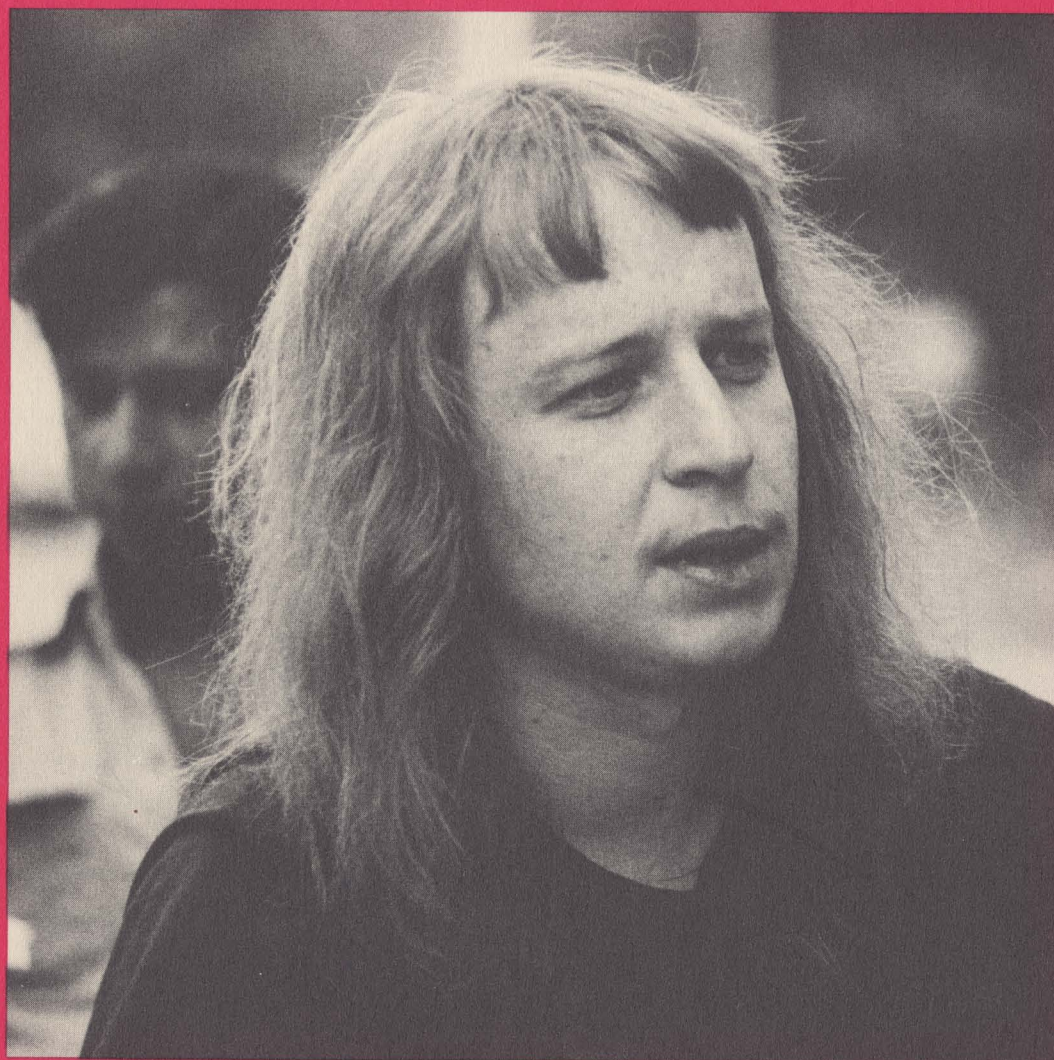


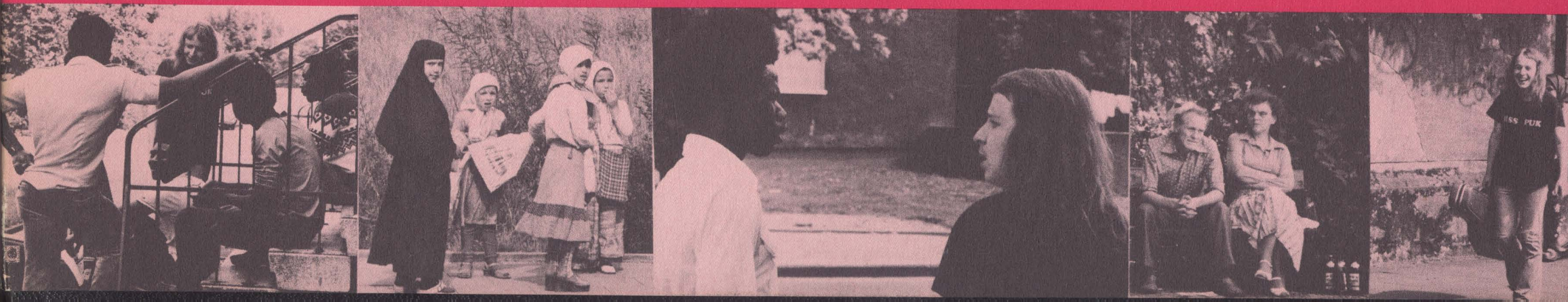
FOLKWAYS RECORDS FTS 32851
Stereo

ROGER MATURA



Niss Puk Band

TIMES ARE GONNA GET HARDER



FOLKWAYS RECORDS FTS 32851

Stereo

Roger Matura with Niss Puk Band / Garbage Orchestra
Roger Matura (vocal, guitar, flute)

