

FEATURE 5: JSROCKIT



How long have you been making music?

I've been trying to make music for about 15 years. I started out with a guitar, a drum set, and a 4-track after hearing early 90's lo-fi DIY type artists (Sebadoh, Eric's Trip, the bands on Shrimper Tapes, etc) make cassettes that had great songs, but not such professional production. It was the first time I heard something that wasn't so over-produced and made me feel like I could try it myself. After about 5 years of trying to make tapes in a lo-fi acoustic guitar style, it just wasn't working and I quit. A year or two later, I got a drum machine (a Boss DR-660). I'd sit around and program that thing all the time and loved it. That brought me through stuff like Fruity Loops and Reason. However, I didn't get serious about trying to make things sound a bit better until a year or two ago...actually learning synthesis and trying to hear better.

What brought you to electronic music?

Hip-Hop and Kraftwerk. I've been a Hip-Hop fan since the 80s. As far as pure electronic music, I used to listen to this noise band called Harry Pussy and they did a song titled "Showroom Dummies" on one of their records and I loved it. I was at a record store in the mid to late 90s when I found Trans Europe Express and noticed Kraftwerk made the original version of Showroom Dummies. Once I heard that, I was hooked and started buying more electronic music. I think I bought all the Kraftwerk albums within a few weeks after finding TEE.

The early 80's were ripe with electronic/electro/hiphop/funk fusion. Do you draw from some of the early pioneers such as African Bambaataa, Mantronix, Jonzun Crew, etc?

Not in any direct way. Maybe Run DMC...I like those big simple drum machine beats they had and how some of the 80's beats didn't have high hats...that kind of stuff makes its way into what I do. Also, how in the 80s, you could get away with a beat that was just drums and noise. I love that aspect of early to mid 80's hip-hop. Honestly though, I'm directly influenced by early to mid 90's hip-hop producers like DJ Premier and the RZA (or at least the music they did in that time frame). I've also been influenced by newer stuff like Anti-Pop Consortium, J Dilla, and Madlib.



What inspires you to compose?

Drums. Even the most simple of drum machine beats makes me happy. Without drums, I doubt I could make music...or I guess I'd go back to playing acoustic guitar. Also, simple but good music is extremely inspiring. I've always loved people who could make a great song with just an acoustic guitar and a vocal or just a drum machine, some noise, and a mic.

Is it only drum machines you love or do you get into sampling? If so, what kind of sources to you sample from?

Yeah, I use samples on every song I ever make. It may not be blatant always, and it may just be some noise, but it is always in there to add some type of atmosphere at the very least. I sample from the stuff I listen to...it could be anything. I listen to a lot of hip-hop, but don't sample from hip-hop. I sample from electronic music, a lot of Bjork, some folk, whatever works really.

What do you find compelling about Elektron gear?

The versatility, ease of use, and fun aspects of the machines. They are ridiculously deep, but if you want to make something simple on them, they work well for that as well. I love the digitalness of them, the crispness. Analog is kind of boring to me, though I do respect those who do it well (because I can't). After using both the Monomachine and the Machinedrum for an extended period of time, all other equipment just feels tedious to use. Parameter locks spoil you. I'm very partial to synths with built-in sequencers. As far as that goes, Elektron is the best.

Ok, many of us know you've had a amazing amount of gear over the last few years, any besides the Elektron boxes you adore?

Yeah, way too much gear and not enough music. Right now I adore the Metasonix TM-7...but we'll see if that adoration lasts. I can honestly say that the Elektrons are my things right now. I'm excited for the analog version of the DSI Linndrum II though.



What are your plans for the future?

To keep on trying to make my music sound better.

Name one thing you wish was different about your Elektron gear, what's highest on your wishlist?

More ROM sampling time in the MDUW. I like to use long samples in the UW, and due to the limited space it doesn't hold many. Also, stereo samples would be great. That said, I have stopped using an MPC and only use the UW for sampling, so those features can't be that important to me.

Random Thought?

The Club Nintendo Game & Watch Collection from Japan (for the DS) is a must for anyone who loves vintage Nintendo.

One final question here, how did you come up with JSRockit as a moniker?

Oh no, wrong question. It was a name given to me by a friend from the town I grew up in. It was during my weed smoking days and we called joints stizrockets. Anyway, he ended up calling me Johnny Stizrocket. Since I basically made music for those guys to listen to when I first started, I used the name...but had to shorten it to JSRockit to be able to live with it. Rockit instead of Rocket because of the Herbie Hancock song...

(laughter. quality story!)

Kit List:

As of 4/02/08:

- 1 Elektron Machinedrum UW MKII
- 2 Elektron Monomachine
- 3 Korg K01
- 4 Metasonix TM-7
- 5 Apple Macbook
- 6 MOTU Ultralite
- 7 Mackie 802-VLZ3
- 8 Audio Technica AT-3035
- 9 Vestax Handy Trax
- 10 Logic Studio 8
- 11 Bias Peak
- 12 Camelphat Free and 3
- 13 Tritone Valvetone
- 14 Dynaudio BM5a Monitors with a M-Audio BX10 subwoofer

Contact Info:

taco6@yahoo.com

www.myspace.com/jsrockit

www.virb.com/jsrockit

Music:

[Track 1](#)

[Track 2](#)

[Track 3](#)