, mind you — in addition to reinventing herself as an artist and writing the album, she also gave birth to two children and somehow managed to find enough time to feature in Mirjam Ungers much-lauded documentation on female singers *Oh yeah, She performs*. "You gotta stick with it — at least when you're serious about it", she smiles, with a glint of steel in her eyes.

And stick with it she did, as the nine new titles prove. Completely self-written, lyrics and all, these are no slick dancefloor tracks but rather nine occasions of tilting inwards and coming up again to seize and tell about her life.

"Only what comes from deep within one's personality can resonate with other people", Rotschopf is convinced. And this is what she went for in the studio, in close collaboration with famed producer Patrick Pulsinger and no less than 18 guest musicians.

Show me where your soul is born / that's where I want to go ... What is the title track *Messiah* about? Rotschopf, born in a bucolic village in Salzbug's Lungau, was both influenced and inspired by the church music and polyphonic choirs she was exposed to as a child when she was a member of a singing parish youth group and an epiphany singer, elements of which can still be heard in the spiritual devotion she brings to her vocals. She appreciates artists such as Patti Smith, who tend to be blithely indifferent towards their own importance – "It's never about glory and always about experience", she insists. A former sociology student and model, Rotschopf spent half a year in New York, where her first solo concert took place. "I've brought back the energy and drive that NY is famous for". However, these days she prefers life in Vienna, surrounded by the Austrian capital's very different musical history.

Transcendence is a basic human requirement — a thesis even atheists tend to concur with. And *Messiah* is suffused with transcendence and soaring flights of musical imagination: organs meet with drum machines, choirs with synthesizers, kettle drums with slide guitars. Together with a member of the Vienna Symphony Orchestra, Rotschopf and Pulsinger recorded some instruments live at the legendary Konzerthaus. A haunting mix of lush chords and electronic siren songs, the album is a constant invitation to explore musical frontiers — and transcend them.

Leaving Superficiality / Not always voluntarily ... maybe we have been remiss in mapping the coordinates beneath the surfaces. But then that's why this album exists, for here is someone who charts them with her voice and soul.

Discography:

Bunny Lake, *The Late Night Tapes* (Angelika Köhlermann/Monkey Music, 2006)

Bunny Lake, *The Church of Bunny Lake* (Klein Records, 2007)

Bunny Lake, *The Beautiful Fall* (Universal Music, 2010)

Bunny Lake, *The Sound of Sehnsucht* (Universal Music, 2012)

Teresa Rotschopf, *Messiah* (comfortzone cz029, 2018)

Winner Amadeus Austrian Music Award 2010