

Q: How did you get involved with music? How did it first start for you?

A: Usually like anyone else, I listened to music on the radio. After some time I found some stuff that I liked most and that was around 1983..85, when producers just started to make special 12 inch mixes of normal radio play version of a song. So I thought that's quite interesting. Later in the '80s, some bands were coming up with special, different sounds, like S-Express, Bomb The Bass, Inner City and stuff like that. This was stuff that I started with.

After one or two years more, around 1990 I started buying some underground "club" records, but that was when the party scene over here first started. I went to some of these parties and the clubs and I tried to find out what kind of music they were playing, because the music was very different from what you heard in the daytime. I tried to find the records, it took some time, but finally I was able to find them and after a few years time, I started DJing with this "backstock".

Q: How did you start producing?

A: First I was a record collector for some years, then I thought `there are many common things in a lot of these records...'. So they must have mostly similar equipment. I was interested more the backgrounds, trying to get some of this equipment. But at the time in '93 or '94 it was very difficult to get, even in Germany because it was totally sold out early '80s stuff, like the Roland machines, and analog synths, and the people who owned it didn't want to sell it.

And the music companies and manufacturers weren't putting out any good machines at reasonable prices at the time (as always they were so far from reality...) so it was difficult to get any good gear to start with. It took me some years. I bought some cheap keyboards and small drum machines, after I while I sold it, saved some money and upgraded to a better system and then I think about '96 I had first proper setup to make music, that was when I started to release some records. At the time I used a BassStation Keyboard, Casio RZ 1, Roland 606 and Boss DR 660 Drums, a "quasar" sound module, Doepfer MS 404 analog synth, and EMU Esi 32 sampler.

Q: Why and how did you to set up your own record label?

A: First I released mainly with Tresor Records in Berlin because it was something of a coincidence. I had just started DJing then at one of their nights, and I met the people who run the label. I gave them some tapes, they listened to them in their car and after three or four weeks, they go to their office and say, "hey, we must release this now!" It was good luck and right timing and that's how it used to work. Nowadays, it's almost impossible for something like that to happen. Now they would get like 20 demos every week, most dont even get heard.

After two, three years it was quite successful, I released some vinyl singles and some album CDs. I earned some money from this and from there, I bought more equipment and also started my own independent label, in 1998, not in the first place to release my own stuff, but also to release projects with some friends of mine which wouldn't otherwise have been released.

I met some people while travelling around, listened to their stuff, thought it was really good and wanted to give it a release. We have facilities in Berlin to master records so it was quite easy for me to access it and make records on my own. Just small budget, one 12" production was not more than US\$ 1800. It was ok for me, I had money, I made it and kept some money from the sales and from this I could start the next project.

This went on for three or four years and just now, I stopped the label because I needed more time to finish my own projects and distributors encounter change of markets. I released a couple of singles on my own label but also on other labels because they approached me. So now with the next project of my own stuff, I needed more time for planning. Actually, with each release you try to improve and get a bit better than the one before, develop a little. So it's at a point where I have to focus and concentrate on working something out, like an album project. I'm also working with some friends in Berlin, they also own small labels. We work together every week so we decided to put our stuff together and we're sorting out distribution for this and I think it's going to continue more after 2003.

Q: Do you like being a DJ at Tresor? How does it compare to playing in other countries?

A: The situation is special in each country where this kind of underground dance scene is existent. Every country has a different stage of development. In Germany, the whole thing started really early. In '89, '90 they developed the club infrastructure, so every two years or so there's a new generation of people going to clubs and usually after two years they stop because they finish their studies, start a family or have a regular job... and they cannot continue party every weekend. I found this as observation, study the people who go out to the clubs.

I was working in the Tresorclub from '95 to 2000, almost on a weekly basis I was in the club. Of course I also played on a frequent basis but since '98 I travel a lot more because of the releases and only played once a month, like a label showcase.

Now I would be playing on special events, like anniversary, or the Love parade. But it's still not so different for me because I'm somewhat of an ambassador or a messenger, representing in other places what we're doing in Berlin.

Q: Do you prefer live sets or DJ sets?

A: For me a Liveset is more difficult because my live set consists of small elements that run, you have to make everything in a combination, in a live situation. Before that to make a programme of one and half hours, you have to really memorise where is which part so put them right on the time which they should be on. So for me it's more complicated because with records you can hear the records before You mix it in, you know what it sounds like, where the breaks are, each record is written on the artist and trackname. So before you put the record on you can check it and everything. In a live situation you have like 16 channels and you cannot pre-listen to everything because it's a live mix. So you have to know which section is which, which bar is which. It's just my experience. For the audience, live sets are usually more interesting because there's something more going on rather than a DJ just putting one record after another. It's a performance, which is always more interesting for the audience to enjoy. And the sound is to dance for. It's one continuous play, so you can dance, party and experience the music. That's the difference.

What would your advice be to someone who wants to be a DJ?

