

INTERVIEW TO SCHONWALD

Schonwald are an Italian duo that make a mix between *post punk*, *minimal wave* and *shoegaze* and that we saw some time ago and that we have reviewed on these pages. We have interviewed **Alessandra Gismondi** and **Luca Bandini** because they're creating very good music, they're much skilled on stage too and they already have new projects to talk about and, in addition, because their project is fully Italian.

- 1) The first question is a ritual one: talk about yourselves to our readers. I've tried to search, without success, what the word Schonwald would mean. What is its meaning and, upon this, what this represents for you?

Luca: We are a duo composed by Alessandra (vocals, bass) and me (guitar, synth and drum machine). Schonwald is my mother's surname, my grandfather had Austrian-Hungarian origins, we have erased the two dots from the O in the surname (*ö umlaut*), then its meaning has changed from "Beautiful woods" to "Already in the forest" that is "To be in the forest".

- 2) Six years have passed between **Amplified nature** and **Dream for the fall**. What had happened in the meanwhile? Which projects have you dedicated to?

Alessandra: 5 years had passed, *Amplified nature* was released in 2009 and our new album was released in 2014. In the last years, I've been into other musical projects (**Pitch**, **Vessel**, **Schonwald**) and this doesn't have allowed me to release other albums in the meanwhile because this would have been counterproductive and impossible to plan promo tours. Since that time to today we have published the fourth *Pitch* album and two E.P. with *Vessel*, while with *Schonwald* we have been present on various international compilations. Both of us have played with *Pitch* for ten years, then we decided to concentrate us exclusively on *Schonwald*.

- 3) Talking about your last album, *Dream for the fall* allowed you to gain a certain visibility thanks to the French label Anywave. How come you got in touch with them and have you felt satisfied about the current results gained?

Alessandra: We got in touch with the label when we had been the chance to share the stage in 2013 during the promo tour of **Mercurial** in Paris and in Lille with **AVGVST**, Aurelien Delamour band, who created Anywave together with Myriam Berchechat. Subsequently, the collaboration between Anywave and Manic depression records made for the release of our last album began.

- 4) The album artwork is, without any doubt, enigmatic. What kind of relation exists between the title, the meaning and the artwork? What does it want to express?

Luca: The album graphic had been thought and developed from Myriam Berchechat taking inspiration from the mood of the songs, from the lyrics and from the album title. For both Alessandra and Myriam had been much important to focus on the symbolic and esoteric meaning that express the apple and the double meaning of the *Fall* word (fall, autumn). Stylistically, the artwork fully represents ourselves and we think that this perfectly marries with the listening of the album.

- 5) Your recipe is described like the meeting between *post punk*, *shoegaze* and *darkwave*, obviously seasoned with your own originality. I've noted that your lyrics play a lot with the

I / You duality and, in general, tend to talk about the private sphere. Do you think that this genres lead to utilize these kind of topics?

Alessandra: In my opinion, a musical genre that requires a priori specific lyrics writing style doesn't exist. In my opinion, writing song lyrics means to communicate without too much schemes and to let freely flow our own sensations and the images that are more closer to my experience of life. Usually, my lyrics consists of the repetition of sentences and words that give a more obsessive and more hypnotic mood to the song.

- 6) How do the songwriting process happens? What comes before? The lyrics, the music, or is it a casual process? How one of your songs is created?

Luca: Our songs are created from rhythmic *drum machine* lines, then follow the bass, the guitar, the synths and, at the end, the vocals with their vocal melody and their lyrics. It's never a casual process, the formula is simple and always the same.

- 7) I'm happy that, for once, an original italian group can find the success that deserve them. I know that you're always on tour and that you play in the most important strongholds for a certain kind of sound. Who are the artists with whom, during the tours, you have been better until now?

Alessandra: The luck of doing in our life what we are more passionate about is a success. We have played in the most beautiful and prestigious stages, we have had the chance to confront us with marvellous musical acts gaining much consents by people and criticists. It's always a stimulus to have the chance to play with other bands, at the moment we feel lucky because we have always shared the stage with sincere and thick artists.

- 8) Is it possible, in your opinion, for a band like yours, to build a huge fanbase in Italy as well as the more considered (at the moment) independent musicians in the current discographic market? What would you change in the italian alternative / independent music market?

Luca: We think that in Italy is difficult to have an important fanbase with regard to the genre that we play. In Italy, there are lots of very good alternative / independent music labels which work very well.

- 9) Let's talk about the vinyl / cd question. I have your last album in front of me but, during your last live, i've seen your vinyls shown in the merch area and, on Discogs, Dream for the fall songs are listed "as if they were vinyl tracks". Why have you made this choice? Is this choice related to the recovery of the analogic dimension of the music or is there something else?

Luca: We have always released on vinyl, CD and in digital, all the analogic or digital supports are appreciated and this choice has been shared with the label that has always supported us.

- 10) *Live* dimension *versus* recording studio. Do you have any preference? What could you do *live* (and not in the recording studio) and vice versa?

Luca: We love to play live and we like a lot to record in the studio too. These are two completely different worlds, not comparable between them. During the live, the performance goes on without any breaks and the relation with the people gives great extemporaneous emotions, while the studio work is always different for each song: some songs are developed and worked as works in progress

and the songs created in the recording studio and, doing in this way, new sounds are discovered while, other times, we go into the studio with already ready songs and with much clear ideas about what we need to do.

Alessandra: The Dream for the fall promo tour goes on in 2015 with more gigs in Italy and in Europe and, in fact, we have gigs planned until late spring. In addition, a new album is already ready and we think to release it during the next september.

11) Which projects do you have in mind in the future? What do you tell me about **Shad shadows**, for example?

Luca: Shad shadows is a really new completely electronic project, without any guitar or bass. We are oriented on the search of sounds recalling movie scores, late 80s and 90s industrial dance and, probably, a new E.P. will be released in the spring of 2015.