SIDE ONE

1. Dream City
2. Sojourner's Lament
3. No Need to Get Nervous (Part I)
4. End of the Rainbow
5. No Need To Get Nervous (Part II)
6. Thinkin' About a Distant Friend in The Night
7. Times Are Gonna Get Harder

SIDE TWO

1. New York (You're bringin' me down)
2. Only a Sparkle of Time
3. Advocate of The Poor
4. Modern Times
5. Road to Heaven

All songs written and composed by ROGER MATURA
Produced by MOE ASCH / ROGER MATURA
ARRANGED by ROGER MATURA / EAN GIDMAN
Engineering mixdown and mastering
by MICHAEL KLANK
Recorded at "ROCK DOG" Studio / Gregor Bockholt
Lippramsdorf / West-GERMANY
Design / Photos by Wolfgang Grohmann
Notes by Christine Muller

This record is dedicated to:

all
free spirits
despairing roamers
uncompromising reformers
audacious riders of the storm
sorrowful wanderers
broken highwaymen
unspoiled poets
dreamy hobos

all those who stride upright and honestly through
this world!

TIMES ARE GONNA GET HARDER

ROGER MATURA

Niss Puk Band

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TIMES ARE GONNA GET HARDER

Roger Matura with Niss Puk Band/Garbage Orchestra

Roger Matura (vocal, guitar, flute)

"Curiosity of the year. . . although the message isn't easy to decipher in the Dylan ranting in which it's delivered maybe he's a prophet of the Eighties after all." Colin IRWIN/MELODY MAKER

". . . maybe the best debut in the contemporary folk field since the 60's." ROCKING CHAIR

"Roger Matura is still alive and fighting! He has not been buried in bucks like some of our earlier folk prophets, so his statement remains true!" Tim MC KAMEY

"Boring!" SOUNDS

"An anachronism!" MUSIC EXPRESS

"Ein bemerkenswertes Album! Vor allem durch Roger Maturas bruchige, nicht unbedingt schone, dafür aber emotional mitreibende Stimme, die jedoch manchmal an Dylan erinnert!" Andreas HUB/MUSIKER

Only some few extracts taken out of the completely diverse reactions of the cultural press concerning the debut album of Roger Matura/Niss Puk Band "No More Nukes" Folkways Rec. FTS 32850 in the USA and Europe.

On account of the unexpected and in most cases positive reception of "No More Nukes" in the United States, Moe Asch, discoverer and promoter of Roger Matura, for years one of the leading men of the American Folk movement, decided to produce a new second album. Moe Asch granted musical and lyrical liberty so that Roger Matura decided to give up the Dylan-like style of the "anguished, strangulatin' protest song" which dominates on "No More Nukes". He decided to get free of his idol Bob Dylan and to realize his own musical and lyrical conception which is to be fit into the "engaged Folk Rock/New Folk".

Whether this project will be successful critics may decide.

In order to realize his new project Roger Matura worked together with 18 relatively unknown but anyhow talented German musicians coming from the Ruhrgebiet, the "Niss Puk Band" and the "Garbage Orchestra". Roger Matura needed more than three months for songwritin', practicin' and arrangin'. Roger Matura and Ean Gidman are responsible for the arrangements. The musicians worked very hard for more than 4 weeks in the "Rock Dog Studio" where they had to surmount musical problems because most of them are amateurs. But anyhow, with the help of sound engineer Michael Klank it has been possible to realize the new project "TIMES ARE GONNA GET HARDER".

Now I'm going to tell a bit about the songs and their texts so that you get a short orientation about the tenor of the new project.

"New York" describes the town as a survival city as it presents itself to foreigners. It represents the fascinating and also the disgusting aspects of New York. Roger Matura talks about the daily terror you can see and feel everywhere. For him it's the reaction of the non-privileged to social terror from the establishment. He thinks of New York as being very hard and determined of the chase for success and money.

"Only a sparkle of time" is a soft, tender, compassionate song that Roger Matura wrote for his wife Jessica. It deals with his deep love to her and tells us that all being must end somewhere because there is an "Endless risin' and fallin', passin' of all things." The last line "what more is man than only a sparkle of time" makes us remember that man is just like a short glitter in universe.

The opening track "Dream City" has its origin in the film "Traumstadt" of "Johannes Schaaf" which reflects a journey into surrealistic regions full of excess and absurdity. The song describes different sorts of persons who do absurd things. It's like a kaleidoscope where people of all kinds-famous ones, forgotten ones, poor ones, established ones-pass by your eyes and your mind. But anyhow, you are meant to visit the dream city by the words "Roll down, roll down to DREAM CITY, you'll never feel alone in "DREAM CITY".

