

## MEGAreviews live

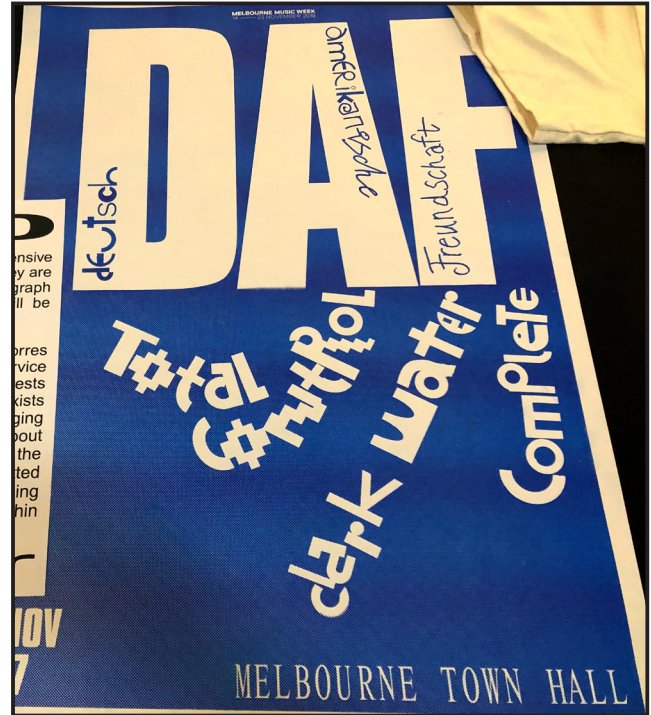
# DAF. Melbourne Music Week @ Melbourne Town Hall 17-11-2019

by Michelle McGoldrick

Melbourne Music Week threw everything at its' 10th anniversary this year with an inspired lineup of local and international acts including Stonefield, Body Type, Total Control, Sarah Mary Chadwick and Robert Henke. Over 350,000 music lovers have enjoyed MMW in the past ten years and this year Melbourne's cityscape was utilised as venues for the festival - Melbourne Town Hall, the State Library of Victoria, the Argus Building and Australian Centre for the Moving Image. (ACMI) The gig that had Writer On The Road jumping up and down was the inaugural Australian performance of German electropunk duo DAF (Deutsch Amerikanische Freundschaft.) Forty one years in the making - everyone at Melbourne Town Hall was pumped and three support acts set the adrenaline before DAF's appearance.

COMPLETE gave three intermittent sets but nothing interrupted the nerve-steeling flow of their sounds as they delivered hesitant tones which commanded the audience to sit in the anticipation and enjoy the ride to no particular destination. COMPLETE's final set saw the singer return to the stage with skin coated in white and wearing a g-string. It was a reminder of a time when male performers weren't afraid of a little flesh on stage, or when men would dress up (or down) for fun. Control offered naked theatre, industrial mime, physical poetry and inhuman roaring whilst the hooded menaces at the vocalist's side helped create the apocalyptic, hypnotic trance. Backing tracks were crisp, linear - and at times catchy as a pop song and equally transparent in their quest to shift boundaries between music and theatre.

Final support was **Total Control** whose singer merged anarchistic tones reminiscent of the ghosts of **Ian Curtis** of **Joy Division**, **Dugald Mackenzie** from Melbourne's 80's punk visionaries **Venom P. Stinger**, with odd shades of Peter Garrett's stiffened moves. Was post punk ever so sure of itself as Total Control? Sure enough to belt out mean bass lines that took precedent at times against backing guitar riffs that even sounded a little pretty - but not for long. The set at Melbourne Town Hall started friendly enough, but it gradually progressed to a garage punk journey that threw in upstarts like a melodic, **Hendrix**-inspired blast of wah-wah, or shards of contrasting



The DAF gig poster

experimental electronica. The band are self-proclaimed fans of post punk synth and drum machine programming and **Total Control** know how to capture the soaring optimism of the post-punk period when electronica infiltrated music and freed it from the restraints imposed by a punk movement that had gone on too long and imploded on itself. After punk, music wasn't afraid of anything anymore and **Total Control** dive right into the joy.

