

## Denim phenoms

>> The magnetic attraction  
of Berlin's Jeans Team



AS ABOVE, SO BELOW: Jeans Team

By **RUPERT BOTTENBERG**

Balancing post-rock nuance and e-pop sparkle, punk energy and performance-art irony in varying measures, Jeans Team have proven themselves one of the most interesting and durable products of the late-'90s creative boom in Berlin, a city that JT co-founder Franz Schütte claims is as fun and vibrant as ever. Shaved back down to their original duo for live shows (Schütte and co-founder Reimo Herford—Henning Watkinson is on hand for studio work), Jeans Team aren't exactly going back to the drawing board.

**Mirror:** Has reduction to a duo changed the way you create and perform music these days? Have you returned to the ideas and strategies you used at the beginning?

**Franz Schütte:** If you are four people, you can recreate many more little parts that are in the music live, so we have to reduce the music in a certain way, and have quite a lot on backing tape. Also, we've been doing this since 11 years, so I think we've found a quite good way to find out what needs to be played live, and to transport the energy that we need for a live concert. That's changed a lot. In the beginning, we have backing videotapes, where you could see us performing on the screen, and then we doubled ourselves and played with ourselves. But somehow, we got away from this art thing and started to concentrate on the musical side.

**M:** Each of your records shows a new step in the evolution of Jeans Team. What direction will your music take from here?

**FS:** Right now, we are working again more on dance music. The last record, *Kopf Auf*, was kind of our guitar pop album, but that also has to do with the topics of the songs. We had very earthy topics—vagabonds and finding freedom by denying certain standards of society. For these topics, we needed instruments that are somehow earthy, where you see the person is standing on the floor while playing it. If you hear a real drum, or see a drummer sitting on a stage, he's definitely with his body attached to the floor. That's completely different from the second album, *Musik Von Oben*, which means "music from above." That's an album where nearly everything happens in the air, because it's all electronic sounds. The only thing that attaches you to the floor is the bass drum and sometimes the bass guitar. I think the new stuff is going to be more electronic again. Our topic for the new things, the ideas for the new songs, are not that earnest, a bit more sloppy, a bit more hook-line style, like in house music—you know, just one sentence and it goes on and on. It's more about doing magnetic, electronic dance music.

**M:** Will we hear some of that in Montreal?

**FS:** What we're doing right now is more of a best-of gig. We've only played Montreal once, but in Germany for example, people have known us a long time, so we said, come on, it's a very important point in the history of the band, so we'll do a kind of greatest-hits thing. I mean, we always made new versions of songs, changed them in a way that they suit us today, but I think it will be a very representative gig for people who don't know us at all.

**With Claass at Zoobizarre on  
Friday, Jan. 11, 10 p.m., \$12**

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