The title song "Times are gonna get harder" is about the race riot in Miami Beach. "Double standard of justice and discrimination" means that there's still a latent discrimination which implies that white policemen are allowed to kill black people without being punished. "It could be a long hot summer" stands for coming fights and force, terror, tears and a lot of grief and sorrow. The last verses accuse police and establishment of legalizing violence and brutality. The song claims for "breaking down racial barriers" and ends with the question what those will be doing who plead for brotherhood and equality.

In "Sojourners Lament" Roger Matura describes a certain solitude when he says "I'm gonna take that lonesome train to the edge of my illusions". He shows us that we exhaust the soil that factories, cities, streets push away nature. This implies that he feels lost and lonely in this world. The song ends with sorrow and resignation.

In contrary to this the song "Road to heaven" is full of hope and good humour. It is in some way similar to "Knocking on heaven 's door". This song came out when Roger Matura was drunk and was improvised and directly recorded on

tape without any rehearsal. Therefore this song is very spontaneous and original. The song deals with a journey into heaven by a train that keeps on rolling. It's not sure when and where the train arrives but you don't need money or any legitimation, you just need much spirit and feeling to keep the wheels turning. All this creates a hopeful promising vivacious atmosphere which is reinforced by the impulsiveness of the musical interpretation.

"End of the rainbow" is an impressive even dramatic song which conjures people of being aware of a menacing war. Roger Matura describes how the earth will get destroyed by "madmen on power". This song is an emphatic and vehement confession to peace in the world.

"No need to get nervous" is a sort of explicit version of "End of the rainbow" where Roger Matura tries to find the reasons and background for one of the most dangerous crisis of mankind. The song describes vividly how you get manipulated by mass media, by those who have a lot of power until you are "deformed to a tractable marionette".

The song "Advocate of the poor" is about the Latin American clergy who supports the rich wealthy people in oppressing and exploiting the poor ones. Those who speak against suffering and slaying in Latin America are just killed as it's said in the refrain "A hired gunman shot him down. . .". The symbol of "his blood was streakin' the white altar cloth" means that the innocent - the advocate of the poor - must die because they are politically active and therefore inconvenient.

"Thinkin' of a distant friend in the night" is dedicated to ROLF NOVAK who died from cancer when he was 24 years old. This song is full of genuine feeling and describes a gloomy landscape plunged into mist that allows us to gain time for thinking of those who are dead.

Finally the most important and the longest song "Modern times" deals with experiences, destinies, impressions Roger Matura gathered in the United States. The song has autobiographic character especially in the beginning when we are told of a man who leaves his home and family to look for a "meaning in his life". He feels depressed and irritated and sad but nevertheless he does neither think of going home nor of giving up making music. The other verses treat of episodes of his experiences in the United States. He talks about so-called marginal existences who compensate their miserable, hopeless life with brutality towards those who don't belong to them. "Watch ya' guitar, Mr. Music Man! they roared with laughter, This neighborhood is too bad for you!" demonstrates this quite evidently. Roger Matura also talks about those who have given up their hopes and dreams, who vegetate and finally die beside the established ones who just know consume and don't care the disappointment of life. The song describes old folks who have given up themselves and who are just "hangin' out there sprawlin' along the counter munchin' on toothpicks, clutchin' their drinks" in "sputterin' blue neon light" without doing anything. But anyhow Roger Matura feels a strong ardent desire for the United States which is expressed in the last refrain "in my dreams I could see the Mexican border, the Rockies, Frisco loomin' ahead of me and I was filled with the spirit of America."

The predominate theme of the new album "TIMES ARE GONNA GET HARDER" seems to me to be the diverse forms of force, power and those who are the victims of the oppressors. The lyrics describe how Roger Matura experiences race riots, the exploitation of the poor, the non-conformists who vegetate at the margin of a society that just knows consume and the chase for money and success.

But anyhow some few lyrics like "Sparkle of Time" or "Road to Heaven" show that Roger Matura does not only perceive force and brutality but that in his mind there is place for deep and tender love to his wife and still vitality which hopefully makes him keep on fighting for a more human world.

At last I'd like to go into details to some conversations I had with Roger Matura during the last six months.

I: In contrary to the American press a great part of the German press gave your first album "NO MORE NUKES" unfavourable review. What do you think about it?

Roger: The most critics complain a certain musical monotony, their difficulties of understanding the texts, the obvious influence of Bob Dylan and technical and musical weaknesses. Looking back I admit that the reviewers have been quite right! Therefore I now try to realize my own conceptions and to offer a wider range of musical variety. I also try to avoid musical faintness by looking for some good musicians and by recording in an ordinary studio. Well, you see that I'll thought about the reviews and try to make it better in my new album.

I: What is the main task of Folk nowadays?

Roger: Well, I think it is necessary and good to enlarge the traditional folk elements by new actual ones. Folk music should recover the force that it has had in the folk-singer area of the sixties. It should have the capacity of changing our consciousness like Guthrie, Dylan, Seeger and so many others and it should help to prevent a threatening war. The task of Folk must be to explain to people on the road, in concert halls and everywhere that problems must not passed over in silence.

