

# VENUS HUM

words: Lindsay Bloemink



Annette Streen tranquilly holds a cup of tea and watches the stage from the side bar of The Metro in London. She's dressed like she's in a 1950s B-movie: pink dress and a green sash. I casually approach her and am welcomed by a kind smile that is as infectious as her voice and stage presence. "My throat has been bothering me today, I don't know if I can give the best interview." Coming from her this news sounds like a polite sneeze rather than the whole story crumbling to the ground. No matter, as Annette takes off to wander the streets of London her band mates Kip Kubin and Tony Miracle come to the rescue.

As we find a semi-silent bunker beneath the depths of the club, Tony points out the contrasts in their music. "When people say 'describe your music' and I want to be fancy I say 'digital pastoral'. Annette brings an earthy quality with the subject matter and Kip and I bring in all the other electronic business."

Kip picks up Tony's train of thought: "The

casual listener could go 'drums, synthesizers, vocal', the more astute listener would go, 'that's a really weird synthesizer part that probably took some time', which can show that we're a little deeper than your average electronic band."

To look at Kip and Tony, you couldn't picture them tearing up the boards in the studio never mind on stage. I wondered how they let everyone in on their genius when they're buried behind their instruments. "Even though we use laptops and high tech equipment when we're on stage, it's a performance; we perform as a band," says Tony. Kip reinforces this, "It's important for what we do, not so much for what Annette does because everyone can physically see her mouth open and words come out, it seems like an obvious point but really you could say, 'what's he doing, is he checking his email?' So we do make it a point to let the audience see what we're doing by keeping things close and

available to look at.

"The thing is, I never intended to be in a band, I just am in one," says Kip. Tony laughs: "Having said that, I always thought we'd be an underground band. We're influenced by bands like Mouse on Mars and lots of weird, minimalist music coming out of Germany. My record collection looks nothing like J. Lo's."

Any words to pass on about Annette? Tony clears his throat, "For a long time she wouldn't really write songs, she would just write in her journal and write pages and pages of thoughts. I'm envious because she's so free with her words, I don't know where it comes from. She says her writing comes from very personal places, relationships and spirituality, and can be considered random words like a thought trail, no direct translation for every one, but they always mean something. You can take away the meaning without knowing the exact context; I like that about her lyrics."