



# OFF THE RAILS

*Riga Metro*

BY: SID COCAIN

Since 2008 Riga Metro has been creating dazzling sound structure symphony; tech-electro with the depth and funk of jazz that is as teasing as it is generous in audio pleasure. I spoke with singer-songwriter Eline Dumpe about how they conduct such carefree complexity and their plans to let the world in on their eclectic electric dreams.

Riga Metro is based in the Baltics, and while the Latvian music scene is bipartisan and vibrant it has grown stunted, preventing talent from flourishing. It's an unfortunate Eastern Bloc bi-product whereby pop-culture is imported, usually on the say-so of commercial music critics other various strains of suckfish and 10-percenters. Very little is sought out or developed for export, and the few that does get to broadcast are measured for the type of safe and banal pop that all sounds the same, anyway.

"The difference between Latvia and the entire world is that in other countries a musical performance is an event, but in Latvia it is just a tool to earn money. It's a stupid Latvian paradox. The audience is very sensitive to marketing in Eastern Europe – usual listener has no taste, but listens to the music he or she is told to."

Someone clearly didn't give that directive to this 4-piece – including Antony on keyboards, Valters Sukis on guitar and Gusts, the programmer. As Elina Dumpe went on to explain however, this 4-piece is, technically, a 5-piece:

"Our bass player Valters Sprudz usually makes very good studio and rehearsal sessions, but for live performances hasn't much time. Yeah, he is like a sexy bitch that makes you hot, before leaving and saying: "No no, guys, let's finish another day..."

I can relate to that type of frustration, and as I personally reflected on that, Eline went on to tell me another riddle of the band:

"What the fuck Valters, the guitarist, does in this band is still an enigma, yet he is the person that makes our music free from bony sound and behavioral standards."

And free it most definitely is, as we spoke about the journey of their music. Riga Metro do not simply make electronic music, their music is made to be live. Inspiring samples fit the groove for the right now arena – their tracks are taken off the rails.

'Transsiberia' is a train trip that takes an altogether different route. It's a repetitive tickety-tack of layers and grinding sexuality as Eline's vocals as arouse like Shirley Manson. Breaking beats relying utterly on the audio to take you travelling, without the depth of lyrical abandon.

While 'Heartbeats' takes you through the station and into a different plane, just north of normal. Elegant electro bridges subtlety with tripping tones; beats glow and bubble with pleasure, and whatever 'Delete Me' lacks in terms of depth in its intro – almost in parody of these 2 preceding songs - makes up for in absolute techno crescendo that will have anyone that hears it pogoing in open air or in the house. And with 'We Don't Know How' we are taken to the jazz car while the travel slows down to groove, by a smooth and sultry Eline.

Not all of their songs are quite as catchy however, and with good reason. Harkening back to the fateful state of Latvian music culture, the band was approached to create a song for radio, a fantastic opportunity at first glance yet one that broke down between stations. The song, 'Dance Partner (You're Gonna Be Mine)' was limited in personality by the stations controller. It transports none of their soul – and leaves the same sad sensation as buying a ticket that never gets checked.

Having played across the length and breadth of the Baltic States at Latvia's biggest festivals, such as the "Moonlight Party" and "Positivus" as well as the Lithuanian "Tundra Festival" and Russia's legendary "16 Tonns" nightclub, the band are slowly expanding their borders of perception to central Europe, and 2012 has them crossing the barriers for trips to Germany, Spain, Holland and the UK for their first gigs outside the Iron Curtain – exclaimed by supporting cult electronic outfit, Lamb, in their home

country. It is a lot of organizing for the band – who are as yet unsigned. Each member is not just a musician – they are also the producers, software engineers, web designers, promoters, roadies and anything else that needs to be worked.

Like many bands, Riga Metro never began as a band. For Anthony and Elina, the core of the group and the drivers of their motion, they began almost by accident:

Before Riga Metro met, it was just a search for contributing artists to jam and talk about philosophy. We were four (or five) individuals who all wanted to make music we liked, wanted to listen to, that was the right music for us.

And make it they did, toying with their own backgrounds in various forms of jazz, punk and electronic to make enough music for several albums. Riga Metro conducts sound better than most cult electro bands out there – it is the best audio trip you will take for a very long time.

We do not play shit and almost everyone who visits our concert – whether its 10 or 300 people - has a great mood after it! People come to us and say compliments – that is wonderful!!!

Check out [www.rigametro.lv](http://www.rigametro.lv) while you still can – the tracks mentioned here (and more) are all FREE to download – just click the Music tab to be taken away.

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