Folk should break down national barriers because I think all people in this threatened world fear war, pollution and the destruction of nature. They fear misery, hatred and suffer from discrimination and degradation! Well, perhaps it sounds funny but I still believe in justice, freedom and equality. of all human beings or do you know any other scene of life?

Special thanks to:

Peter Herrmann (baB)
Ean Gidman (alto sax, french horn)
Christine Horen (oboe)
Peter Vinkenflugel (keyboards)
Rudi Mika (violin)
Wolfgang Kaczmarek (12-string guitar)
Hans-Peter Schneider (2nd acoustic guitar)
Andreas Koehne (drums)
Helmut Quakernack (accordion)
Christoph Lemke (percussion)
Dorothee Ewert (french horn)
Christine Muller, Isabel Bittner (female vocals)
Thomas Kappernagel, Ansgar Buchholz, Uli Korsch (brass)
Christine Muller, Achim Hencke, Berthold Henrichs (strings)

DREAM CITY (Roll down, roll down . . .)

Rollin down on "Desperado Highway"
overhasty headin to automation city
hopin to get busted in the compressed color
of advancement
well, I think, I'm doing alittle better now!

Tarantulas faint complexion
painted afterglow, rapacious tower in ruins of success
Superman uses the machine of propagation
well-behaved welfare soldiers he's erect in

Today the soul-auction has been inaugurated
promissin total pleasant sensation
the distracted veteran of thousand massacres
sells photos, bespattered with the blood
of his nation

Refrain:

Roll down, roll down to DREAM CITY
you'll never feel alone in DREAM CITY

Endless codes of honour stridin dignified
accompanied by the military band
playin the 9th of Beethoven like an "OLD-TIME DIXIE-
LAND"

tears in the eyes of war-cripples as they listened
wooden toy guns they are holdin
in tattered hands

Stranglehold of society's morality
embraces with atomic power-claws
the gnome, who's praisin prompt sexual maturity
committed him to the legal torture chamber
in a mediaval old wedding jalogy
he'd been loaded

Self-ordained priests of law
masturbation with fossiles of the Second World War
while soap advertisin spots are flowin unhindered
out of their toothless, evil-smellin mouths
the blind man catches a glimpse of it
in what he's livin in

Here's the foyer of the bourgeoisie fags
hidin their phoniness behind noble masks
presentin proudly rusty badge of ranks
they've got for instructed killin
in Vietnam (or elsewhere!)

Refrain:

Roll down, roll down to DREAM CITY
you'll never feel alone in DREAM CITY

Saint Joanne, a chippered tart,
moumfully brawlin a flat melody of "Prohibition"
believe it or not, once she studied art
now she crowned herself "Boozin Queen of Exhibition"
with a Chinese-patterned blue bandana
patched up and tied together around her shaven head

Luke, the pimp, he gives a lecture
about pollution of environment
bringing out censorious astonishment among discussin
intellektuals
the invisible magician brews a drink of "Eternal Youth"
the crazy invalid choir bawlin Vivaldi
the female saxophone player blows a futule Blues

Refrain:

SOJOURNER'S LAMENT

Cold winter wind dislodges, fleeting shadows of the night
blows between shiverin' branches of bare trees
stretched towards the grey mornin' sky
from craned up factory chimneys, smoke rings slowly
swell out
unclasp the jagged city silhouette
with a smeared, sooty cloak

Whirlin' lights of street lamps, that strew the wet
pavement vein
arouse in me the fragile, reckless face
of somebody I once was very close
I shrink from the shower of visions, crashin' down on me
while the hollow disorder of my life overcasts
the wreckage of faded years

Refrain:

It's been a long time since I had someone to talk to
I'm gonna take that lonesome train to the edge
of my illusions
wasted life, I push it away from my mind

Thorny flower of sadness,
carved in the vastness of my notions,
bends her cup of sorrow down on
the turmoil of an awakening world

Eternal turn of seasons
outlasts all restless human striving
even gorgeous kingdoms, being scattered and devoured
by never-ending celestial tides

STILL NO NEED TO GET NERVOUS

Unlimited, endless pleasure and real happiness
they're promisin' you
enlightenment, knowledge, immortality
they're tradin' with
all these spiritual masters, who pretend to have seen the
truth,
to fulfill a divinely mission here below,
when they, meekly smilin' and barefooted pass a collection
basket around, raisin' blissfully your devoutness
still no need to get nervous'

With religious insanity and misconstrued doctrines
of salvation, they're deceivin' you
well-calculated charisma, produced by TV and magazines
is dazzlin' you
psychopathic leaders, who unscrupulously take advantage
of you
claimin' that they can exorcize civilization's defects
generously referrin' to Bible, Marx, Koran and Cosmic
Manifestation
to deform you to tractable marionettes
still no need to get nervous

Ghastly, starved skeletons with widely opened eyes
are starin' at you
disgusting pictures of half rotten bodies live over satellite
are rattlin' you
the Third World Volcano, groanin' under stoked fanaticism
and starvation,
nobody knows, if it's gonna erupt and spit out
mankind's "Last War"
the sorcerer's apprentice, throwin' away his crown of thorns,
could threaten the insecure peace of our world
still no need to get nervous

END OF THE RAINBOW

Get ready brothers and sisters
there's a war a-comin'
can't you perceive the mongers shoutin'
madmen are on power

Hearts a-gonna stop poundin'
flowers a-gonna stop growin'
earth's a-gonna stop turnin'
no hand or foot will stir inside the shell of silence

Angels of annihilation will come down
through the bomb-blotched air
with iron faces reflectin' the spiral of terror
and grindin' tanks of roarin' scorn

Flames and smoke will erupt from bare woods and burnt
out cities
where armies clash in sudden blackness
tocsins will ring in the end of the human race
and no ship will return from the oceans of blood

Refrain:
Will this be the end of the rainbow?
Will this be the end of mankind's dreams?

