

What are your current releases?

Last year in May I released “Netzwerk der Zukunft”, and in October “Verbalizer” came out.

How do you create a new track?

Usually, I start with the beat, meaning a bass drum and snare. Then I focus on sequencing and the bass line. Everything else follows only after I have a solid foundation.

What are your most recent developments?

I’ve just assembled a second setup in the studio. The first one is a big, hard-wired studio. More or less an unalterable machine. The second is a modular studio, where I only connect the devices as needed. It’s primarily used for direct recording and the computer basically functions as a tape machine, but with MIDI Clock feel and Sync. I tend to play more things by hand now. I’m using a lot of older devices again, such as the SH-101 or the 808. I like to concentrate more on these devices instead of the computer. But with both studios, I always have the final production in mind. Even though the second setup still has to prove itself, it is completely self-sufficient. The last thing I want to do is having to take one thing from one studio to the other.

But why the decision for this second studio with a modular setup?

That was just a coincidence. Somebody showed me the RC-300, a guitar looper by Boss. Actually, I only wanted to use it for effects. But then I ran loops and beats over it, even MIDI Clock and Sync worked with it. So I took my 808 and SH-101, and suddenly I had a bunch of sequences on my hands. That was pretty much the defining moment for me. A bit of experimentation led to the creation of a new track. I’ve discovered a new production method for myself that’s much more free and spontaneous.

Would you say that cutting back to a minimal setup stimulates creativity?

I can be creative on both systems. I need the big studio, but the small one is equally interesting. I can do everything I normally forbid myself in the large studio, because everything is hooked up in a certain way. I’m working on a new track with the small system and recorded the majority of sounds with the SH-101, simply because I’m recording directly. With the large system, it never would have happened like this. It would run in real-time and I would have used it for only one sound

You have quite an impressive array of equipment. Which characteristics do you look for in an instrument?

An instrument must be easy to grasp. Then, I favor buttons instead of numerous submenus. It has to work flawlessly. I need to concentrate on making music, not on solving problems. I don't touch anything that's not easily accessible.

You're using the MPC Renaissance mainly for live performances. How do you utilize it exactly?

I've been using MPCs since I started making music, at first with the MPC4000. To me, the MPC is mainly a sample player. I extract loops from my songs, edit them and employ the 16-track matrix. I improvise live, play lines with the synthesizers, sing or speak using the vocoder. Because I arrange everything live, I require direct access without having to think too much about it. When I press the pads I know: Here's the bass line, here comes the hi-hat. For the most part, the MPC is underutilized in my gigs, because I use it mainly as an arranging-machine (laughs). Additionally, there are maybe two or three MIDI sequences triggering an Alpha Juno, for example. But more importantly, I have 16 tracks for each song, and I use those to arrange my loops when playing live. I don't even have to look at the panel, I can feel where I am at any given moment. It's basically a subconscious process. No other machine can offer that in my opinion.

How has the modular system changed your workflow?

I've developed a completely new understanding of single components. I never expected single oscillators and filters to have such a high quality and so many features. I've got to admit, I kind of lived under a rock in that regard. The quality of components leads to an entirely different approach in the studio. I take a filter or LFO and create complete sounds using only an envelope or a trigger signal. I've been around for quite a while now, but that has certainly broadened my horizon.

Let's take a look into the future. How do you think we are going to make music in the next 15 years?

I believe hardware will play a more important role once again. The age of simulation (laughs) is coming to an end. Some people don't need hardware at all. But the tendency, and not just in my immediate vicinity, is going back to using more hardware.

What can we expect from you in the near future?

I'm currently working on a new album. Then there's a music instrument I'm working on, at least in my mind. Sound design is another thing I find very interesting right now. And I would like to write a story for an audiobook.

You just mentioned sound design. You created a beautiful sound set for us. How did that come to pass and what was your basic idea behind it?

At first, I couldn't imagine building single sounds. My approach was just too intellectual. But then I employed the modular system and just started doing something. Then it all came together. Hours passed by, I was absolutely engulfed in my work. And I discovered how to create these kinds of drum sounds for myself as well. I've never really attempted doing it this way before. It has definitely opened a new door for me.

You've left the drum sounds quite raw. Was there a specific reason?

When you have a block of marble in front of you, do as Michelangelo did and carve your own David. That's why the samples have the full frequency. Condense and edit them on your own. For example, you could really flesh out that bass drum, there just more possibilities. Not only is it more fun that way, the result sounds better, too.

You gave an insight to the night session, when you created these samples. How did that video come about?

In the past year, I've increasingly recorded complete jams and captured the moment, when a new track emerges. With the video I did for you, I just filmed myself working and gathered material. Then I cut it all together. It's really another creative process for me: I allow a glimpse behind the curtain and you can see that I'm just using regular devices. I update my Facebook page frequently with new videos and insights to my studio work. You'll also find jams that led to the creation of full tracks which were then released later.

Thank you for the interview.