**DAF**: a grinning **Robert Gori** finally swaggered onto the stage and the electricity coming from the audience could have lit the band's synthesisers. Gori flicked the presets, then slid in behind the drum kit and waited for the original electro-punk **Gabi Delgado-Lopez** to appear. No frills, no gimmicks, stern but elegant; Delgado-Lopez quickly radiated his distinct communicable style by using his body as much as his voice to connect with the audience: crouching low to sing straight into the crowd, intense eye contact - the man has no fear of his Melbourne comrades who have idolised DAF's sound since the 1970's.



**Melbourne Town Hall**  
Photo: Michelle McGoldrick

Gorl worked the kit by adding nothing particularly visual but a live drum sound, particularly the loose snare skin, sounded pleurably shabby within the mass of electronic power. DAF's programming delivered bottomless rumbling punches which backed heroic vocals and contentious gestures including a mock arm salute - DAF are a long way from Germany yet never quite German enough anymore it would seem.

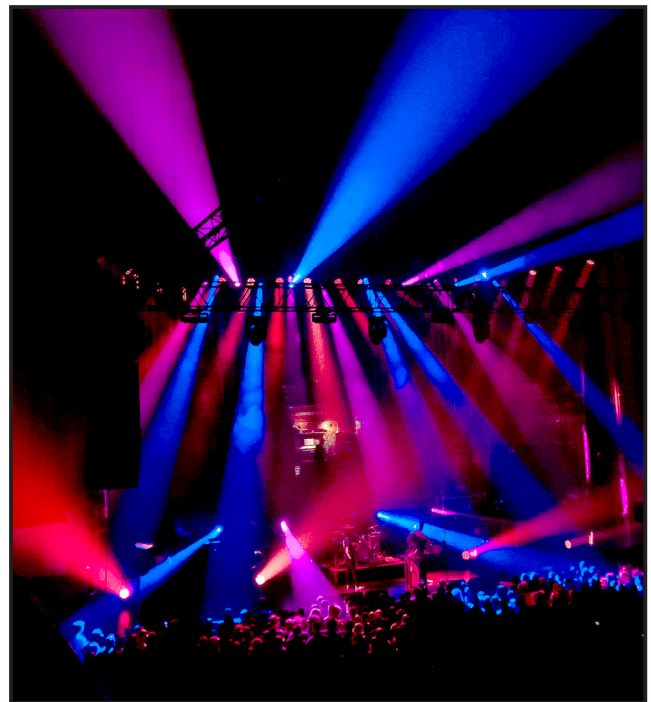
Delgado-Lopez sang and talked in Deutsch throughout the entire set where references to the homeland were frequent and hardcore nostalgia was played out through the songs: DAF in 2019 is heavy and sharp as ever, just as DAF can be cold and brutal as they ram the industrial love home where it hurts most. These nightclub kings cause no loss of blood from the pumping beat of the 80's, and they know how to take an audience into very dark and impish places in equal measure. Not surprising, the beat-addicted "Der Mussolini" created an immediate wave of movement with its' gleeful pump and once contentious lyrics of *dance the Mussolini ... dance the Adolf Hitler ... move your ass around* (noting in interviews DAF said their lyrics were parodies of words and phrases and merely reflected Delgado-López's fixations with the sounds in particular words.)

"Kebab Traume" took off with shady references to counter-culture, spies and barbed wire in Germany held together by

Gorl's warmly robotic drum sounds which faded out in rhythm and blues. Always one for surprises; a fun and frisky inclusion to the set was Delgado-Lopez's arse-slapping homage to **disco** which hit the right notes of camp and grind.

Three encores ended the night including Delgado-Lopez's slapstick *Sieg Heil* in a 'blink and you'd miss it' moment from the wings of the stage. Far from paying homage to a gesture that is illegal in Germany (and other parts of the world), it was a defiant sign that DAF's music will never be shy of the influences it rebelled against for the ultimate victory.

DAF's music will always be synonymous with sex beats and hard partying and DAF at Melbourne Town Hall was sex on a stick for the devotees with relentless stamina and validation of human interaction with the power of the electronic instrument. **Melbourne Music Week** excelled itself by bringing DAF to the festival where audiences were pinching themselves to check if it was real ... DAF, Melbourne, 2019. Surreal times. *Dankeschon* Melbourne Music Week - you just keep on giving.



**Total Control**  
Photo: Michelle McGoldrick

