



## THE BIOGRAPHY OF THE ORIGINAL YAMAHA BOYS FROM SILINJÄRVI

Now long established as one of Finland's most innovative electronics-based instrumental groove exports, Aavikko emerged in the mid-1990's totally from the leftfield. Their seemingly demented brand of quasi-psychedelic fairground / nightclub entertainment, disconcertingly fusing a 60's spaghetti western feel to slavic pop hit melodies, was emphatically out of character for an unassuming teenage trio from the deepest small village humdrum of Siilinjärvi, in the cultural wasteland of eastern Finland. Armed only with cheap electric organs and a drum set, Aavikko ("The Desert") were one of the few acts anywhere to have the vision and insight to completely discard the clichés and conventions and to create something that is genuinely entertaining and ambitiously original at the same time. Not surprisingly, it didn't take long for Bad Vugum, Finland's individualist label, to call dibs on Aavikko's suspect services, and their collaboration got off to a fittingly innovative start with the two-format release of the band's eponymous debut EP (1996): the MCD featured "hi-fi" studio versions of the same uneasy-listening hit tunes that the 7" vinyl boasted as primal mono recordings. "Monumental fun. A whole new era of exotica is emerging from under the North Star... This is the record of the year" offered the Spex magazine in Germany, without really realizing how compatible the Aavikko Groove and Teutonic Tastes would prove...

By the time of "Derek!", the debut album (Bad Vugum 1997), the fidelity distinctions were dropped in favor of a 'best of both worlds' type of solution, highlighting the deliciously raw yet efficiently clear sound that complemented Aavikko's grand scheme of things equally well. With its sheer musical class and full-on versatility, "Derek!" entertained from start to finish; it sported everything from the band's 'trademarked' surf-house to maniacal monkey-jazz, from delicate faux-lounge moments to grating avantgarde screech, from ethnic rhythms to quasi-disco boogie blast and miraculously, managed to make perfect sense! The underground success of "Derek!" continued in Germany, where Humppa Records jumped at the chance of licensing the album, to a unison of enchanted praise from the more expert Central European press.

Tours in Germany, Switzerland and Austria followed, notably opening for the quirky electro-chanson popsters Stereo Total, with whom Aavikko soon formed a mutual appreciation society. This also earned them a slot on a double 7" compilation (Bungalow 1998) of rather unusual acts covering Stereo Total's hit "Holiday Inn". In 1998 Aavikko started cooperation with Hawaii Sounds. This first bore fruit in the shape of the hit EP "Oriental Baby" (1999), which witnessed the trio seemingly seeking a slightly more accessible way of recording.

Constant touring and endless revision of new material delayed the making of the second album "Multi Muysic" (Hawaii Sounds / Spinefarm records) until Autumn 2000, but it proved emphatically worth the wait. They had managed to expand on their already awe-inspiringly wide canvas of 'other worlds, other sounds' by introducing some organic saxophone, and a high-octane Kraftwerk pastiche, to boot ("Viitostie", also released as a pre-album CD single, with three bonus tracks).

In 2001 Aavikko invited their German friend, the dadaistic organ artist Felix Kubin for a small tour in Finland. After this tour they completed their long-in-process single "Superlake Beat", later released by experimental scottish record label Diskono. Year 2001 offered other international adventures as well; after concerts in Glasgow and London, Aavikko was invited to visit the BBC studios for a Peel Session. In October, after a successful tour with Barbara Brockhaus, Aavikko were financially able to put up their own record label, Muysic For Peoples.

The following year, while busy with their record label, Aavikko expanded their musical know-how to the world of television and multimedia. Their popular theme for "Kumman Kaa" TV series topped the GSM ring tone charts for three months. In July Aavikko flew to San Francisco to start their first US tour, a coast-to-coast journey of 21 dates. To celebrate this tour, Aavikko and their tour companion Mono Pause released a single (Electro Motive, 2002) together, both groups covering each other's songs. In Las Vegas Aavikko met an exotic singer called Kabar (who apparently had escaped from Guantanamo prison camp), and together they recorded "Eye fo the Leopard" (Muysic-05), first "schlexotica"- song in the world.

Having already taken their gospel of 'supergroovy supermarket party music from Hell' to such exotic and uncharted territories as Iceland and Portugal, with much more planned to follow, the world seems like Aavikko's oyster soon. At the very least, Aavikko must be one of the premier Finnish acts to have the potential to appeal equally to chart-oriented music lovers as well as marginal cult fanatics.

Biography by Kari Heikonen (some parts by Biff Johnson)