

Antti Paalanen - Meluta



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Meluta

Rockadillo (www.rockadillo.fi)

A shaman, a magical weaver of ancient healing spells...

No, not all Finnish accordion players of recent times can be called that, but I just had to try and see what that kind of opening line would look like, because I'm somewhat at a loss for words. So I will start by borrowing a few from my Finnish colleague Jyrki Kallio, writing about "Class of 99," the 15th anniversary concert to celebrate The Common Folk Club in Tampere.

"Preceded by [Puhti](#)'s boisterous song "Sipiläs," our space was then invaded by the noisy 3-row squeezebox of the grand vizier himself, Antti Paalanen. Having contemplated the characteristics of his instrument thoroughly, he has arrived at a clear answer of his very own. In the hands of the man from South Ostrobothnia the accordion is manhandled in a manner that hammers intensive shamanism into wolfram carbide, in a furnace of growling, throat-bellowing and progressive surrealism. The man and his accordion dove hand in hand into waters so deep that upon surfacing, having spent his last lungful of oxygen, the listener has the sense of having visited the furthestmost frontiers of *unexplainability*."

Unexplainability may not even be a word in English, but in Finnish, "selittämättömyys" sums it up perfectly.



"Class of 99" was only the second time I've experienced Antti Paalanen, so I have some catching-up to do. This is his third album and the first on a "major" label -- major in a roots music sense, since Rockadillo has been bringing Piirpauke, Wimme Saari and others to all parts of the globe for a long time.

Paalanen has been very busy for years, both studying for a doctorate at the Sibelius Academy and playing in many different bands, most notably in Hehkumo with Puhti's Anne-Mari Kivimäki and Pauli Hanhiniemi, a Finnish rock star turned rootsy.



Listen:

"The Final Waltz"

"ACC Rider"

"Yeah Mama"

"Judgement"

"Angus"

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Antti Paalanen - Meluta (We Wanna Make Some Noise)



The first thing you need to see and hear is his energetic video visualization of some tracks. "Meluta (We Wanna Make Some Noise)" goes a long way in explaining it all. "Kraftsman" can be said to be more of the same, with occasional softer spots. "[Breathe](#)" from his previous effort *Breathbox*, is slightly calmer, but still quite breathless.

Antti Paalanen - Kraftsman



So, here we have a veritable John Lee Hooker of the "kurttu" or "hanuri" - the diatonic accordion. *Meluta* is relentless - a hypnotic and supremely addictive record. And much like Hooker, the listener has a constant "I could do that" feeling, even if that is impossible, with a subtly and intricately constructed record like this. Analyzing separate tracks is almost pointless, because the few calmer moments are simply overpowered by the sheer heaviness of it all. I surrender to the spell. - Waldemar Wallenius

Further adventures:

- Visit the artist online at www.anttipaalanen.com
- It's all in Finnish, but you can see lots of [Jyrki Kallio](#)'s photographs of Paalanen (as well as other artists) at the "Class of 99" concert in Tampere.

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