

Feature #1:

PSIENCE

How long have you been making music?

I would rather say experimenting with sound, for over twenty years. I started on guitar and bass guitar but my musical interests in Kraftwerk and Tangerine Dream drew me towards electronic music specifically the synthesiser. I have played live in electronic, rave and techno environments and have great respect for electronic artists who take their show on the road. I am interested in technology and have seen it advancing in leaps and bounds especially the power of the home computer. Exponential growth in technology has brought us the software studio and virtual sound machines and processors. I think its amazing to have this sonic power in our hands and the vast universe of possibilities that it gives to us.

What brought you to electronic music?

Electronic music is the great infinite frontier for me. The synthesiser and the sampler can create sounds that we have never heard before, take us to places we have never been before. It is the mirror of our 21st century age like the instruments in the centuries before have reflected the technologies of their times. Electronic sounds cannot be written like music and you don't need fingers like Joe Satriani to get some nice arpeggios going! The world is made of sound and music is a subset of sound (structured in scales, keys and a matrix of different rules and regulations). Shaping sound as well as sequencing sound is like a never-ending journey it feels like I've been skiing along a massive mobius learning curve.....and its too late to stop! Experiment, experience and produce. We need new models, new idioms and new sounds...envelopes, oscillators, filters and Lfos .

What inspires you to compose?

The synthesiser is one of the most amazing instruments ever made to produce sound. There is an infinite universe of sound and we are fortunate enough to be able to manipulate it, bend it stretch sample it squash it and even destroy it in so many ways. I tend to start with chaos or randomness and try make some sense of it, support it with percussion or other sounds or textures. Like finding some driftwood on the beach and fashioning into a millennium pigeon :-). I find myself becoming more politically driven in the pieces i am producing and some tracks have are directly motivated by some world events that have happened in the last couple of years. I feel a need for reflection in these times and because i have children I feel a responsibility to do something about the mess and at least to make some noise about it.

What do you find compelling about Elektron gear?

I was first aware of elektron when i heard about the sidstation and was intrigued by the synth they created with the 6581 chip. The first instrument i used was the machinedrum at the end of 2001 and I was blown away by the sound and build quality. It was great to have a drum synth with parameter locks that allowed you to shape every note in the sequence and the xox roland-like programming was minimal and easy. I met a couple of the elektron guys at the musikmesse in 2002 and was impressed by their enthusiasm for the machines they made. Not long afterwards I had the sidstation and delved into the 8-bit fatness that the oscillators provided and although the latency needs some adjustment , its definitely a classic. I asked a friend of mine to build a rack version (kung fu) for me and its still has pride of place in my setup. When elektron wanted beta testers for their monomachine i jumped in with both ears and got the SFX-6 keyboard. The monomachine is a very deep synthesiser and I appreciate the programming that has given such purity to their oscillators. I respect what the guys from elektron have done and the quality of the products they have produced . In these days of corporate monoculture its good to know that there is a small independent company of switched-on guys that are creating machines that are both innovative and unique.

What are your plans for the future?

My plans are to play live with the machinedrum and monomachine in as many places as possible. I've been collecting media for some time now and will incorporate it within my performance. I hope to work with other artists and be inspired by the sum of the parts whether it is in the room next door or across the globe in Guadalajara. The electronic artists i have met have been cool and I'd like to meet more of them. I think there should be more networking, after all we were all drawn to this electronic world, lets share our experiences. Synthesiser - I recently swapped my tr-808 for a jomox sunsyn (thanks damo) and it sounds juicy raspy crispy and powerful (all at the same time). I'm looking forward to dive-bombing and plunging into the great pool of sound that it can create. Another venture will be to program my robot 'irn-bru32' with some appropriate samples and sequence him with some robotic moves. (I think midi would be a good way to control robots, being able to sequence their movements in synchronous time to the sounds that you are creating). I will probably do some more beta-testing and evaluations which is exciting - what will they think of next?

Kit list :

synths / drum machines:

elektron machinedrum UW
sidstation rack
monomachine SFX-60
waldorf XT
roland tr-909
tr-606
mc-202
tb-303

jomox sunsyn
oberheim matrix 1000
korg ex-800
control synthesis deep bass nine
e-mu xtreme lead
roland varios

fx:

ensoniq dp4
focusrite compounder
studiomaster gate
akai mfc-42

mixer:

allen and heath s3 mix wizard

audio interface:

focusrite sapphire 26 io

monitors:

tannoy system 800

midi:

bitstream 3x
grex controller

computer:

apple computer

Psience:

Website: <http://www.psience.co.uk>