Bomb dust over sleep villages
grenades in children's bellies
explosions that'll erase whole cities
its heat will melt the snow of the poles

Mother Earth ripped open by bomb blasts
bowed by the weight of throbbin' meat
sprinkled gently with fall out
death and power in shape of mushroom clouds

Politician's noble speeches fester like dirty sores
don't listen to the rubbish they talk
they don't know how to handle our future
with nuclear weapons, sacred prayers, national pride
and shattered truth

When shall we learn not to worship old metal
to stop wastin' money on armament race
it won't make this world a safer place
all you faint hearts and deaf ears:
Be aware!

STILL NO NEED TO GET NERVOUS (II)

Risin' inflation swells and crawls irresistibly
to corrode your plastic dreams
growin' unemployment breaks the spine of the ordinary man
impotent politician's view of man's future has given way
to disillusionment and gloomy helplessness
among those, who are concerned about nuclear safety,
ecological mismanagement and advancement's faith
still no need to get nervous

From slaveships to the ghettos
white profiteers displaced the culture of the blacks
humiliated, broken, slaughtered Indian identity
revealed God-given selfishness
you sowed injustice, suffering and hatred in reservations
and dead end streets
to heap up your neon heathen temples of exploitation
awakening self-consciousness and the wrath of the oppressed
could fatefully break out in the eighties
still no need to get nervous

On the threshold of a new time existential dread folds
his wings over the twilight of human future
lost orientation eclipses the turning point
of the people of the world
many of us take refuge from brutish reality
from adaptive duress and desolating environment
to liquor, simple country life and political inactivity
glacin' back at a radiant past
still no need to get nervous

THINKIN' OF A DISTANT FRIEND IN THE NIGHT

Summertime has gone too fast
rough winds cut loose faded leaves
rain clouds wrap around my solitude
autumnal tints cover deserted streets

On roofs and domes the mist slides silently down
touchin' tentatively shapes of mirrorin' chrome
behind shadowy park benches and grated towers
the asphalt sidewalk dissolves into dark corners

Diffused thoughts escape into the sleepless night
the unnotice death of a distant friend crosses my mind
I wonder how he endured the burden of his life
toppass away so young

Somebody hastenes through the drizzlin' rain
whose footsteps try to dash away from nights starred face
which gazes down on the heavenly hour glass
that'll crack when your time has come

TIMES ARE GONNA GET HARDER

A disastrous night goes down
where human misery is embraced
and the dreams behind cold walls
no longer can't be dreamt on

The cries of the ghetto
misused, mistreated for years
painfully rooted in American history
wielding torches, rampagin' through blood-soaked streets

Suddenly the seed has come up
cultivated with violence and joblessness
increasing inflation and ranklin' hate
has been vented in boilin' outrage

An old woman crouches stealthily in the shade
with frozen eyes amid her furrowed face
silently whimperin' for the death of two sons
slaughtered in the cruel war of the races

Refrain:
It could be a long hot summer
with a lotta lootin', a lotta shootin', a lotta killin'
ghettos in flames, children of scorn
"Burn, baby, burn!"

Double standard of justice and discrimination
brings about crimes committed by the Welfare Class
white repression triggers riotin'
you can't expect the blacks to be quiet and starve to death

But how far will it take you guys
if somebody gets killed or hurt
while others, who could be blamed for your fate
still make their money behind polished desks

You must break down racial barriers
tear down ragged apartments
don't legalize police brutality
under which the poor are sufferin' most

The voices to cool the anger, to plead for brotherhood
they were shouted down, but what are they gonna do
tomorrow
when the times are gonna get harder

NEW YORK (YA BRINGIN' ME DOWN)

Stranded somewhere in Survival City in muggy weather
amidst beehives of human megalomania due to be scrapped
I've seen a lotta creatures rummagin' in tilted garbage cans
I've seen a man perishin' in the gutter with a knife stabbed
in his back

Blarrin' transistors, stray dogs are sniffin' at phone booths
and darkened doorways
Pope's on screen, somebody jumps off the Brooklyn Bridge
poverty masks are flingin' off and witherin' away on
overcrowded sidewalks
uluatin', flashin', stinkin' sheet metal hyenas are spewin'
out disillusion and loss

Yellowish cab insects are buzzin' through the traffic jam
gorges of stone and glass are shaken by bangin' loaded
trucks
shroud gauze of waste gas hovers above speechless statues,
hidin' a drunken indian, who pisses at the historical
Spanish church

Frightened city sobs, pulsatin' Times Square hollers
obscenities
narcotics swallowin' mutants of alienation are leakin' out
the academy of thoughts
boneless businessmen accumulate property as evidence of
divine approval
blind street singer croaks: "New York, ya bringin' me down!"

