



Disconnected POP

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Ever since Kraftwerk, Germans have had an affinity for taking American electronic music and pushing its boundaries. In "Disconnected," their new full-length on Studio K7, Funkstörung's Chris de Luca and Michael Fakesch take ingredients from hip-hop, blues, soul and folk rock to cook up a stew of glitch-hop, electro-soul and minimal tech-house.

Though previously better known for their electronic instrumentals, in "Disconnected" the duo concentrates on a more organic effort with an emphasis on pop song structures, live instrumentation and vocals. "Pure electronic music was starting to bore us," says Fakesch. "It was somehow no longer our thing and we had to free ourselves from this feeling. We have always had the use of vocals and acoustic instruments at the back of our minds, so we then searched intensively for instrumentalists."

For the new album, Funkstörung worked with about 30 musicians, including Enik, a 23-year-old vocalist and multi-instrumentalist; Lou Rhodes, the singer from Lamb; Sarah Jay, best known for her vocals on Massive Attack's "Mezzanine"; MC Tes, a New York-based artist on Warp's Lex Imprint; Rob Sonic, of New York hip-hop outfit Sonic Sum; Hamburg-based beatboxer Mark Boombastic; and pianist Matthias Modica, head of the Gomma label and a member of Munk.

The album's title refers not only to its

decreased emphasis on digital beats, but also to the methods by which it was produced. Instead of recording face-to-face, De Luca and Fakesch and their collaborators from across the globe used a file transfer protocol (FTP) server to exchange tracks.

Fakesch says candidly that working alongside other musicians is not Funkstörung's strong suit. He and De Luca are perfectionists, taking "hours and hours and days and days" to find the right sound and get the right take. Outside feedback can hinder this process: "It feels wrong if somebody listens to us and comments on what we are doing." Creative control is very important to the pair; though they gave singers and musicians great freedom to add to the instrumentals they placed on the FTP server, in the editing phase Funkstörung made the final decisions.

The duo prize isolation not only in the studio, but also in the larger world. Based in