

PHILIPP MÜNCH INTERVIEW

Today we talk with **Philipp Münch**, one of the leading Ant Zen rhythmic industrial forerunners (**Synapscape**, **The rorschach garden**, **Colony collapse disorder**, **Ars moriendi**). We'll talk about the **Frantic sessions** album (with **M.O.A.T.A - Omen**), released only a few days ago by **Ant Zen**, about rhythmic industrial with a subcultural and musical approach, and about what we have to expect from a non stop-making music musician.

- 1) Hi Philipp! This week Ant zen have released Frantic sessions, an album that tells the story of your early work, as The rorschach garden, with M.O.A.T.A – Omen. Tell us something interesting about it that we can't find on the Ant zen page.

Yes that is true and we are all happy that this album was published 20 years after it was intended to be. We (MoM and me) had a great time recording all these tracks but we lost more and more contact. During these times i also started Synapscape with Tim which was very different but also familiar in a way which at least was the reason why i didn't missed the other thing.

Frantic Sessions contains elder work but nothing of the early work. MoM and me started collaboration in 1990. He helped me with Rorschach Garden and i helped him in M.O.A.T.A.- Omen. So it came along that we made something different together which knew no limits at the beginning. It could be Pop, Dark Ambient, Noise, Experimental or Dada. The song 'Ash Nazg' is from that period (1992) and it was the only track on a C- 90 cassette tape which sounded like that. Because of the feedback especially on this track we decided to do more 'industrial' stuff and that's what you can hear by your own now.

- 2) In this album, loads of musical souls coexist, but there's something that all of them share in common: the interest in experimenting something that, when these tracks were composed, was absolutely new. How everything started back in the days? What were the initial musical and cultural imprints which brought you guys to these results?

We always had just fun in doing what came in our minds. We both were no people with an ordinary musical taste and we had some nice gear like analog synths an Atari computer a mixing desk and a DAT- recorder. And of course lots of time because neither me nor him was interested in careering. We lived for the moment and did what we wanted. Just because it was like this and not because we wanted to be super successful.

Musicalwise we were a lot influenced by left wing alternative music and culture. Maybe we were a kind of Noise- Hippies also related to most of the other independent music at that time. Mainstream culture did not played a role, except that this was the opposite of what we wanted to achieve. We were no intellectuals but for sure informal members of the 'do it yourself' movement.

- 3) While listening to the album lyrics, i find it impossible to understand what the lyric's topics are about. Why do you use such high distorted vocals? What are your lyrics about?

It's not important to understand the words. You will get everything by listening and it's very important to get your own point of view. That's a reason why we distort vocals. We consider you as a self responsible human being and you will find your own access to what we are doing. It's more made for your spiritual journey and not for simple entertainment. Of course you can feel entertained by it which we appreciate but you can get much more out of it if you like.

- 4) As a musician who continually produces new stuff, what's the common principle which can be found in all your several side projects? What do you want to achieve with music?

Music is life. I am alive. It is my language. I'm not so good in talking. Words can be so limited. Music and sound is not. The common principle is fun, curiosity and achieving pleasure. I'm doing music mainly for myself and if you like it it's a good thing but not the motor of my creativity. Creation is my goal. It always changes. I'm never doing many projects at the same time. Sometimes they rest for years but usually they are all coming back to me.

- 5) As one of our webzine goals is not only to talk about music, but to explain its cultural and social heritage, could you explain us what happened in the early '90s in Germany? Is there a cultural reason why this new sound brought by labels like Ant zen (or Hands, too, among others), so called rhythmic noise started out? What was happening in the german underground electronic music? And what's the situation now?

I don't know if there is a cultural reason for it. Some handful of people had similar ideas at the same time and through the Tape scene we all came into contact. It happened in the early 90ies and it was not a german phenomenon, also people from Belgium, France, England and Italy and and and did it. The reason why it became longer lasting had been some people who had the courage to release the music and as important as that to do festivals and special club nights. Especially without Maschinenfest (from 1999) on things would have been not so easy. Also 'Forms of Hands' and 'Elektroanschlag' became important festival. They all were made by lovers for lovers on a non- profit base. And it is still like that. Maybe this is the important thing why this scene still exists. It's not about financial profit but about values which money can't buy.

