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KMFDM DOIN' IT AGAIN

by Kristen Kawaguchi

Kein Mehrheit Für Die Mitleid, better known as the acronym KMFDM, released its fifteenth album, *Tohuvabohu* on August 21. Following its formation in Paris in 1984, the band whose name roughly translates to "No Pity for the Majority" shows no signs of stopping.

"I just woke up not too long ago and spent my morning tea working on a mix I put away last night at 3 a.m.," says founder and only original member, Sascha Konietzko, or Käpt'n K, whose vox, synths and programming spawned KMFDM's definitive release *Ultra Heavy Beat*.

"Tohuvabohu is an Old Testament word to describe the state of the universe before the gods got busy creating stuff," Konietzko explains over the phone from his home in Seattle. "When I was a child, my mom used it when she came in my room on a rainy Sunday. She'd go, 'My God! What a Tohuvabohu!' She'd start looking for failed tests from school and stuff like that - tear everything out of the cupboards." He adds, "She was laughing when I gave her an advance copy. She said, 'I haven't heard that word since you [and your brother] grew up.'"

Embodying the definition of "wild, without form," the album title was switched from E=mc². "Things were approached differently than previous records. In the last few years, KMFDM has become more of a steady line-up and steady things always get boring and get on my nerves. So, this time, I challenged them saying, 'Why don't we write whatever comes to mind. Instead of you just playing the drums and you just coming up with guitar stuff - work on songs, work on structures, arrangements. Let's mix it up a bit.' So it became more chaotic. And when there's chaos, there's creativity. So, we used that wave or spurt of inspiration to put this album together and it kind of wrote itself."

Maintaining the belief that KMFDM belongs to its fans and vice versa, on March 3, the band asked people to call a hotline and state



what KMFDM means to them. Excerpts of the recordings were stitched into the opening track, "Superpower." Similarly, a request was issued for videos. The deadline for the FanVids was three days before I spoke with Konietzko and he had not viewed the entries yet.

"It's a reciprocal relationship [with the fans]. I'm always fighting with the squadrons of people with brooms and plastic bags that come in when the show is over and they just want to clean up and go home, but there's still 150 kids by the merchant booth. We always try and improvise and take 'em all back stage or out by the tour bus."

Tohuvabohu incorporates German, Latin, Hebrew, Spanish and Lingala, an African language. "Los Niños del Parque" is a Spanish cover from the German group, Liaisons Dangere-

uses. "It's one of my favorite songs of all time," states Konietzko. Referring to band mates, he attests, "Only the rhythm section could come up with ['Saft und Kraft']. The song's speed metal rhythm banged out by drummer Andy Selway, manifests the English translation: "juice and force" or "juice and power."

When asked if a *Tohuvabohu* tour was on the horizon, Konietzko disclosed, "Not at this time... KMFDM has been pretty consistent about just pumping it out and livin' it up... For the past five or six years we've been recording, touring, recording, touring and nobody has time to develop anything outside of KMFDM. We figured, 'Here's a good album that will tide you over until the next one.' We finished touring on October 31, 2006. On the first of November, I was schlepping gear into storage. On the sec-

ond, I was shipping leftover merchandise back to the plant and on the third I started working on [*Tohuvabohu*]... There needs to be a little time to concentrate and focus on things beyond. Otherwise you lose perspective."

Konietzko does acknowledge a few future plans. "I think there's a plan to do a similar thing like *Hau Ruck* and the follow up EP *Ruck Zuck*, to do a follow up EP, but probably album length to *Tohuvabohu*. Y'know, remixes and stuff." The front man disclosed that KMFDM has already accumulated a handful of remixes from the likes of Combichrist, Die Krupps, Dope Stars Incorporated and Angelspit.

Konietzko adds, "We just made what I think is our best album to date. It's definitely my favorite." He pauses briefly. "Then again, *every new album* is my favorite."