Röyksopp - Junior (2009)

1. Happy Up Here (2:43)
2. The Girl And The Robot (4:26) *play*
3. Vision One (4:59)
4. This Must Be It (4:41)
5. Royksopp Forever (4:59)
6. Miss It So Much (5:01)
7. Tricky Tricky (5:59)
8. You Don't Have A Clue (4:33)
9. Silver Cruiser (4:36) *play*
10. True To Life (5:50)
11. It's What I Want (3:06)

Personnel
* Röyksopp – production, synthesizer, sampling, programming (all tracks); vocals (tracks 2, 11); strings, string arrangements (track 2); vocoded mystique (track 7); bass (track 10),
* Kato Ådland – bass (track 5),
* Karin Dreijer Andersson – vocals (tracks 4, 7),
* Anneli Drecker – vocals (tracks 3, 8, 10, 12[a]); backing vocals (tracks 2, 11),
* Linda Fay Hella – additional vocals (track 5),
* Lykke Li – vocals (tracks 6, 12),
* Robyn – vocals (track 2),
* Davide Rossi – strings, string arrangements (tracks 2, 5, 8, 9),
* Ole Vegard Skauge – bass (track 10).

More often than not, categorizing Röyksopp into the subgenre of downtempo electronica can be an accurate choice. “Chill-out music” is a simplistic and linear term that some may scoff at, but there is no denying Röyksopp’s importance within the fledging music subgenre that gained prominence in the late ‘90s and early ‘00s. In 1996, Air’s Moon Safari was one of the first

heralded releases to utilize this downtempo ideology without dwelling exclusively on trip-hop or IDM, opening up boundaries for electronic artists that tired of choosing between bass-pumping club mixes, percussive trip-hop, and the form of IDM that was ushered in by Warp Records in the early ’90s. They may not have been the first to revolutionize electronic music and its eventual implementation into forms of rock, pop, and other genres, but their 2001 debut, Melody A.M., broke new ground in its cohesive adaptation of electronica’s new image. They integrated the lush, synthesized ambience of Boards of Canada within the pop-minded sensibilities of Air, resulting in a style of downtempo electronica that was able to remain vivid and serene while simultaneously emitting a series of pop-centric hooks and sharp production that made their placements in clubs or commercials hardly startling. In escaping from the countless number of electronic subgenres and rash stereotypes, Röyksopp made a name for themselves with an astoundingly unique style in their first attempt at innovation.

Four years after the release of Melody A.M., the Norwegian duo underwent a considerable stylistic transition within their own previously presented form of downbeat electronica. The Understanding showcased a more restrained version of Röyksopp despite their higher emphasis on dance music. The most glaring difference between both albums, though, was the addition of vocal performances. As it turned out, this was the primary result of The Understanding’s weaker reviews, as critics often found the duo’s focus to be decreased as a result of vocal additions that often seemed forced or detrimental to a song’s structure or tone. The Understanding had its highlights, but most fans of Röyksopp yearned for an album that traced back to the instrumental tendencies of Melody A.M. while showing their new adoration for dance-like vocal accompaniments in a more cohesively expansive form. The Understanding lacked the overall ambitiousness of Melody A.M. with arrangements that were more repetitive and predictable despite their melodic nature. To release an album where the sporadic vocal highlights of The Understanding were infused within the experimental keyboard-led instrumentation of Melody A.M. would presumably be the best of both worlds for fans. And while integrating the otherworldly concepts of Melody A.M. is a certain challenge, fans should be delighted with the presentation on Röyksopp’s third and newest album, Junior. ---Mike Mineo, obscuresound.com

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