Everyone sees himself/ herself as a part of the whole and there is no super- ego kind of people.

Those can be found in the commercial goth scene and of course they didn't liked what they saw an so they claimed the word 'Industrial' for a totally different kind of music which was nothing more that bad produced techno with dull speech samples from movies or games. Even many people like this i don't care and do what suits best to me.

- 6) In a country in which industrial music is considered as an old fashioned genre only sometimes followed by young people, i appreciate a lot the fact that young people follow your music (and the music produced by Ant zen & similar labels), go to the festivals, and the fact that a lot of new young musical projects see the light and release their stuff. What, in your opinion, generate the most this interest in younger people?

There are not so many young people out there. Many people are much older. A reason for this is that this kind of sound is usually no 'first contact music'. People go through several genres before they come to us. That's why we have no teenagers here. You have to be fed up with something else before you turn towards us. It's about personal decisions and not about hype and fashion.

Also if you are doing music and sound you need some time to mature to do your own style and your own interpretations. Music has to be you. And then it works.

- 7) What are (and were) your major musical influences? What kind of relations exist between industrial

and techno music?

I mainly prefer electronic to Rock music. I love the sounds of synthesizers. I ever wanted to have one since i knew about them. I was raised with a classical background and so i was learning violin and trumpet but it never satisfied me that the music was always someone else's music. Quite early when i was 12 or 13 i wanted to do my own music. I started with my younger brother and after a couple of years i continued by my own until i met the other Ars Moriendi guys. That was my first band.

When i grew older i lost my interest in regular pop music and turned towards New Wave, Experimental and Industrial. To name a few here we go: Psyche, SPK, Einstuerzende Neubauten, This Mortal Coil, Dead Can Dance, The Cure, Joy Division, Skinny Puppy, Cabaret Voltaire.

Techno and rhythmic industrial are both repetitive and there lies the most thing in common. A big difference is that techno tracks are made for mixing and rhythm industrial is more track oriented and in that way more like traditional rock music. Both sides have good things to offer but the Live Act is more important in rhythmic industrial.

- 8) When i've seen you live in Milan (as Synapscape and as Philipp Munch), i've noticed a particular detail: especially during the second gig, you've played several groovy rhythms, but no one started to dance. After the gig, i thought about it and i found it a strange phenomenon. Do you think that 4 / 4 rhythmic music is defined for dancing, or not?

It's more about if people have Techno in mind they have particular patterns and build-ups which are very similar to each others. People dance because they recognise things. If people are interested but not familiar with a certain sound they listen but do not dance because it's not a part of their existing habits. Especially this audience was definitely more techno than anything else. It's not necessarily about the static 4/ 4-pattern, a century ago it was more 3/ 4. It's simply about what you are used to and what your friends do.

- 9) Do you think that genre definitions could suit well with the research in the experimental possibilities of sound? Could your music still be considered industrial in some way, or is it just an old fashioned word?

This term is still ok. In the end it's just for giving people a kind of navigation. Call it the way you want. if you are curious enough to discover, you are welcome.

- 10) Why do you think it's difficult to bring this music (and the interest about this music) in our country? What could be the main reasons?

There is some interest in your country for this music but it's all underground like everywhere. In the end it's good that it does not become a mainstream thing which keeps it honest and true. I still trust in peoples souls even if it takes more time until they appear. We are doing it because we want it so everything else is secondary. It's no plain amusement, we are going beyond that. So you have to know yourself in a deeper way. Many people are scared of that because it means a change of their way of thinking, of their habits. It means to be self- responsible. But then you can't blame your shit onto others.

- 11) What are you working on and what are you planning to release? Could you tell us something? I know that you're unstoppable.

The new Synapscape album will see the light of the day later this year. Beside of that i'm doing lots of stuff but more hidden in the background. You will be informed early enough.

12) Thank you for your time! Greet our readers and invite them to buy your new record!

Hello readers. Buy our new record :) We love you!!!!