

INTERVIEW WITH XLR8R

what year did rk&hf form?

2000

which cities and countries are rk&hf members from?

sara grew up in east germany, linda in west germany and pauline in the french part of switzerland, but now we all 3 live in berlin since many years.

rk&hf's first performance was?

2000

what instruments or machines does each member play?

we have many instruments which we all (more or less) play, we like to exchange the instruments live aswell. we have a sampler (korg es-1), a drum computer (dr.groove), we have guitar and bass, and a couple of instruments that we found, or bought at the flea market: for example a casio sk-1 (a small 80 synthetizer, which has 8 sounds, but i swear you can do a couple of things with it!) a yamaha pss-270 (another kind of cheap synthetizer), glockenspiel, etc.

*is the group's set up different for live shows,
or is it the same gear as in your studio?*

the same

*tell us about a rk live performance-what is important,
technically or otherwise, to have a good show?*

the first thing that is important is to have a good feeling with the audience, that´s why we always chose carefully the places where we play at. we do shows in clubs that interest us and we also do shows for example at queer, feminist, or anti-racist events. for a good show technically, it is absolutely important for us tto make a good sound-check, because we play so many instruments live that we really need to have enough time to prepare for the show. then we have good chances to have fun!

what software if any does rk&hf use in the studio?

logic audio

what computers if any does the group use?

we have a power book. half of the tracks on our record are recorded by ourselves on the power book, with a very simple soundcard (m-audio duo)

take us a bit more in-depth into your studio gear.

what are your favorite machines and why?

it is important for us to have a very direct access to our digital equipment. when we compose new songs, we like to programm our drummachines as we are playing and and to improvise- so our equipment has to be simple to use, that´s why we like what

we have. at concerts we partly also play the drumcomputers live - not everything is pre-programmed. we also believe that we don't need expensive equipment, or anything that you need a long time to understand how it functions. but linda has for example a really nice old epiphone guitar - so you can't say either that we play only on trash equipment... our music is a mixture between some elaborate sounds and melodies and some more punk and trash elements.

what machines would you like to get that you don't have now?
some better synthetizers, because every show is a risky adventure, we always fear that our synthetizers are going to die on stage!

tell us about the „punk“ aspect to your production techniques - are there any? for instance, does your music arise from a diy aesthetic?
we love to do everything by ourselves, so i guess we are quite diy... we do partly of the recording by ourselves, the artwork, the visuals, the fotos etc. we have stressy jobs, and have not enough time to do everything, but we love to do as much as possible, and to have control over our images and our sound - we haven't got a producer, for example. we also learned the things we do by ourselves and we sort of have the ambition to achieve a lot with our own working methods. in the same way that we sing our texts with accents, because we find interesting to invent partly a new language with our accents, you could say that we also play our instruments with accent, because we like to experiment with different instruments that we haven't necessarily learned conventionally. but this doesn't mean that we don't want to be good at playing these instruments or that we like diletantism, which some girlbands are too often associated with or categorized in. i suppose we have the ambition to find a style that is our own.

what's the key to getting more women involved in programming and performing electronic music?

i think that in every kind of art practice it is important not to feel caught by conventions or rigid models, which are often occupied by male musicians. it is important for women to recognize that there are so many ways to approach electronic music and to explore them. there are a lot of women who have been and are very important for the development of electronic music and they are often made invisible, so platforms like the ladyfests who invite a lot of women to perform and who feature them are very important to my eyes. and another thing, break the myths: it is difficult to start with electronic equipment because in the music shops it is almost always male staff selling it, or the people who can provide or explain you the music programmes are almost always men, but you realize very quickly, that even if they talk in a very complicated way, in 99 % of the cases, they don't know more than you on the subject! so girls go ahead!

what other music past or present artists do you admire and why?

to throw together names that the 3 of us often mention: b52, the au pairs, liliput, luscious jacksons, bufallo daughter, team dresh or god is my co-pilot, who gave me for example in the 90ies a sense for all the potential that the word queer has.

*describe the politics of your music. what are the main things
rk is trying to communicate, explain or inspire action for?*

we don't have one message to transmit and don't want to explain anything. we try to offer different levels of access to what we do, and one of them is certainly the music itself. but if somebody likes our music, maybe she will like that the content of the texts also influences the music, or that the sound is also carrying content. if somebody likes the feminist content she will maybe like that we try to conceive feminism in relationship to a critique of capitalism - and inversely. queer politics has an important role in our lives so i suppose that our performance and texts are also very influenced by that. we don't like categories, and we hope that people can read what we do from different perspectives or follow different strips.