A: The most important thing is to have a good record selection. If you have a selection over the time, after some years, the value of this increases. It's like putting money in the bank, you get interest after some years. If you keep a focus on that, after some years your chances increase that people recognise you better. It's not important to have the most expensive turntables or mixers or technology. What counts is the idea and to keep in mind also not only the music selection but also that the DJ is like a show. The show element and the entertainment element is quite important because people pay to enter the club and they want to relax from their work and be entertained and not be banged on the head.

If I want to start producing, what's the first piece of equipment I should buy?

A: Most people nowadays already have computers so if you want to start something, with a notebook it might be a little difficult because you cannot easily expand them, but if you have a regular PC or a G4 or something, then just get some good audio cards, which are quite expensive but it makes sense because you don't need a big external mixing desk or big samplers because you can run everything on the computer. You cut down on Microsoft useless software that you never use because they slow down the processing - for audio applications you always need *Realtime*. It's very important to streamline the software. Finally there's no reason why someone should spend like \$10,000 for a home studio if you can make the same thing with the right software.

What is the definitive "sound of Pacou" ?

A: "Pacou sound", at least for the moment, can be described as techno influenced by about 15 years of DJ music on vinyl starting from "extended Discmixes" of pop music like Depeche Mode, Frankie goes to Hollywood or S-Express, I bought about 500 of these singles before I started making tracks, for the reason to save money cause I realised that much of the techno that came out after 1991 based on similar setups(the same instruments). What makes it still interesting and challenging is the endless possibilities to alter the setup and the sound and to insert new influences into the dance field (For me techno is a modern subcategory of dance and disco music). The law is "there is no law, please innovate"...maybe there is some influence from punk attitudes.

Q: Has the thought of live improvisation ever appealed to you?

A: I do live shows but I see the limit there cause I can not carry my studio with me, and there are only very few techno setups to give me freedom of improvisation and keeping up sound quality within the 20kg baggage limit of the airline. So far of the techno liveacts I saw the best ones soundwise were the worst to look at (just 10 tracks harddiskrecording "live" mixed or just a laptop for all...is it Live then (and what is the relation to the audience) ?!?!?)

Q: How is the scene in Berlin ?

A: Still doing well, there are around 4 regular techno/ club events every week and many more for all sorts of House, alot of bars with DJ in the background, I guess that is the trend now here. I used to play once a month in a techno event but there are many new DJs around and they need to get ON one day. I played here for the last 5 years regularly (after going to parties for another 5 years back). One could say things are still moving.

Q: How do You produce Your music ?

A: Basically I use TR 909 (Drums), various setup of synthesizers such as nord lead, JP 8000, Waldorf etc., a Sampler and some analog sequencers. Recently I produced some tracks without this setup, only with a Pentium PC (no instruments). The key issue for me is how to get my idea into sound fast, and how easy can I modify things.

Q: Have you recorded for many labels other than Tresor?

A: Yes. I worked with some friends in Berlin on some really underground material under different names so no one can identify what it is or where it's made. I released a few singles under the name of X-Men, but then I stopped because I found that MANY other people use the name X-Men. I've started my own label called LL Records - two pre-releases came out 1998. It was a success with specialised record shops - everyone from Atlas Records in London to Subvoice in Tokyo called me about it. It was just one thousand copies - no big info - just my mobile phone number.

Q: You've done a remix for Ben Sim's Theory label haven't you?

A: Yes - I met Ben over here one summer. We met together with DJ Shufflemaster who did the other mix on the same record. There was just an instant idea - 'maybe we could do a record together'.

Q: Do you enjoy doing remixes?

A: Yes - it's quite funny I think. I don't like working just straight for the money. I like to build up a relationship with the artists. I like to know what they are doing, what's their background - if it works out then it works. I've just done a remix for Access 58 - that's Brenda Russell's label, and I've done some tracks for Atlas Records' label Vertical Form.

Q: Have you ever collaborated with other artists to produce tracks?

A: Yes sometimes. Here in there's some guys called the Sender Berlin Project who also recorded on Tresor, and Kanzleramt. They started two years after me, but we work together a lot in the club. I used to give them a bit of advice on buying equipment first, but then we worked together on a few co-productions. Most of the time I work by myself though. I live really near to the Tresor office, so sometime maybe I can have a session with some of the other Tresor artists.

Q: What is the significance of techno to you? Do you think that its various subtleties and textures can overcome a society that seems to be geared more towards various forms of music that show no density in form or structure?

A: Techno is the definite underground sound of the 1990s, all Pop music has shifted towards techno sound or production methods even some R'n'B could be labelled slow or mellow techno. Nevertheless there are 2 points to realize: (1) techno itself is a very small market (if You want to make big money do something else) , (2) techno is more than only the music or small clubs filled with drugconsuming freaks (its maybe supposed to be a global soundtrack of now).

Q: What does your workings with DJAX mean to you as a producer?

A: Djax is a famous dutch label for Acid music, they exist over 10 years now... for me it is an honour to be on their catalogue, I think I bought about 80 of the records they have released and well as producer it was a new way of creating something different...At the time I worked on the State of Mind album which involved keyboards, analog sequencers and drum machines... pretty much hands on work while the whole project for Djax is based on some software and a PC soundcard.

