

MINUIT MACHINE – VIOLENT RAINS

One year has exactly passed since **Hélène De Thoury** and **Amandine Stioui**, french **Minuit Machine** duo, have showed themselves to a wider public with their cold sound characterized by melancholic lyrics, permeated by compliance and sadness, of **Live & destroy**, and in the meanwhile Hélène has released an EP with the **Hante.** monicker, one of the best minimal synth releases of the last months, that minimized the vocal role and that, on the contrary, widened the melodic, full of pathos, patterns.

Violent rains is partially the result of this evolutionary process and presents itself as a surely less monolithic work than its immediate predecessor and, for this reason, its music is maybe harder to assimilate, although the ten songs here contained (including the *She devil's* remix, originally contained in their debut EP **Blue Moon**, released in 2013), are quite catchy.

Although the duo hasn't radically changed its coordinates, always staying loyal to a sound inspired by '80s music, they needed only one year to change both their sound and their lyrics in many ways. As already said before, the Hante. experiment represented for Hélène the right moment to go out of the cold boundaries of the debut album, and the result here could be listened because the melodic patterns, here more stronger influenced by certain synth pop, are voluntarily more complex and less static than in the past, and the same happen in the construction of the rhythms, much less squared and monolithic. Drum machine's lines are more unpredictable than in the past, and the reinforcing beats are rather frequent, giving to each song a strong longevity.

This feeling of safety shown by the composer can be found even in the singing of Amandine, that here is more free from the cages of the past, and this improvement is highlighted from the beginning, assuming kaleidoscopic tones that merry very well with the kaleidoscopic melodic constructions. Beyond the purely vocal side, thinking about the past lyrics, is evident, since the title chosen for the album, that Amandine has gained courage and strenght, in some cases even rage, a feeling sometimes necessary to go out of the abyss in which sometimes mistakes inevitably push us in.

This is evident in the promotional album's song, *Battles*, that represents, in a certain sense, a sort of overcoming of the concept of "merciless faith". *Our fate is ours, no one can steal it from us*, and the brave lyrics consequently influence music (and vice versa). Their new sound is, in fact, less cold and distant, more physical and post punk-like: in a few words, more straight. This process of going out of the glass cage in which to protect from the everyday issues is evident even in *Black is my anger* and *Inner self. It's not safe to be walking alone, but I am fearless and invincible*. Behind this courage, however, the hidden fear to stay alone shows itself, perceivable in songs such as *Famous or dead* and the opener *June 7* (the best song, from an instrumental point of view, that more evidently influenced by Hante.'s sound). Surely, the act of going out of the strictly underground scene and of having played a lot in festivals and in different places have helped the duo to be more confident in themselves, a fact that only can help them to create original music.

The lyrical negative trademark (but here not compliant, thinking about the past) is however present in "classic" songs such as *Everlasting*, *Relapse* and *The earth. I'm falling down, i think i'm losing it again, the past will never let me go, this weight will never leave my chest*. Nevertheless, Amandine finds the strenght to look in front of herself, clenching her fists.

Always however keeping their soft trademark, never particularly heavy, Minuit Machine show an evident change since the album's cover artwork: leaving out the perfect and artificial geometries of Live & destroy, Violent rains is an album projected toward the outdoor, both musically and lyrically, a work that talks about battles to face, and even if sometimes it could be possible to lose a fight, remember, Hélène and Amandine, that facing problems going out of an only apparent safe glass's bell is already a very good beginning! Keep going on this road!

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Score: 8

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