

Soldout



Soldout's David Baboulis and Charlotte Maison pictured in our office's backyard

Almost a decade into their career, Belgian electro rock outfit Soldout is far from running out of ideas. The two-piece, known for its signature blend of 80s new wave with electronic beats, catchy melodies and rocky riffs, just unveiled its new single *Wazabi* in May and is now working on a third record, scheduled for release early 2013. We invited Charlotte (29) and David (38) over to our offices on a summery Tuesday afternoon to talk about recording their new album, writing a movie soundtrack for the very first time and partying in Berlin.

Photographer GRÉGOIRE PLEYNET Interview SARAH SCHUG

Charlotte, you started out with classical music. It's quite a way from there to electro rock. How did that happen?

Charlotte: Well, I learned the basics of music theory just like all the other children and I also learned to play the piano. But what I really dreamed of was becoming a conductor. I always practised with my brother's magic wands in front of the mirror.

Do you think this still influences your music today?

C: Definitely. I think a composer like Chopin has elements in his music that can be found in today's pop. Just think of Agnès Obel for example.

How did you two meet and how did you realise you wanted to make music together? Looking at your different backgrounds that was not an obvious choice.

C: I recorded a demo with covers of jazz songs, of Nina Simone for example. And a friend of mine passed it on to David because he thought we should do something together.

David: I think we really complement each other. And we have a common vision. I was more of an autodidact when it comes to music. When I was 14 or 15 I started playing around with my computer and my synthesiser. Charlotte and me just wanted the same thing at the same time and really understood each other. Her music was a new universe for me just as my music was a new world for her.

I heard you are working on a movie soundtrack, can you tell me more about that?

C: Yes! The movie is called "Puppy Love" and the director is a friend of ours. We actually just saw the first cut and really liked it.

D: It's very different from what we usually do, because everything needs to be based on the director's instructions and the atmosphere of the film. Of course we keep our style but we go in a direction that is less dark than usual and more pop, as the film is about two teenage girls. And there will also be some songs that are quite rock, with lots of guitars.

As this is the party issue: What's the best party you've been to recently?

D: The best ones are always the ones that are not planned, when you just want to have a beer and in the end you're not home before the sun comes up. The best night recently was in a huge loft in Brussels that belongs to a few architects. All doors were open and there were DJs everywhere. A friend from New York was visiting and he just loved it, he said even in New York you would never find something like this. We told him that it's like that every day in Brussels, haha.

I have a question regarding your band name, which makes it very difficult to find you on the net. Has that ever been a problem for you?

D: When we made up the name Soldout we weren't even thinking we'd ever play concerts. It just went out of control at one point. But when we were programmed as the support act for the tour of Front 242 they considered not putting us on the flyer because they were afraid everyone would think the shows were soldout and no one would show up!

C: When we chose our name, the Internet wasn't that important yet. We only checked if the name already existed.

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You released an album in 2004, then in 2008 and now again four years later. How come it always takes you four years to come out with something new?

D: That's not on purpose! After every record we feel like having a break. We don't want to do the same thing again, so we need to search and grow, and that takes time. Some bands tour and prepare their albums at the same time, but we prefer to concentrate on one thing.

C: Each time we reflect a lot on what we did, what was good and bad, where we want to go... It's important to give yourself time to discover other bands and styles and get inspired.

What was the inspiration for your upcoming record then?

D: There's more than just one influence. We wanted to work more on melodies and the voice. Before our music was very rhythmic. I think we are getting closer to our own sound. We always keep what we liked from before and combine it with something new.

C: What I like the most is when people say it's different but still recognise our sound. It's

hard to find your own thing because you constantly get influenced by everything you listen to.

How far along are you with the album? And where did you write it?

C: We are quite busy with it at the moment, not everything is finished. Last fall we went to Berlin for three weeks to come up with new material. Here in Belgium there's just too much to do all the time, we get calls from friends who want to meet up etc. But in Berlin we could lock ourselves in and do nothing but music. We tried that for the last album too, in the Ardennes, and that didn't work, because we don't really have the scout spirit. We need to be in a city, that's why we chose Berlin.

There wasn't too much distraction in Berlin? Did you go out a bit?

D: Of course we went out a bit, we had to see the legendary Berghain. We stood in line for one hour but it was worth it. The interior is amazing, it would be cool to play there one day. What's so great in Berlin is that everyone goes out for the music and people really dance, whilst in Belgium people mainly go out to flirt, for the wrong reasons basically. But Brussels is changing too, and in a good way.

Why is your new single called Wazabi?

D: When I work on music with the computer and start a new file I'm obliged to give it a name. First I just numbered them and then I started giving them weird names, but we would never keep them as song titles. But we liked Wazabi and just kept it.

Why did you decide to release Wazabi as the new single?

C: We have actually some other songs that sound more like singles than this one. But we didn't want to do the same thing again. It's less evident with Wazabi, but we don't like to do what others expect. Also, the Internet brings the advantage that we are not really dependent on radios anymore.

How is the new album different from the previous ones? What's new?

C: We focus more on melodies and the voice. The single is already much calmer and quieter than what we usually do. We were a bit scared for the live shows because our concerts have always been very dancy, but then we can always pull out some violent old tracks if necessary. People have always told us that they loved our live shows but wouldn't listen to our albums at home – with the new one they will do that.