Rib crunchin' in rockin' four wheeled battle ships
patrolin' metallic uniforms on duty emerge and disappear
waxy people bein' pushed in front of onrushin' trains
spasms of violence shoot through New York City muscles

Grand Central Station, people are crashin' their luggage
down
men are workin' the rails with smeared helmets
demented lookin' Jehovas' witnesses huddled on the
platform
can't get their message across

Big-bellied tourists are snappin' pictures of emaciated
Bowery bums,
who're sunbathin' in their rubbish coffins
a cratered carrion guzzler dances the "Sewer Waltz" for a
couple of dimes
in torn undershirts and dirty pants with a lots of wild fun

Urban animals are jammin' the avenues of Manhattan
flag poles are towerin' out the UN building like barrels
reptile creatures in pin stripe suits roller skatin'
on Broadway
past spray painted walls "system cripples!"

A few blocks from the Village the panorama changes
drastically
rugged ruins are piercin' like bayonet blades into the sky
chimneys rigged with clotheslines- backyard kids a-yellin',
screamin', laughin'
scarred junkies on the roofs- success a long hard climb

Madmen, beggars, saints, mutants of bureaucracy are
waitin'
in line for a token to ride the Down Town Express
bulgin' army of washouts, spilled upon unemployment offices
while landlords let go whole city blocks to ruin and wreck

Street gangs are crawlin' out their caves of grates and laths
behind junkyards and city dumps, our reposin' 21st century
epitaphs
psychological slaughterhouses and cultural brain washin'
stations
are producin' self-hatred and brutality

New York, appreciate your temptation and fascination
of your self-made destruction
Your insanity streamin' forth the fight of possession
the germ-cell of human failure

Now I stand in between the concrete graveyard
feelin' the poundin' strength of your monster hearth
Empire State Building's grinnin' at the worm with a guitar
nausea slowly subsides

ONLY A SPARKLE OF TIME

Bird songs wake me in the morning
softly flashin' light
seeps through the cracks of my window frame

Buddin' leaves, circlin' windmills
sunflowers in bloom
human longing emerges from the waters of sleep

Images of broken feathers
dance before my eyes
nudgin' me lightly before they hit the ground

Nature unfurls his blossoming carpet
winter backs away
there's magic sealed in every newborn life

Refrain:
When the sun crashes down to the edge of the earth
I'll still love you
and even if the dust of my traces might be blurred
I'm gonna love you

Watch the snow white horses sail by
forget about dark-painted days
blindin' us with sorrow and despair

What makes your words touchin'
the depths of my soul
what makes your poundin' heart echo in my mind

Give me strength to walk on
wanderer on the starway of tears
and if my paces grow heavy
let me die in faith

Endless risin' and fallin'
passin' of all things
what more is man than only a sparkle of time

ADVOCATE OF THE POOR

"They might kill me," he spoke with humbleness and caution
"but they can't kill the voice of truth!"
where the clergy normally keeps quiet and tolerates
suffering, torture and slaying in Latin-America

Salvadorans from all over the country are beggin' for help
clutchin' photographs of disappeared relatives and friends
- missing victims of arrests -
probably dead and buried hurriedly
somewhere between coconut and palm trees

Brutal repressiveness of the rich elite
don't let anybody standin' in their way
massacres in the barrios of the cities and
among the campesinos on huge coffee and sugar plantations

Refrain:

A hired gunman
shot him down
his blood was streakin' the white altar cloth
he fell on the floor, struck in the heart by a single bullet
a nun heard him whisper:
"God have mercy on their souls."

Security forces are executin' orders
from a few landownin' families
politically active peasants are being killed with machine
guns
what manifests the outrageous methods of the country
ruler's
to increase the property

He was father, protector, advocate of the poor,
condemnin' tyranny and terrorism
an adherent of liberation theology, which fills the people
with courage
to free themselves from oppression

Romero offered his blood as a seed of liberty
and a sign of hope,
to the cause of peace and justice
he was one of the very few "Men of God",
who'd spoken boldly against the violation
of human rights

Refrain:

A hired gunman
shot him down
his blood was streakin' the white altar cloth
he fell on the floor struck by a single bullet
a nun heard him whisper:
"God have mercy on their souls"

MODERN TIMES

On a stretcher they took his stiff body down the stairs
of a poorly furnished, unlocked apartment on fifth floor
near St. Mark's Place
wallpaper was flakin' off, shower dripped monotonously
roaches were crawlin' up and down fissured walls
smellin' of stale wine and rotten foodstuffs, a small tape
recorder on an antique stool without back
caked blood, straw sleeping mats, magazines scattered
all over the filthy ground
"Overdose of painkillers!" one of the small-lipped
lush-workers snapped

Refrain:

They found an unreadable notebook smeared with cat food
dumped it into the toilet bowl and flushed it away

