

NOMADEN by STRÖER BROS. and HOWARD FINE - A Making Of

1982

Hans P. Ströer and Ernst Ströer, then jazz musicians playing with Volker Kriegel's Mild Maniac Orchestra, meet Howard Fine for the first time. They are tired of the pure jazz-rock thing and are looking for a partner, maybe a singer.... But destiny leads them to Howard Fine, dancer and poet, born and raised in New York. The Ströer Bros. attend a live performance in Munich, where Fine explains how words, as an alternative currency, could lead to word inflation. Fine is brilliant: witty, precise and charismatic. The Ströer Bros. immediately realize that they've found their dream partner. They ask him to show them other texts and find in them a treasure trove of powerful stories, enigmatic dreams and musical rhymes. They begin working on music. Howard not originally trained as a singer, explores different ways of speaking. He whispers and screams, chants and bellows, recites and raps in his own unique way. The Ströer Bros. use vocoders, unusual reverbs and special effects to add variety to the vocals. The Bros. play together, Hans on keyboards, guitar or bass, Ernst on his hand drum set. A kind of story gradually emerges, a narrative about departure, high hopes, life in transit – and about arrival.

1985

The Ströer Bros. and Howard Fine spend three weeks recording NOMADEN, their first album. The air in the studio is hot from all the machines running: the Studer 24-track, the Space Station, the amplifiers. Lights blink, twinkling like the red, blue and green eyes of strange animals. Sheets of paper with Howard's lyrics and snippets of magnetic tape, used to record and produce unprecedented sounds, lie strewn all over the floor – this is the pre-sampling age, folks!

The hand drum set, set up on the tiled floor of an empty indoor swimming pool, looks like a paralyzed giant spider. But what a sound! In the control room, the Ströer Bros. and Howard Fine listening to the mixes one last time.

The LP NOMADEN by Ströer Bros. and Howard Fine is released on MOOD Records.

The German press celebrates the album as a masterpiece:

"I never heard something like this. This music alienates me, gives me a certain thrill, inspires me. An exceptional album ... the music is not of today, it's of tomorrow." *Michael Konitzer / TEMPO*

"Ströer Bros. are the German counterpart to Sly and Robbie." *Andrian Kreye / MUSIKEXPRESS-SOUNDS*

"With rhythmic obsession, Howard Fine talks and sings his lyrics: picture puzzles of dreamed reality, real dreams, the archaic, and ways of ultrasonic communication. His language and the music of the Ströer Bros. interpenetrate and inflame each other, evoking feverish images of motion. The entire album is about motion. The A side is the departure side – wild and full of pulsing rhythms, euphoric, escalating into hunted nightmares. The arrival side, quieter and smoother, pulses with melancholic power and creates contemplative musical postcards. This LP is a film from tomorrow for the nomads of today." *Nadja Mayer / Auftritt Frankfurt*

1986

The LP NOMADEN wins the German Record Critics' Prize.

1987

The Ströer Bros. and Howard Fine tour Southeast Asia on a grant from the Goethe Institut (Germany's official cultural institute). Their live shows astonish audiences in Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok, Singapore, Manila, Jakarta, Bandung and Surabaya.

The Ströer Bros. and Howard Fine record four more songs, adding a soul choir to the music. But they feel that it's too early to create a whole new album. They decide to take their time...

2000

The Ströer Bros. and Howard Fine begin work on their new album. They have a story in mind about the adventures of a group of pilgrims....

2007

"WHERE ARE YOU NOW ERNST AND HANS PETER STRÖER? AND HOWARD FINE?" (*blog*)

Blogs. Sonar signals from the Internet. NOMADEN LPs have become rare collector's items.

A CD was never made, and the four unreleased tracks from 1987 have been sleeping in the archives, waiting to be released.

"I DID A GOOGLE SEARCH A WHILE BACK AND DIDN'T TURN UP ANYTHING WHICH STRUCK ME AS PUZZLING GIVEN THE QUALITY OF THOSE TWO ALBUMS - FLUCHTWEG MADAGASKAR AND NOMADEN." (*blog*)

2008

The Ströer Bros. re-release NOMADEN, now for the first time on CD. Though the master tapes from 1985 have been lost, an expert technician re-masters the CD from a virgin original LP. The four unpublished songs from 1987 are remixed, along with a maxi-single called „Fred Wohain's Whafo Diner."

Again, critics applaud:

"The more you get involved with the phantasmagorias of the poet and reciter Howard Fine, the more you follow his energy, the deeper you dive into his uncanny, sometimes scary world of images and sounds from the 1980s. The farther outward you accompany the lyricist and reciter Howard Fine on his phantasmagorical journey and the more intensively you follow along in the trajectory of his energy, the deeper you plunge into the disconcerting and sometimes frightening sounds and images of the Eighties – which has nothing at all in common with the nostalgic sentimentalism of today's over-thirty generation. I recommend this CD to everybody who didn't waste his time back then. It's an iridescent documentary, as refreshing as possible." *Ralf Dombrowski / Jazz Zeitung*

2010

VOODOO TRAVEL, the new album by the Ströer Bros. & Fine, will be released on Ilusion Records.