Q: Describe the project and how it came about.

A: I came across a demo version of software which creates sounds similar to some parts of my "real life" setup hardware, well it sounded funny so I started recording some pieces on the harddrive and then made a CD ... after I checked it here with some friends...well everybody said it sounds different to my other work but the quality was good and some said "I would definitely play the tracks in my DJ set" (I agreed) so I sent the CD...after some time I got a mail from Saskia (the boss of Djax) saying that she really wanted to release these tracks. I think the whole thing worked out well and I received some good feedback, finally I got some new "fans" who became interested in my other productions so I guess everybody benefitted from this venture in a way. Once again all this happens on a small scale sales. There are 1000 to 2000 vinyl singles of each release so this makes all that still work on a familiar basis. You get to know label people, distributors, retailers, party promoters and music lovers personally.

Q: "No Computer involved?" Are you signifying a desire to move away from the more mechanized computer oriented sounds often exuded by electronic music? If so, why? If not, what is the significance of this particular title.

A: Except for the djax project I never used computer for the productions. It is too slow to hook up and not a straight form of working on a track for me. Anyway I am not saying that its bad to use computers for the work, in fact I use them for my communications, website and musicwise to make the post production work (EQ and cutting the session recording)...in the end it comes to ideas and imagination, so once You have learned how to use the machine right You can make it work.

This particular album was directed against the stupid advertisements of the music industry selling a software program with slogans "all You need to "create" Your personal techno hit"... awful campaign/ awful software or the Yamaha and Roland companies who brought terrible instruments as "the new techno machines" instead of innovating their output. For these "mega-companies" its about huge scale profits not about any musicians needs, so basically its about abusing their original intention and deforming the "preset" sound of these devices.

Q: "Symbolic Language". Is there any connection to mathematical theory to what you were referring to here?

A: It was about music as symbolic universal language that different nationalities understand immediately...especially with dance and techno music You will get immediate physical reactions, emotions, people recognize something without a word and it gives them a positive message.

Q: Describe your involvement with Tresor. What does the residency at one of europe's legendary techno clubs, often considered a bastion of integrity, mean to you? Do you see yourself continuing in this role?

A: Well I started there about 5 years ago and for me its been a fantastic opportunity to get to know all the people working with Tresor. Essentially this is a key point, a cornerstone of the techno business ...everybody who has something to say is or was involved with them in one or another way over the time...so I met everybody and thats the way how You can make friends, travel around and become a part of the network. One thing I would like to add is that Tresor is a very straightforward company. With all my output on the label I always had total artistic freedom and control over all stages of the production, even the cover design...

Q: What is "the music of mathematics" ?

A: I work in the musical forms of techno but I do not relate so much to mathematical terms...although most recent techno is kinda "precise" and "programmed" this does not occupy my thinking when I make music or play as DJ (!!!). For me this is just a "natural" basis on which all dance music sits. So the thing for me is more about creating a certain density, deepness, subliminal emotive triggers, unique soundscapes. or maybe produce music as a form of global conversation, also all techno producers are linked to another this way. So if someone comes up with a new trick, a new sound or something It will immediately be "on" (meaning like it will be written on a "global techno music newspaper") this applies also on the mainstream music business there is a typical popular example american singer Cher or Madonna using some postproduction sound (which is basically techno), and after 2 months or so maybe 5 or 10 new "hits" use the same gimmick to get in the charts.

Q: Does structure in electronic music ever influence or limit your interpretations of whatever form you wish to procreate in sound?

A: NO cause I have never taken keyboard lessons or played a classical instrument.(then it would definetly limit me) I see myself maybe more a programmer not a musician here when I work. My horizon however is still a musical one- I can understand the revolutionary moment in Jimi Hendrix, Sun Ra or Steve Reich and also I find much of the Jazz music is so much broader than dance and techno. Maybe this is the way to go...keeping some of the basics of techno but enrich with improvised elements. Basically that would also fit one definition of innovation.

Q: What about drug issue ?

A: I don't use drugs and I don't smoke. I hate if people smoke in front of me when I play, or in a restaurant. In most areas where drugs are consumed (Europe, US, Australia) it will have bad long term effects on the user because they do not know whats in the substances and harm themselves, it also harms the scene on the whole. You can easily see it in Australia and the states already. However I am not the police but I don't recommend using any drugs.

Q: What is the meaning of music for You ?

A: Music to me is expression of feelings, can tell stories without or in parallel with words and in the best case even cause emotional outbreaks ...

Q: Do you think that the mainstream fail to understand the 'symbolic language' of techno, which is why is doesn't get exploited so much by the large corporations?

A: Yes, I'm aware that the sound is not made for the mainstream. That's my intention. I don't want to sound like the Backstreet Boys, but I try to use the same technological standard to produce the same kind of sound quality. The first time the term techno was used with on the first KMS album I think. That is a good example of a blueprint if you like. If someone had no idea of the music, maybe you should play them one or two of the tracks. Inncity is a good starting point - Good Life was just re-released. This gives a good idea of what techno can be. Of course - this was a commercial success as well - it sold maybe one million records, but that's cool.