



These days, the Large Hadron Collider isn't the only big bang heard near Lake Geneva --- as Switzerland's own Aisha Devi Enz, aka Kate Wax, continues to tour Europe in support of the fascinating LP *Dust Collision*, on James Holden's Border Community Label. CGNY recently had a chance to catch up with the multi-talented producer, vocalist, and performer, and learn more about her diverse musical influences and style.

CGNY: Thanks for joining us Kate. Let's talk a little bit about the new release compared to your previous efforts. From your first EP, Black Sheep, to Reflections of the Dark Heat, and now to Dust Collision --- we've noticed a continued strengthening of your approach. How do you feel your musical sense, and the feelings you try to communicate to and evoke for the listener, have evolved across your albums the last few years?

KW: A life worth living is about mutations; my music reflects and extends that constant evolution process. I think I have begun creating music in a very direct, emotional and empirical way; the early songs were as impulsive as writing a personal diary. The need to create has always been the vital motion, my identity, as if the process was at least as important as the result. My music is a real-time introspection, a true reflection of my own evolution as a human being. Through time, I'm (trying to be a less freaky person) learning to refine my work, to filter, transform, convert by using different platforms and tools, finding different languages and sharpen nuances in the message. I think my music is less frontal, more codified and probably more demanding now, both in the sound and in my lyrics. I'm asking a lot more from the listener, I'm very personal but everything is under a camouflage dust. It is destabilizing I guess.

CGNY: You've definitely got a very 'punchy' sound across all your albums, really deep use of bass, crystal highs -- but behind the sound, there's a lot going on in terms of the variance of your strong structures and genre influences. In past interviews, you've mentioned that this is because you've got a lot of elements and aspects to your personality that bubble to the surface within your music. As your musical career moves along and you refine your style, how do you see these somewhat competing visions or directions reconcile themselves in your music? Should they even be reconciled?

KW: Music is a resilience act that almost healed me but didn't yet totally; it is the fragile identity of a multiple personality outsider. While creating, I think the different parts of me tend to accept each other and co-exist in a much better way, but they'll never make peace and that is paradoxically for the best; this tension and non-satisfaction are the main creation stimulus. Music will remain my introspective therapy.

CGNY: Another very unique aspect to your art is your core and expressive use of vocals -- your

tracks rely on a very finely tuned sense of vocal structure. How do you approach vocals in the creation of your music, and how do you apply your own background and classical soprano training? Do you generally build your tracks around written lyrics/melodies first, or the lyrics around the beat? Or depending on the track, perhaps a combination of both?

KW: Discipline has been the only reliable point of reference in the creation of Dust Collision. In the middle of an emotional unsuitability, following a strong discipline in the process mode, was probably the only possible way to finish an album. I tried to channelize and limited myself into a precise mode of creation, like a formula. Writing was the life drive, where internal collisions, inner wars were being spat on paper. It's fundamental in my music and I can hardly imagine a song without voice and words, without any metaphysical content. I write texts/poetry/key words first and then come rhythms, molded by these words, how they sound and what they express. The violence, or the softness or the words influences directly on the beats. Than I create the melody, like a songwriter would, by twining words and notes. Melody and words together are like a living beast that brings me on powerful fluxes. I sometimes spend 8 or 9 hours singing without ever realizing I am recording...like an auto-trance.

I am currently working on my next album and trying to approach structuration in a different way, that is a huge challenge, but music is a never ending experimentation battlefield, I'm fascinated.

CGNY: We also know that you've got a real love and passion for the hardware gear, which is something that differentiates you tremendously from the soft-synth (and some would argue, almost 'cookie-cutter') production approach of a lot of artists today. What are your favorite hardware tools for production these days, and how do you feel these tools enable you to produce the way you want to?

KW: Chaos is pretty hard to materialize.

I'm getting crazy over gear catalogues but I actually own few machines. The album was mostly created on my computer, as a kind of devotee centralization of emotions. The versatility rather comes from my researches with the voice used as a multiple and flexible instrument. I really like the idea to experiment with few means, creativity is more interesting in pushing two or three tools as far as possible than having a huge arsenal.

My universe is dense, complex and dark, subject to permanent struggles, I couldn't be satisfied with one transmission language. Being in equation with a message with only what I dispose, 2 or 3 machines, a kitchen full of useless tools (I don't cook) and this capricious but elastic voice is also part of the experimentation, the singularity and the challenge.

I like to extirp the blood of each instrument, but my main hardware tool remains my voice. I tried to transmit through my body and its vocal extension a strong physicality, using my body as the medium, exploiting not only the singing but also unwanted mouth noises, shouts, body beats, whispers, strange guttural sounds...

CGNY: What about on tour, do you bring a lot of the analog or hardware gear with you on stage, or rely more on sampling and triggering capabilities? What's your tour rig setup like when you get on stage?

KW: It is worth apprehending the music for a live event in a different way than the way it was written on a vinyl. I like to reinterpret the songs and give them a second life, maybe even more de-structured and organic. So on tour, I'm an airport donkey, I use an APC controller, my computer, a Dave Smith Evolver synthesizer which I love above all, a Jogo for the kicks, a Korg ER-1...and a space station for the voice. I'm also playing with a bassist Raphael Rodriguez, as I wanted to add more of the core deepness bass has. I'm obsessed with the sound of basses, both physical and virtual. And there are also visuals, which were created by Niels Wehrspann, my graphic designer best friend. These visuals are also played live following my motion, and projected directly on us. I think the live performance is a physical and sensual immersion into my world.

CGNY: And finally, speaking of touring, we know the Dust Collision tour is underway (for a while actually!). Any places you've really enjoyed your sets or the crowd so far? The tour has also mostly been in Europe --- do you have any plans to come stateside in the near future?

KW: Yeah, we've had the chance to tour with James Holden for a year now. An incredible welcome came from Paris or Barcelona; it's rather surprising considering the colossal amount of music that people can access in such big cities. I think people are more and more curious for new music, they're not afraid to discover hybrid and strange creations, they're not afraid to take distance from a boring mass-culture.

Kate Wax

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We just came back from Italy where we had a fantastic mini tour with James and Luke Abbot. I think Italy is now one of the most avant-garde and visionary music platforms. Their musical heritage combined with massive changes in the country has created a very fertile field; the audience is more receptive and enthusiastic than anywhere else.

Of course I'd love to tour through US, but we will probably do Canada and New-York first, later this year.

Interview by [Feisal Ahmad](#)

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