

Grandma Lo-Fi

Kristín Björk Kristjánsdóttir aka Kira Kira shot a movie about an old lady who decided at the age of 70 become a musician. Previous to her concert in Dresden Kristín answered a few questions about it.

How did you discover the works of Sigríður Nielsdóttir?

A little bird told me about her. Sigríður always had a great talent with communicating with the feathered ones. So at first I was completely blown away by her amazing music, but it was after we first met her and discovered what an incredibly charming fire cracker she is that Orri Jonsson and I decided to make the movie.

In seven years she recorded 59 albums, 687 songs. Did you listen to them all?

Yes! Believe it or not. It took some time, and we were still plowing through the catalog at the final stages of the edit, but we made it to the end and kept discovering new jewels until the very last moments of creating the film.

How long did you accompany her with your camera?

The whole process was about 8 years, but that's including all the doodling with animation, super-8 tinkering and endless adventures in the editing process.

How did she like the idea of shooting a movie about her?

She loved it!

Did she see parts of it before she died?

Yes, she saw an early rough cut and enjoyed that very much.

Did or do Icelandic musicians cover her style, using cheap pre-recorded rhythms and self-recorded sounds? The Lo-Fi style seems to be quite in fashion.

The Lo-fi is in the air, sure.

In what way did she influence artists like you? Was it the 'I can do whatever/whenever I want it'-attitude of hers?

Yes partly. She was always a "go for it" kind of person who never let pesky devils like self-doubt or other people's opinions affect her work.

It is your first feature movie. You are a musician, so did it necessarily had to be a movie about a musician?

It was necessary to make a movie about Sigríður Nielsdóttir. It simply had to be done. We didn't care if we had no idea how to make a movie when we started out. I guess that's the cocky rascals we are, we just went for it like Sigríður would have, in blind faith that we'd make a beautiful movie. You can't let a little thing like not knowing how to do something stop you from doing it anyway. We all just threw our talents in various other fields in the air and the result is Grandma Lo-fi.

In what way did Sigrídur Níelsdóttir influence your music as Kira Kira? It sounds dreamy, rather experimental and not too Lo-Fi. Is it the creative usage of noises and sound snippets you put together on stage?

It's mostly the spirit which drives Sigrídur in her creations, but we are also both avid sound collectors. We both gather sounds on our pocket recorders and use them in our music. Hers just happened to be a rather big tape recorder that she wore around her neck.

Do you plan on shooting another movie?

Yes. It's a secret for now. But I am scribbling away at a new script.

Is your label "Kitchen Motors" still running? I couldn't find any news about it.

"Kitchen Motors" went into hibernation a few years ago. But the spirit of what we did, as a collective, lives on through my work, in the way I love bringing people together and creating exciting, playful collaborations.

Juliane Hanka