



## FAUNA FLASH

### **Worx: The Remixes**

(Compost/Defend)

Rating: 7

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There is no mistaking Fauna Flash for a distinctly European phenomenon. The Munich-based duo of Christian Prommer and Roland Appel are representatives of a remarkably catholic approach to electronic music that owes as much to jazz and dub as house and techno, and which draws equally from them all. Although this kind of cosmopolitan eclecticism may seem slightly out-of-date when compared against the current mainstream of electronic music, Fauna Flash are a living rebuttal to the notion that tasteful down-and mid-tempo music has to be dead-boring.



Although the genre has been co-opted in recent years by the advent of poorly conceived "chill out" compilations, there was a time when the intersections between acid jazz and trip-hip was one of the most exciting places to be. Certainly, continental producers like Kruder & Dorfmeister, who were able to reference conventional drum & bass, house and hip-hop in order to create entirely new hybrids, thrived outside of the traditionally schismatic environments of British and American electronic music. Fauna Flash have positioned themselves outside the imprimatur of any conventional scene -- save perhaps for the central European locus of like-minded groups represented by Vienna's G-Stone collective

and Germany's Compost -- and their fastidious dedication to well-heeled, unerring universalism marks them as consummate craftsmen.

*Worx* collects 13 of the duo's best remixes on one disc, which includes two new mixes. These remixes are uniformly good, with a few being downright excellent, and while some may complain that the mixed-disc format offers an unflattering showcase for individual tracks, there is no doubt that the mixes on this disc represent some of the most ingenious examples of the remixer's art available.

The most pleasant surprise on *Worx* is just how versatile Fauna Flash's production can be. Anyone familiar with the duo's work (along with Rainer Truby) as the Truby Trio might have easily expected a much more pronounced Latin influence, but while the Latin sound is definitely present, it is not dominant. Tracks such as Grupo Batuque's "Ole Ola" are very much samba, down to the syncopated piano phrasing and the sampled soccer announcers, but they sit perfectly next to tracks such as Hajime Yoshizawa's "Endless Bow", which is an almost perfect example of the kind of R&B-influenced house often associated with the Philadelphia sound.

But right next to more traditionalist modes, we have tracks such as Christian Prommer's remix of Abdullah Ibrahim's "Sweet Samba" (the disc's only solo remix), which -- despite the name -- manages to summon an almost perfect replica of something you might expect to hear on Germany's Tresor label. Rivera Rotation's "Dedicado" reminds me of the kind of old-school New York garage you might come across in a Danny Tenaglia remix. Minimal Compact's "Shouts and Kisses" sounds like -- I kid you not -- the Gap Band circa "You Dropped a Bomb on Me", right down to the same cheesy handclaps and funky guitar bits. They've even got a bit of tasteful St. Germaine-esque jazz house, in the form of Hidden Agenda's "Low Jazz Fidget".

The two brand-new remixes betray a surprising trend towards traditional techno. Rodney Hunter's "Take a Ride" seems to have been inspired in part by Giorgio Moroder's cascading synthesizer lines for Donna Summer's "I Feel Love". It's a surprising, peak-hour club anthem, full of psychedelic distortion trapped to an irresistible house chassis. Megablast's "Jubita" could easily have wandered in as a B-side off a 20-year-old Juan Atkins record.

From these descriptions it would be easy to conclude that *Worx* was a mess, a jumble of styles and genres with little or no effort made towards the kind of cohesive signature that marks the very best remixers as collaborators. Fauna Flash's distinctive style stems not so much from the kind of beats they use or their approach to a particular genre, but a philosophy that reflects generously on the universal nature of dance music, and the ability of a driving house beat or a sly jazzy break to act as a stylistic medium for any number of disparate forms to meet and