



Summer Lovin'

Datarock's cheeky dance-floor heatwave

By J. Niimi

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It's prime time to burn your party soundtracks for the long, hot summer. And in selecting those mixes, you'll want to include a track or two off the self-titled debut from Datarock, the Norwegian electro-pop duo of Fredrik Saroea and Ketil "Ket-III" Mosnes. With its groovy, goofy odes to BMX bikes, computer camp, and of course, l-o-v-e, *Datarock Datarock* is the perfect accompaniment for the beach, the back seat, and the dance floor. In songs like "Sex Me Up," butt-shaking beats meet equally greasy lyrics ("Sex me up/ And I'll sex you down ... / I'm into S&M/ I'm neither butch or femme ... / I'm into any man!"). But the naïf pop hooks, bargain-basement synths, and over-the-top vocals tip listeners off to the fact that Datarock are more about having a laugh than being your dog.



Datarock: summer workout pop.

Details:

Tuesday, June 12 at 9 p.m. Admission is \$13; call 771-1421 or visit

www.theindependentsf.com for more info.

"Sex Me Up' is really just a joke about all the super-sexual R&B you hear on the radio," explains singer and multi-instrumentalist Saroea. "It's got this very sexualized verse, and then this cuddly bear chorus," he adds with a laugh.

Saroea's relaxing on his veranda, and it's sunny in Bergen, in contrast to the gloomy weather he'd just endured in England. But he's certainly not complaining. Datarock's U.K. jaunt included a surprise cameo from Kav, the guitarist of late-'80s rave godfathers the Happy Mondays, who joined the group onstage in Newcastle for a few numbers. The pairing was quite apt: *Datarock Datarock* includes a tribute to the band's avowed Madchester heroes in the New Rave-ish track "See What I Care." "The fun thing is, now, Happy Mondays come to us!" says Saroea. "We're doing a remix of one of their songs. That's so cool!"

Datarock's taut grooves are also fueled by a hefty dose of late-'70s/early-'80s post-punk. Saroea name-checks Devo, A Certain Ratio, and PIL as big inspirations, and cops to the Talking Heads reference on "Fa-Fa-Fa"

(musically, as well as the lifted "Psycho Killer" refrain). The band's not shy about citing heroes — the song "Laurie" is all about Saroea's Laurie Anderson obsession ("I want to be Lou Reed, 'cause he's

with her. Ohh baby!"). Yet despite all the cheeky rock quotes, Datarock's blend of warbling Casios, chattering beatboxes, and melodic (if altogether wacky) vocals is engaging, inspired, and a hell of a lot of fun.

Saroea and Mosnes began making music together after meeting up at a Gus Gus concert in 2000. They recorded on a "cheap home computer setup," and released their first record, a 10-inch EP, on Telle Records, a label whose roster included early recordings by Norwegian indie acts like Kings of Convenience, Björn Torske, Röyksopp, and Norsk pop chanteuse Annie. (Fredrik credits Bergen's temperate weather for the dynamic local music scene: "In a city that rains 250 days a year, you have a lot of indoor activities.") By the time Annie's Web site first mentioned Datarock around 2004, the pair's self-titled debut had been self-released to local acclaim and scattered Internet praise.

Netzwerk Music Group eventually picked up the album, reissuing it worldwide this week in a slightly different version. Two original tracks were scrapped and four new ones added — including the infectiously dancy "I Will Always Remember You" (featuring Annie on backing vocals) — along with a couple videos. Datarock is also working on an album of remixes by other artists, though Saroea's keeping mum about the details.

Although *Datarock*'s tracks were mainly recorded as a duo ("Our drummer's been learning to imitate my weird playing," says Saroea), Datarock is currently touring the U.S. as a four piece: with a drummer Saroea refers to only as "L.A. Gear," and a keyboardist. A prominent Norwegian jazz saxophonist will also be joining the fold on the final dates.

Saroea is psyched about playing in the U.S. for the third time, as the breakout success of American electro-indie bands like LCD Soundsystem has paved the way for up-and-coming Scandi-pop. "When we played in New York, we had like 15 people dancing onstage. Our last show in L.A. was sold out," says Saroea. "I heard Lindsay Lohan was trying to get in."