

The bold history written by Einstürzende Neubauten over the last 27 years now has a dramatic new chapter with the release of their new album *Alles wieder offen* (“All open again”) which is being released October 23rd on their own Potomak label, distributed in the U.S. by Ryko Distribution. Working outside normal record business market mechanisms, Einstürzende Neubauten recorded the CD over some 200 days in their own studio funded by their world-wide network of subscribing Supporters via www.neubauten.org.

Einstürzende Neubauten has always created its own musical cosmos, but with *Alles wieder offen* this cosmos is wider than ever before. And the stars within it are shining brighter. Possibly informed by the title of 2000’s *Silence is sexy* word on the international music scene was that Einstürzende Neubauten had become calmer, quieter even. *Alles wieder offen* blows this assumption out of the water; it is an urgent and compelling album in every aspect. The instruments do not exhaust themselves by a consumptive struggle against each other as they might have on prior recordings, but instead create an unprecedented fusion of Einstürzende Neubauten-typical instruments with conventional ones. Alexander Hacke’s bass has never sounded warmer, Jochen Arbeit’s guitar more graceful, the metal of Rudolf Moser and the percussion of N.U. Unruh more unsettling and diverse, or Blixa Bargeld’s voice more mercurial yet forceful.

It’s the little details that first draw the attention: Jochen Arbeit’s whizzing guitar on “Unvollständigkeit,” seeming to anticipate the outburst that follows: a rain of light, falling aluminium sticks; the way Alexander Hacke electronically deconstructs Rudolph Moser’s nervous and yet rounded flowing rhythm on “Weilweilwei”; the deft combining of uplifting organ and the almost tender feedback that rends the sky open on “Nagorny Karabach”... After almost three decades, the musicians seem to be in a state of euphoria encouraged by their own seemingly endless possibilities.

Throughout *Alles wieder offen* the individual elements are all delivered with awesome urgent intensity. “Die Wellen”, the grand opening piece, finds Blixa singing: “And from the highest waves, from breaking spume, a thousand voices break away”, the strings join in and suddenly 1000 voices swell. The finale, “Ich warte”, is carried by Alexander Hacke’s hypnotic *biguela*: following the lyrics admonitions the music: “note for note eludes rigidity to open doors gates sluices until in a cloudburst – reveille fanfare – unexpected (...) leaps out in ambush.”

Alles wieder offen is possibly Einstürzende Neubauten’s most fully and perfectly realized album yet. It seems to be a work that’s really conscious of the band’s history. On a lyrical level “Unvollständigkeit” is a sister piece to both “DNS/Wasserturm” (1983) as well as “Redukt” (of *Silence is sexy*, 2000); “Nagorny Karabach” refers to “Armenia” (1983), which is the sun of the EN-cosmos; “Von Wegen” quotes both their first single and a line of the song “Sehnsucht” from *Kollaps* (1981). Moreover musically “Von Wegen” mirrors the structure of “Zerstörte Zelle” (1987). “Susej” is based a rhythm guitar figure, which Bargeld recorded in a flooded cellar of the Hafenklangstudio in Hamburg in the early 80s. So the band is communicating directly with their past as the Blixa of today sings over the guitar playing of the Blixa of yesterday: “On the lips the same questions still, about the first things, the last days. (...) your doings alone are what remain of me beneath layers, years, annual rings it is yet still engraved.” Many layers have deposited themselves around the group’s

original nucleus. At the same time the energy, the rejection and the sheer willpower of the early days is still powerfully evident, following the warning in “Weilweilweil”: “Don’t take the advice of those who’ve long since frittered their winter fat of opportunities.” *Alles wieder offen* presents itself as the most emotionally affecting and intellectually stimulating album of Einstürzende Neubauten’s career.

2004’s *Perpetuum Mobile* was the last release the general public was aware of. However, beyond conventional mechanisms of production and marketing, more than 10 regular albums were conceived, recorded and issued between *Perpetuum Mobile* and *Alles wieder offen*. All these were exclusively available from the band’s neubauten.org website.

There is the “*Musterhaus*” series which consists of eight instalments, where EN followed a path that wouldn’t have been possible to pursue within the limits of a more conventional format. One CD contains piano compositions by the individual members; another features Einstürzende Neubauten’s repertoire performed by an orchestra; a third one is a journey back to their beginnings, comprising collages of their very first sound investigations together. Other CDs in the series are dedicated to the human voice or the musical possibilities of ritualised wine consumption, respectively. The “*Musterhaus*” series very quickly became a hot collector’s item, due to the elaborate packaging, extremely limited number of copies produced and most importantly their exceedingly high quality. Pieces developed for this series were subsequently woven into the fabric of *Alles wieder offen*. The sound poem recited by N.U.Unruh in “Let’s do it a Da Da, the guitar intro to “Susej” and “Die Wellen””’s piano lines all were developed for “*Musterhaus*” CDs.

Meanwhile the “Jewels” series comprises compositions often created in one day whose lyrics are based on dreams. The group were guided by a system of cards (called: “Dave”) with specific instructions written on each one, sometimes a clear message (“five keys”, “short”, “cymbal”), and at other times more cryptic (“cut off underneath”, “totalitarian”, “fruit”). Each member of EN drew several cards, interpreted their instructions and translated them into music. This procedure was specially developed to undermine rigid work mechanisms. The process was not only employed in the studio but also on stage. Improvising of this kind -- with all its inherent unpredictability and lack of defined boundaries -- naturally contains the possibility of failure but as the EN already proclaimed on their album *Fünf auf der nach oben offenen Richterskala* of 1987: “Keine Schönheit ohne Gefahr” (“No Beauty without Danger”). The cards also played an important part in the recording of *Alles wieder offen*.

As exciting and innovative as these releases were, and as important to the creative processes that yielded *Alles wieder offen*, they were still primarily a by-product of the revolutionary concept of web-performance undertaken at www.neubauten.org. *Alles wieder offen* is being released without any kind of record label involvement. The recordings were financed by Supporter subscriptions via www.neubauten.org who in return will receive a special Supporter Edition of the album (optionally with or without the accompanying DVD). Without the Supporters *Alles wieder offen* would not exist.

Moreover, the Supporters's involvement goes beyond financial: the Supporters viewed the album as it was being created via webcam and they had live online discussions with the band about the recording, at times arguing with them -- demanding the further development of ideas the group had discarded for instance. The Supporters also formed a choir for the "Musterhaus"-piece. *Alles wieder offen* is thus a rejection of all conventional market demands and structures. It is also this attitude that the title *Alles wieder offen* describes.

The album is released in October 2007, in the usual elaborate packaging in Digipak with a multicoloured booklet which contains all the lyrics in both German and English. A Europe wide tour is planned for the spring of 2008. The roads are indeed open again.