AGF

by Susanna Bolle   Photos: Uli Dziallas

"Are you ready? Are you ready to produce... Sunlight?" The words are a direct challenge, however playful. No bullshit. No beating around the lyrical bush, as Antye-Greie Fuchs kicks off "REfail," the fourth track on her second solo record as AGF, *Westernization: Completed*. It's the launching point in a 5-minute, 21-second call to creative action set aloft, bouncing lightly over a beautifully crafted jaunt of bubbling electronics and hip-hop beats. Forget the lingering stereotypes about the coldness of computer music: There's nothing coldly anonymous about any of this. AGF spins what she calls e-poetry, tells it as she sees it, through words and finely sculpted sound. It's the digital made personal—every word, every sound.

The westernization that AGF documents on this latest record occurs at an intimate level; it is the story of her navigation of the modern, post-Cold-War, digital world, of life online. As she lays out in the autobiographical "Contemporary Westernized," AGF grew up on the wrong side of the Berlin Wall in an East German city not far from Berlin, insulated and isolated from much of Western culture and its values, both good and ill. She began making music as a teen doing the singer-songwriter thing, and first began experimenting with electronics in 1993 as one half of Laub with musical partner Jotka. Together the two have created lovely, gently disjointed electronic pop on albums like *Kop-*

flastig, *Unter anderen bedingungen als liebe*, and 2002's *Filesharing* (all on Berlin's Kitty-Yo imprint), pairing AGF's unusual vocals with prepared guitar and electronics.

AGF, the solo artist, was born with *Head Slash Bauch* on Kit Clayton and Sue Costabile's label Orthlorng Musork. In contrast to Laub's skewed vocal pop, AGF's solo work was a more freeform experiment, combining voice and laptop, where her voice was simply a single element in a larger, swirling storm of subtly rendered sounds. In place of narrative lyrics, she read fragments of computer code, HTML, technical manuals, and the like, her voice submerged in a warm sea of clicks and whirrs. While the