

Front View is the album debut of film-maker and musician Helena Ratka, alias Pose Dia. A soundtrack and theatre composer, as well as resident DJ at Hamburg's Golden Pudel Club, Ratka emerged onto the scene as one half of Shari Vari (together with Sophia Kennedy). Now all these pathways or winding roads have converged to create Pose Dia and an impressive album of many facets – a self-assured debut.

"The origins of the Pose Dia name go back to my great aunt who was a dancer in the 1920s. Some years ago, I heard an old tape of a home concert with her and her husband. He was a composer and she was singing. Her delivery was similar to my own style today. I was thinking about a name for my solo project when I remembered a picture on the wall at my great aunt's of an abstract character named Pose Dia."

Born in Hamburg, where she continues to live and work, Helena Ratka played the saxophone in her school's big band. She then set the sax aside and began experimenting with electronic sounds, initially with film soundtracks in mind for her studies. It was around this time that she picked up a regular DJ gig at the Golden Pudel Club as Ratkat, which led to her meeting Sophia Kennedy. The pair formed a duo, Shari Vari, recorded an album and played numerous concerts. This collaboration galvanized Ratka into focussing her efforts more intensely on making music, a welcome counterweight to the somewhat drawn-out process of film-making.

Early demo sessions laid the groundwork for Front View.

"The album was produced in different places between 2018 and 2020, mostly in my studio at home. Some tracks or ideas came to me in Heidelberg and Lübeck, where I was working on music for theatres. My favourite place to work on new pieces is a house in solitude where I can concentrate exclusively on the recording process."

The resulting album takes us on a mysterious journey through a darkish landscape. Pose Dia's tracks assume the most diverse forms – from supercooled synth-wave sounds or the weightless effortlessness of pop on the one hand, to the dystopian urgency of contemporary club music or flashes of hip-hop on the other. In spite of this panoply of influences and blackwall hitches, the music is never drowned out in a sea of influences, instead the songs radiate a magnetism all of their own. Within the first few sequencer-driven bars of the opening track At The Beach, the listener is well and truly hooked.

The unique quality of Pose Dia's music may owe something to Ratka's pictorial way of working:

"My art is based on the visualization of sound, especially when it comes to the lyrics. The words always follow the sound. I rarely make notes beforehand or use found fragments of poetry. Most of the lyrics materialize in jams, when I'm listening to new music or beats and start making noises with my mouth. Random words which gradually crystallize into a more concrete idea of an abstract story."

These enigmatic stories, sounds, words and voices in the role of instruments help to make Front View into such a kaleidoscopic album, serene and yet tumultuous, minimalist and tender yet capable of exploding in raw anger.

Daniel Jahn