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Husky Rescue Headlines Electronic Music Festival

By Alec Luhn

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The mini-album “Deep Forest Green” has just been released in Russia.

Ever since the days of the famous Rolling Stones Mobile Studio van, many bands have retreated to a secluded location like a remote farmhouse or abandoned church to record, drawing inspiration from their new surroundings.

Helsinki-based electronic pop outfit Husky Rescue, who will bring its laid-back, electronic- and ambient-influenced indie pop to club Milk on Saturday as part of the Dreamtronica festival, has been taking this concept to the extreme.

The group's 2010 album "Ship of Light," which was inspired by band leader Marko Nyberg's UFO sighting at his home on an island near Helsinki and his subsequent trip to northern Norway, was recorded largely at a house near Lake Bodom, the site of a 1960 triple murder.

The band took nightly walks across the fields and even recorded one track at night in the

middle of a forest. Husky Rescue has been recording its latest material in Brooklyn (at the studio of a vintage-synthesizer collector), with singer Johanna Kalen laying down the vocals in the wardrobe of her home in Sweden. It recently recorded a track in Berlin, as well.

"After running my own studio for 10 years and recording also in all sorts of attics and summer cottages, it was really inspiring to record in an urban environment," Nyberg said via e-mail. "And I enjoy having contrasts," he added, referring to the fact that while he was exploring a studio of treasures in Brooklyn, Kalen was stimulating her creativity with walks in the Swedish woods.

Husky Rescue will headline Saturday's show, which also includes Danish electronic post-rockers Sleep Party People, French ambient pop trio SayCet, Japanese avant-garde composer Kashiwa Daisuke, and Russian post-rock bands I Am Waiting for You Last Summer and Aesthesys. Dreamtronica — marketed as a festival for "connoisseurs of electronic music and true dreamers" — is organized by FBITS, or Flowers Blossom in the Space, a Russian indie label with a focus on experimental and atmospheric music. The label has previously put on such shows as the post-rock festival Astral and the Scandinavian Wave Festival, which featured neo-classical music.

Although Husky Rescue will release its next album only in spring 2013, the mini-album "Deep Forest Green" has just come out in Russia. The band's previous releases mixed indie-pop melodies with atmospheric sounds and the gentle bleats and chimes of synthesizers, guitars and rare instruments. Like some of the other Dreamtronica performers, Nyberg has spoken about the deep influence cinematic music has had on his own work, and he's even scored films himself. In addition, Husky Rescue's music has been featured in commercials and TV shows, including the HBO series The Sopranos.

Although Husky Rescue has played in Moscow before, Saturday's concert will be the first time in Russia for two-thirds of the band: After "Ship of Light," Husky Rescue went through a lineup change, with founder Nyberg being the only member to remain.

The addition of new collaborators Kalen and Antony Bentley has not changed the band's overall direction dramatically. The eponymous single from the mini-album finds the band crafting its dynamic pop music more tightly than ever, placing interwoven post-rock guitars and an alternately sing-songey, alternately ominous vocal line over a steady four-on-the-floor beat (Nyberg mentioned analog drum machines as a major creative impetus at the moment). The gnomish mutterings of bassy synthesizers and a whistled background melody a la fellow Scandinavians Peter Bjorn and John complete the carefully painted picture.

"I really like the fact that [the new material] is more danceable than previous Husky music, but still it is lacking the typical qualities of dance music," Nyberg said.

It remains to be seen whether the new stuff will inspire concertgoers to dance Saturday, as Nyberg praised Moscow audiences for listening peacefully and intently at previous concerts.

Dreamtronica is on Saturday. 6:30 p.m. at Club Milk. 9 Ulitsa Sergeya Makeyeva. 1,500 rubles. Metro Ulitsa 1905 Goda. (495) 726-0998.

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