

In their 27<sup>th</sup> year, Einstürzende Neubauten again prove the potency of their philo-acoustic long-term therapy. After their successful 2007 tour of the U.K. the mature avant-garde All-Stars present their new album *Alles wieder offen*, showing their intimacy and fragility in a completely new light. Blixa Bargeld, Alexander Hacke, N.U. Unruh, Rudolf Moser and Jochen Arbeit have triumphed over the old Berliner *Mauerkrankheit*, the fever has sunk to a normal temperature and the apocalyptic visions and the yearning for death of the early days are now part of the past. *Alles wieder offen* is released October 23 on their own Potomak label, distributed by Ryko in the United States.

Theoretically seen Einstürzende Neubauten's agenda can be summed up as noise-therapy. In actuality, however they always were and will be exceedingly complex. They are an allegedly chaotic production collective creating music whose particular allure and beauty is in no way obvious upon simple, first time listening. In this music the parameters of conventional music have been entirely shifted. The scale of all aesthetic units involved apparently reach up into infinity and are being constantly collectively redefined.

This is how it's been since their zero hour of the association-heavy date of the 1st of April 1980, for themselves and an international music scene that was curiously attentive right from the start. And this is how Einstürzende Neubauten eventually became one of the most important groundbreaking formations in world pop culture. The paths that Einstürzende Neubauten have walked over a period of almost three decades of band history were never before traveled with comparable consistency and unwillingness to compromise. The walls and borders that they broke through – and not just figuratively -- *avec plaisir*, had been considered insurmountable. This counts first of all for a band from Germany.

The Wall was of crucial importance to the founding of Einstürzende Neubauten. The Wall encircling West Berlin transformed that city into a state-subsidized near-paradisiacal freak-enclave for artists and the maladjusted of every sort including Blixa Bargeld, N.U. Unruh and FM Einheit. The trio declared war on every conventional way of listening with the release of their debut-album *Kollaps* in November 1981. In grey time in which “normalcy” included the threat that minor incidents in the ongoing Cold War could at any time develop into a Third World War, Einstürzende Neubauten reacted with almost un-listenable cathartic cascades of noise.

This was their reaction to the omnipresent political madness and the ever-increasing flood of meaningless pop-songs on radio and TV propagated by the “Neue Deutsche Welle” scene. Einstürzende Neubauten offered the anxiety ridden, paralyzed and media sedated masses noise-mighty, rhythm-ritualistic anti-Pop as an antidote, made by instruments carefully stolen from building sites, junkyards and Do-It-Yourself-Hardware stores. They employed steel parts, tin drums, drills, hammers, saws and an untuned electric guitar, all crowned by Bargeld's bloodcurdling screams und feverish apocalyptic texts. *Kollaps*, with its atonal essence, embodied exactly what the title suggested: decay and destruction, illness, doom and death. Ironically its release had the exact opposite effect, being the dawning and cornerstone of a completely new understanding of music which came to influence countless popular bands including Depeche Mode, Nine Inch Nails, Marilyn Manson and Rammstein.

In the years following, the three founders recruited Alexander Hacke and Marc Chung and expanded their ground-breaking sound field experiments with recordings like *Zeichnungen des Patienten O.T.* (1983), *1/2 Mensch* (1985), *Fünf auf der nach oben offenen Richterskala* (1987) and *Haus der Lüge* (1989), all milestones of the Industrial genre. On their first few

albums they were not content to merely widen horizons – they blew ‘em to bits! Pieces like “Armenia”, “Yü-Gung (Fütter mein Ego)”, “Z.N.S.” or “Feurio!” have influenced several generations of individualists who hold themselves aloof from the predetermined apathy of society. Einstürzende Neubauten’s early repertoire still provides oft-copied blueprints for current experimental sound-and-performance art. As the group continued to broaden the spectrum of musical sound in every imaginable direction, they moved away from the brutal, amphetamine-induced anger of their early days towards an acoustic-amplified *oeuvre* in which Blixa Bargeld’s sung and spoken words and accompanying sonic materials formed a distinctly unified whole; their use of eruptive noise became increasingly frugal, being interjected strategically in a nearly mathematical manner. Song structures converged with more conventional patterns of writing. Smiled at in the beginning as a bizarre *Mauerstadt* curiosity, Einstürzende Neubauten established themselves as an irreplaceable variable in contemporary pop-culture.

After experiences with large-scale theater-projects working together with renowned directors like Peter Zadek, Heiner Müller and Leander Haussmann – all enthusiastically received by the European critical community -- Einstürzende Neubauten opened another chapter in their musical history with *Tabula Rasa* (1993), *Ende Neu* (1996), *Silence Is Sexy* (2000) and *Perpetuum Mobile* (2004). This work focuses on the inter-relationship between loud and quiet, noise and harmony taken to the very limit of the frequency-band spectrum. Carried by treacherous perforated calm and softness, the chief ideologist Blixa Bargeld proves himself to be at the height of his lyrical art with songs such as “Die Interimsliebenden”, “Stella Maris” or “Die Befindlichkeit des Landes”: here, he is hedged in, thinking around corners and edges, pondering.

Today, Einstürzende Neubauten is the first and only band which successfully uses the Internet productively to gather and concentrate activities of their fans from around the world. Einstürzende Neubauten launched their official website [www.neubauten.org](http://www.neubauten.org) in 2002, and made it the center of their musical activities. Entire albums are financed by registered Supporters via subscription. The principle is simple: their Supporters buy the next Einstürzende Neubauten album before it’s recorded. With this funding in hand the band has time to work in peace rather than wasting time and energy in endless discussions with record companies about marketing and “brand identity” – irksome intrusions into the artistic process! In return Supporters world-wide have exclusive access to Einstürzende Neubauten’s internal working processes.

Supporters were able to watch the recording sessions via web-cam for the first two “Supporter Albums” (2002/2005) and were also called upon by the band members in direct chat discussions to comment on the working process and influence it. In the same way, the “Musterhaus” series (a collection of experimental albums) is being marketed solely on the website.

One recent high point in the mercurial and unique history of Einstürzende Neubauten was by the highly symbolic 4<sup>th</sup> of November 2004 show at *Palast der Republik*, the former headquarter of the power apparatus of the fallen GDR which was in the process of being demolished. This impressive and unique performance (featuring the 100-person Supporter choir on “Grundstück”) was recorded and filmed for release as the *Grundstück* CD and DVD of the same title (2005) as well as on the *Palast der Republik* DVD (2006).

The untiring exploring spirit is still driven by a hot burning desire. Einstürzende Neubauten are still on the unending quest for the undiscovered Sound and have once again perceptibly redefined their parameters.

For every generation its own sickness, and for every generation its own cure. Sometimes the proven household remedies are the most effective. Or so they say.

Thomas Clausen, July 2007