

## INTERVIEW TO MINUIT MACHINE

Today we talk with **Minuit Machine**, french duo composed by **Amandine Stioui** and **Hélène De Thoury**. Hélène had already been active with **Phosphor** project and now with **Hante**. too. After having reviewed their album **Live & destroy** released by **Desire records**, we decide to talk with them because they have rapidly built a solid fanbase and, actually, they're one of the most talked about and interesting *synthwave* projects. Let's directly talk with them!

1) Tell our readers about who Minuit Machine are, how and when this project was born. Is your name to be intended as a particular french expression or what else? How do we have to interpret it? Talk about your previous projects. I only know that Hélène had registered an album as Phosphor.

H - Minuit Machine was born in June 2013 while touring with my previous band Phosphor. I just moved back in Paris and I had the time to start a new project in my own city. So I started to compose a few songs during this summer and put an ad online to find a singer at the end of August. About the name, I was looking for a good association of two french words that would describe the sound of the project. It came suddenly one summer night, «Minuit» means «Midnight» and «Machine» is the same word in both french and english languages.

A - I was looking for a new music project, so I went to website specialized in ads for musicians and found Hélène's ad, along with 2 demos. I found her sounds very interesting and special, and I knew it would be a perfect fit for me! I wrote her an email, sent her the vocal line and lyrics of Agoraphobia, and she «hired» me :). Before Minuit Machine, I had 3 projects, more «alternative /electro rock».

2) Let's talk about your album Live & destroy. What kind of sensations it want to transmit to the listener? What is referring the album title to?

A - Well, Live & Destroy's main themes are life, love and self destruction. We wanted to move people with melodies and lyrics that express both the darkness everybody feels sometimes, and hope. I believe Live & Destroy is dramatic and deep, but also light and full of life. Our point was to create an ambivalence.

3) During the making of this album (as well as in your previous projects), what are and what have been your musical influences?

H - 80's music, Depeche Mode, The Human League, Tears for Fears... But also lots of artists from the new synth scene, Xeno & Oaklander, The Frozen Autumn, Linea Aspera, Gold Zebra, H ø r d... I used to listen to a lot of different music styles when I was younger from Indie Rock to Industrial Metal, so I imagine that it is the mix of all those steps in music tastes that makes our sound today...

A - I don't come from the cold/dark wave scene, even though I've always listened to 80's artists such as Depeche Mode, The Cure and Joy Division, which clearly inspired these new bands. My music tastes vary a lot according to the mood I'm in, but basically, my main influences are: Depeche Mode, The Cure, Erasure, Radiohead, lamX, Pulp and The Velvet Underground.

4) I've sometimes been to Paris and, thinking about that experience, i've found that your music can be "read" as cinematic in some way. Does your sound take inspiration, in any way, from the primary role had by the cinema and, in general, by your country art important heritage?

A - I'm a big fan of cinema (mostly independent movies). I believe that when I compose a vocal line and write the lyrics, I'm inspired by my personal experiences which include the movies I've watched, mostly those I'll always remember such as Lars Von Trier's, Gus Van Sant's, Sophia Coppola's and Larry Clark's. And of course, the fact that I live in Paris probably has an impact on the way I see/feel things, and therefore on the way I compose.

H - Yes, I think that the cinema is one of our biggest inspiration. I feel really touched by the fact you can feel that! Actually, the first songs I ever composed sounded like movies soundtracks. We try to tell stories with our music, create a world, an atmosphere. So yes, it's a very cinematic approach in a way. I don't know how Paris can influence our music but it does, obviously, since it's a part of us and our culture. It's a city where your emotions are multiplied, because of the beauty of the architecture but also because of the coldness of people sometimes.

5) In the last times, we hear about a lot of music definitions: coldwave, minimal wave, minimal synth... try to clear this confused ideas to us and to our readers. Going outside strict and oppressing genres and definitions, how would you define your music?

A - I don't really like labels in general, mostly because people tend to put you in music genre and it's hard to get out of this genre. However, if I had to define Minuit Machine's music, I would say it's minimal/synth pop, but it can change because our goal is to surprise people who listen to our music :).

H - It's really hard to define our style. Particularly because of all these different genres around synth music. Some songs are more « darkwave », other ones more « minimal », or « electro » or even « synthpop »... Our sound is a mix between all those genres I presume. But I like to call it « synthwave » because it's simpler and maybe more open.

6) Often you're accosted to other acts as Ash code, Keluar, Linea aspera... does a sort of scene exist then? If so, what kind of scene is and what want to express?

A - Yes, there is a real scene, influenced by the 80's new wave. I believe we're all trying to create new sounds, very original, but without betraying this great 80's legacy.

H - For me, it's a new alternative scene that, like Amandine says, is influenced by the 80's new wave but also, is the evolution of the gothic scene from the 90's and 00's. It's hard to explain but I feel like people need to come back to a sound more accessible. And on the other side, pop music are getting darker. And we're here in the middle, not dark enough for some and not mainstream enough for others. But we have our own scene and followers.

7) One of your songs, Sabotage, has been featured on the Wavecore III compilation released by Anywave records. It seems to me that something huge is growing in France. What it's about and why specifically in your country?

A - I don't know about that :). I think this scene is growing in Europe in general and I'm not sure it's more developed in France. Actually, I believe new labels such as Anywave are trying to extend this scene here in France, and it's amazing!

H - Yes! I think it came maybe later in France than in other countries (like England or Germany) but there are more and more great events and cool bands in France, that's really exciting to see this scene growing and to be a part of it.

8) I know that you're working on a lot of projects. I've read that Amandine have lend her voice for a Ash code song and that H  l  ne has just released an EP as Hante. What do we have to wait for in the future?

A - It was great to sing on the Oblivion remix. I also sing on Volkova's « The Call » remix :). We have more remixes to come, where I also sing and in the future, maybe I'll be doing featurings for bands I like. And why not a side project, in the beginning of 2015 :). But my priority is of course Minuit Machine, and our next album!

H - At this moment, we are composing a few new songs for some compilations and also for a new release to come this year! And of course, I will continue to compose for my solo project Hante. in 2015. I don't have a particular plan for that, I just compose when I find time and inspiration :) But I would love to release an entire album after « Her Fall and Rise » EP, we'll see!

9) In Italy, in the last times, "minimalist" music is creating a certain growing interest. To what do you attribute this phenomenon?

A - Well, Italo Disco was created in Italy! And even though it's pretty different from Dark/synth/cold wave, italian people are used to electronic/minimal sounds :). That could be an explanation.

H - I like Amandine's explanation. To be honest, I really don't know but you're right, there are so many great Italian bands at this moment!

10) A few weeks ago you've presented your debut album in Italy too. What difference there's between different audiences, for example between those French and Italian? Are you planning to come back?

A - Italian people are extremely cheerful and kind. I don't know if there's a real difference between French and Italian audience because in the end, people who come to our gigs like our music so they're happy to be here and they treat us with a lot of respect and kindness. We are totally planning to come back in Italy, in April or May, during our Spring Tour.

H - We love Italy, it's such a beautiful country! We definitely have to come back in Spring! About the audiences, I don't think there is a real difference between French and Italian. In this scene, all the people are real music lovers, it's the best audience you can have.

11) I thank you for your time. Cheer the readers and invite them to buy your new album!

A - 2014 has been a great year for Minuit Machine, so I want to thank of the people who have been supporting us since the very beginning :).

H - Thanks a lot for this interview! And thanks to the readers who came until this line, well done! You definitely should listen to our music if it's not already done! :p