In one of the most terrible moments all those years came
to the surface
all those memories shot through my mind
'bout a man I'd gone to school with, who tangled with
life's ambiguity
but I never supposed he'd go so far to commit suicide
his vulnerable, fragile personality had cracked under
the ruthlessness and hostile suspicion
of a "don't show weakness-society"
before we split up several years ago, he seemed to have
everything necessary
single-minded, ambitious, stuffed with material pretensions
but when silly habits take hold of you
you get convenient, fat and lose interest
then it's not much more than a highly-paid existence
between tooth paste and tedious self-content

Refrain:

Sometimes you could hear the tugs chuggin' on East
River Side
and bawlin' of drunks came floatin' from the midnight way

Unexplicably he freezed out, quit his job, left home and
family, he was hungerin' for a meaning in life
for that reason he moved to New York City, where he could
keep his head barely above the water
with dish washin', street sweepin' instead of a life in balance
Accidentally I met him one night as he was performin'
in a crummy local bar
with an awful accent and lousy, yet in some way honest
and deeply movin' songs
weary, dull eyes, puffy face I had to look twice to recognize
him
during an intermission we talked about the changes
both of us had undergone
he was subject to depressions and guilty feelings
as far as his family was concerned
he was exasperated by what he had experienced
and as he realized me, he was on the brink of tears
but it wouldn't have occurred to him to get back
to his wife and kids
for he couldn't make out any sense workin' his whole
fuckin' life just for pension
later on we philosophized on exhausted soil, exploited
labor,
economic bankruptcy and free enterprise that is going
to ruin our earth

Refrain:

But let me tell you
there's a whole lotta emptiness inside of us all
if you're different you'll be eliminated pretty soon

Puerto Rican hoodlums, ratty lookin' junkies
sittin' on the stoop
no matter what time you pass
garbage piled high, broken windows, you gotta live there
if you pretend to relate to the problems of those
hardest hit by recession
"Watch ya' guitar, Mr. Music Man!" they roared with
laughter
"This neighborhood is too bad for you!"
Crossed 2nd Avenue, with lowered head, accelerated pace,
not daring to look back
felt the whole block was mockingly watchin' me
however, nobody followed
I couldn't figure out what might have kept them from

beatin' me up, snitchin' my guitar
tremendously relieved I got to Broadway, corner 10th Street,
ready to dive into stranglin' anonymity
cars sloshed by, as I was frantically pushin' down the
faucet of a small brass basin
in front of a closed church
put my head under the jet of water till my trembling
slowly subsided

Refrain:

Ain't this world a beautiful place to be thrown into
the harder you try to drag yourself out of the mud
the more you fail

Crummy places, explodin' with all kinds of crazies
doors a-swingin', noises of comin' and goin'
mainly baleful soldiers, uncouth sailors, glowerin' laborers
could afford to spend some bucks on beer

outside they were leaning against lampposts and carfenders
hands-in-pockets, bowlegs, dawdlin' away their time
spittin', starin', cursin', watchin' cars roll by
cigarettes were hangin' from their mouths

Refrain:

An unshaven scarecrow in worn leather coat approached me
staggerin': I'm bambi, the deer! You know the difference
between a ghetto and a concentration camp? "

The jukebox blarred, the cashregister crooned
a dour bartender kept fillin' the empty glasses
same old folks were hangin' out there, sprawlin' along
the counter
munchin' on toothpicks, clutchin' their drinks

sputterin' blue neon light, spilled upon the wincin'
poverty parade, which was dancin' in the shade
city's froth besmirched the facade of wretchedness
a "lipsticked" third hand whore was screamin' with
hysterical rage

Refrain:

Move your fuckin' hippy ass outa here, or I'm gonna
split your skull!
You'd do better not to show up here again!

Thus I decided to look up an odd German philosopher
in a fallen-down tenement building, close to Central Park
who was givin' lectures at Columbia University of New York
a tall, bony, ascetic old man with indescribable radiance
and sparse hair,
emigrated with his parents from the NAZI's in the year '34

past poolrooms, amusement halls, peep shows and drugstores
shootin', shoe shinin', glitter and glamour
barbershops, where you can change your identity
and ageless, homeless, not very attractive bums, existin'
free from obligations

disembodied noise of car horns, moveable neon letters,
brightly lit,
stuck to ugly, noxious bastilles of mirror, metal and glass
fire escapes and scaffolds were windin' round eyesocket
buildings
perpetual busy-ness in the brooding heat of the night

sensitive Ad-space people, plastic grin, gigglin'
hobblin', chufflin', scurryin', saunterin' and creepin'
between symmetrical grafts and crevices,
sandwich booths, radio voices, bulbs, commercial breakers
and air hammer lungs

felt lost between contorted skyscrapers, slicin' the faint
moonlight like a guillotine
somewhere somebody was dyin', certainly wishin' not to
be born again
scrubwomen in deserted, illuminated offices
tattooed virility, species of Modern Times were gropin'
about deformed earth

colorful shirts were flappin', cold eyeballs flarin' in
taunting, down trodden, indifferent, cheerful, misceptible
faces in search of distraction, stashin' their stigmatized,
controlled brains
from time to time the vibratin' sound of the courthouse clock
ticked corrosively away

squares and parks were littered with paper towels and
guardians of law
transfigured and draped with repulsive winos, talkin' to
themselves
omnivorous gasoline dreams menaced to suffocate, to
crush you
as a fat, pink lacquered body thre his care into reverse
and backed out

