

THE PREQUEL

When Welsh bass player Stephen Gardener left Oslo-based post-punkers Infiniteloop in November 2009, little did he know about the butterfly effects his actions would spark. This change in line-up would lead to Terje Kleven joining the ranks as a guitarist, and signal the beginning of the Sleep Kicks saga. Terje, drawn out of a musical hiatus after ten exciting, but not very lucrative years in the lower divisions of the capital's music scene, fronting power pop bands Spoonfool and Elster, among others.

However, a change in sound and aesthetics was enough to lure Terje out in the limelight again and the dark vibes became the new default. Two years later, after a self-released EP landed the band gigs in Berlin and New York, Terje leaves Infiniteloop. After all, he is a songwriter and a vocalist and misses center stage.

Fast forward seven years and several musical interludes, the stars align and Stephen and Terje finally can join forces - in the same band at the same time. A Facebook ad from the former is what it takes: "Bass player looking for bandmates - Indie/shoegaze/post-punk." The time has come to put on the black shirt and dig out the effect pedals once again.

SLEEP KICKS

After the usual initialization run of writing material and changing members, the project takes off in August 2019 when Terje persuades his old bandmates Frode Gundersen and Jørn Landbakk to bring their sticks and picks, respectively, and join the force. Sleep Kicks as we now know it, is ready to take on the world.

The bandname's juxtaposition between the innocent and dreamy on one hand, and the restless and somewhat aggressive on the other, reflects the music quite well.

«We quickly found out that the four of us have too many different influences to be able to stay within the strict boundaries of post-punk» says Stephen, himself no stranger to throw in a bouncy dub-inspired bassline. Instrumental post-rock dynamics can be heard in several songs, while others lean on an almost krauty repetitiveness. Vintage drum machines and arpeggiated synths also keep claiming a bigger place on the sonic palette.

«The *song* always remains the most important thing, though» claims Terje, who takes turns with Stephen to write the tunes, and occasionally hints at his past as a popster. "There's always a melodic element, and we certainly don't shy away from a catchy chorus or a hummable riff!"

This accessibility, along with a flair for epic arrangements and an underlying sonic and lyrical darkness, places the band within a tradition perhaps best described as anthemic angst-pop, perfected by obvious 80's legends The Cure, The Chameleons and Echo and the Bunnymen, and taken into the new millennium by the likes of Placebo, Editors and The National.

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HELLO, WORLD!

The quartet don't waste any time, and knocks out a handful of tunes during an effective weekend at Oslo's renowned Taakeheimen Lydrike a few months later. The riffy and energetic "Hall of Shame" seems tailor-made as the band's business card and is released on leap day 2020. The epic follow-up "Recovery" – and its nearly seven minute-long music video from the empty streets of their locked-down hometown – resonates perfectly with the Corona vibe, and generates some nice reviews and a respectable number of plays, domestically and abroad. In the wake of third single "My Own Demon", the band goes on a short tour, visiting small pubs and large concert halls with their triumphant 90-minute set.

THE AFTERDROP

The tour provides the band with inspiration, confidence and even financial leverage to take the next step up the ladder: the debut album. Tiny, but renowned Chaka Khan studios is situated literally next door to their rehearsal room, and seems like the obvious choice. The switch from black metal legends Darkthrone to Sleep Kicks' catchy brand of indie rock is no match for Grammy winning producers Ole and Silje Huleboer, and the album is slowly coming to life during fall 2021. Terje puts down the lead vocals between a severe case of the flu and the birth of his son Alvin, while Ole turns the knobs on the rarest of vintage guitar pedals and Silje multitracks her angelic voice into the most beautiful choir you've ever heard on an indie rock album. The tracks are brought to Taakeheimen Lydrike for mixing and will finally be ready on vinyl and on all digital platforms on March 17, 2023.

«No Chains» is the first taster, showing a band that has grown and a band with *intent*. The single pushes its way into playlists and music blogs worldwide and lands the band a slot at the famous Øya festival, as a solid proof of the band's steady ascent.

The next single is the bouncy "Neptune", again showcasing new sides to the band's sound. This time, the synth is leading the way into what could almost be described as a singalong power-pop anthem. But the personal lyrics, the moving music video and the backstory about Terje's deceased friend Kyrre - that eventually finds its way to the national newspaper – shows a band with depth and ability to connect with people, proven by some great reviews and decent streaming stats.

"Words in Vain" is the last single before the album drops, and even if you'll find synths and angelic voices on this indie rock anthem, the band will tell you that *this* is Sleep Kicks 101. It is, in fact, one of the oldest songs in the cabinet, its origins harking back to 2003.

"Indeed, the title and the lyrical theme was there 20 years ago", explains Terje. "The song has gone through countless alterations and dead-ends, and tried out by 3-4 different bands, before it finally came together." Lyrically, Words in Vain deals with communication, or rather lack thereof, and the quite topical subject of getting heard. "Analogue or digital – it's all the same. Verbally or musically, how not to drown. Let's hope this single will help us break through the static noise, eh?" **Words in Vain is out on all digital platforms February 3, 2023.**

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PRESS

"...if our musical skills were actually taught, we'd like our money back!"

[Interview i *Illustrate Magazine*](#)

"A powerful call to action and revolutionary rallying cry, 'No Chains' by Sleep Kicks will have you shouting out against oppression while getting hopelessly addicted to their sound."

[Review of "No Chains", *The Other Side Reviews*](#)

"Sober yet uplifting, the song showcases Terje Kleven's stern mentor figure voice inciting you to fight the good fight!"

[Review of "No Chains", *Right Chord Music*](#)

"Sleep Kicks newest single 'Neptune' bears an atmospherically beautiful soundscape and an achingly raw lyrical message of grief"

[Review of "Neptune", *Existential Magazine*](#)

«Wow! This is good!»

[Review of "Neptune", *Ballade.no*](#)

"Yet again, Sleep Kicks have dropped a killer tune that balances darkness and light, depth and immediacy, in an example of outstanding songwriting craftsmanship. Or, put simply, 'Neptune' is another great tune from a consistently great band."

[Review of "Neptune", *Aural Aggravation*](#)

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