Refrain:

Brief, electrical, skeletal, unphotographable moments
of Modern Times
Wall Street control station insanity

Columbus Circle, subway turnstile, on my way back to
the Village
doors slammed, train began to move
roar, lights, stations flashed by

lots of people, dressed up in stylish clothes, rings on fingers
nails glowed
some in ordinary suits, readin' papers, starin' out
dark windows or at the subway cop's truncheon
shuttlin' back and forth

Refrain:

West 4th street! I got out of the train, crossed the platform,
walked up some steps
'till I could see the nocturnal sky

A masked kid had been wounded attemptin' to stick up a
grocery store
his twitchin' body banged down the entrance steps
his face thumped to the stony ground
heads popped out the windows to take a look at a banality
of everyday existence

policemen with drawn up guns closed off the street, put up
road blocks, shuntin' the buggin' crowds of onlookers
flashlight had been turned on some kids, arms raised,
who were being pushed against a rusty balustrade

fists doubled-up, babel of voices grew louder
sly figures in the shadows without outlines were furtively
keepin' an eye on the bizarred night scene

Refrain:

You can't blame them for protectin' themselves from being
abused
it's better to trample on somebody, than to be trampled on

Paradoxically that incident reminded me of how I first
hit New York City in summer '78
how I was picked up from a photographer,
who must have felt that I was being a poor nut
in the city and

in utmost danger to be ripped off by a deft black guy
in blatant rags
tryin' to make me come with him to Harlem and crash
in his pad

as I got hung-up for the first time with all those
strange actin' Village outcasts, street philosophers
and curbstome saints
existential jugglers beneath the Washington Square arch,
who packed in sooner or later

in those days it took me a whole while to recognize their
disappointed dreams, screwy hopes and vain expectations
therefore I was profoundly impressed and stunned by their
fatal attitude towards life

also I hadn't been used to the exotic sounds of the Village
especially the wailin' saxophones corroborated with
sad, portentous humming of broken, lost and ruined
characters
which were able to kill you for lousy change
if they only would have been given a chance to

Refrain:
specialized in appearing so innocent and deliverately
helpless
only waitin' for the big score
their glazed, alert eyes were high on pills, weed, junk
or stuff like that

It was gettin' a little colder in the hours before dawn
as I made up my mind to head out west
it's always the same, runnin' away from something,
the boundaries of a cruel reality,
but after all most likely from myself

took the last bus to New York city limit
George Washington Bridge, stuck my thumb out at route 80
'though scarcely anybody passed by

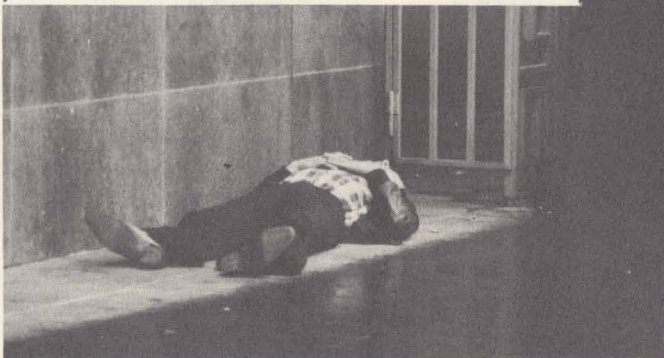
Other Album by Niss Puk Band:

SIDE I

1. TILL THE MORNING COME
(Images of dyin' Eden)
2. BACKSTAGE OF LIFE
3. NO MORE NUKES
4. BLEECKER STREET VISIONS

SIDE II

1. OF THESE NIGHTS IN A RAUNCHY HOTEL ROOM
2. WIND OF CHANGE
3. NICARAGUA
4. ANOTHER RAINY DAY IN N.Y.
5. GOTTA TRAVEL ON



an hour later blinkin' taillights of a smokin' truck,
slowed down for me, stopped, and we clattered
into the breakin' dawn
"Where we goin'?" I asked the cropped hair tough American
truckdriver, wearin' a plaid shirt, it's sleeves uprolled
"All the way out to the end of the world!"
his raspy voice pointed out with amusement

Anyway, I didn't worry about where he was goin' to take me
to and I was fallin' asleep in the back of his truck cabin,
decorated with posters of nude girls

Refrain:
In my dreams I could see the Mexican border, the Rockies,
Frisco loomin' ahead of me
and I was filled with the spirit of America

ROAD TO HEAVEN

How strong the wind might blow
we're on the road to heaven
nothing's gonna stop us
nothing's gonna turn us down

This train's heaven-bound
it rolls all day and night
nobody really knows'
whenever it's supposed to arrive

You don't need no money
or any legitimation
all you need is the spirit
to keep the wheels turnin'

Get on board of that train
rollin' to the coast of freedom
nothing's gonna stop it
nothing's gonna block his way

Lyrics are improvised as this whole simple song is
improvised.

