

Roman aka Novel 23

1. Could you first share with us some info about yourself? What's your work, what do you do for a living? How did you get involved into music...?

Roman: I live in Moscow, and at present time I work as a system administrator of computer networks and video systems in a TV company. Unfortunately my work takes most of my time, but I try to spend all my free time to several creative passions. Music is one of them. I have been involved in music for a long time, since I was at school. It all started when I heard Depeche Mode. A long time has passed since then, but I still like their music a lot. I listened to all sorts music later on and found that I like melodies, harmonies or noise soundscapes created by soul and full of romance of course :) When I decided to create my own music, I applied all my energies to the realization of my favorite musical elements. I think that it's a nice feeling when your own music reflects the way you apprehend life. The creation of music gives sense to my whole existence. It's nice when people are pleased with my music, maybe their life becomes a little joyful too. I'm glad that the music is my hobby, and I hope that it never becomes a kind of work.

2. What's going on with the electronic music in Moscow nowadays? What are the most important Russian electronic artists and labels that you'd mention?

Roman: I can't say that the electronic scene in Moscow lives a full life, but at the same time I can't say that the electronic scene is absolutely non-existent here. There are many musicians giving very few concerts from time to time and a small quantity of listeners visiting these shows. On the whole, electronic music is very uncoordinated here, and haven't got enough attention from people.

I suppose that the most important Russian electronic artist was Solar X undoubtedly who was a progressive musician and who was also very popular. Unfortunately he lives in London now, and the Russian listeners can't see his present creations. Today our experimental electronic scene hasn't got any well-known artists, I don't mean PPK for example, because they seem to me a temporary event and their music is highly commercial.

3. You like to release and promote electronic music with melodies and harmonies on your Shaped Harmonics

label. Do you see melody as an inevitable part of the music? And please tell us something more about the label work.

Roman: Yeah, I see that melody is an inevitable part of the music, because it is the most lasting element. We can see now that fast musical technologies have been developed in the last years. The sound fashion changes quickly, and it brings us new rhythms, styles, etc. And only melodies remains immutable. I think that musician gives more long life to his songs, when he put in melody to them.

Unfortunately label work is complex and joyless, because I collide with many problems . Where to find money for releases, how to persuade distributors to work with us, how recoup costs for releases, where to find time and forces for numerous visits to post offices, when several distributors will pay finally, how to do presentation and small promotion of scheduled release, how to explain to musicians that this music can't bring big money, and many and many other problems. Sometimes I want to drop this business. Releasing music nowadays is "causa mortis" :) But it's just interesting to deliver this music to real listeners.

4. Let's talk more about the melody. I find it hard to define what's melody, it's a very abstract thing. A friend once explained to me that melody is a mixture of other musical elements, like rhythm, tempo and harmony. What do you think about this? How do you define melody?

Roman: I think that melody is an ingredient of music. But if rhythm seems to me like seasoning in a salad, then melody is an important component of a musical salad. this comparison may sound a bit strange, but it illustrates my philosophy of music in a very ...tasty way ! .

5. What do you think about music without melody, improvisational music, or some extreme sound experiments? Do you appreciate these kinds of music?

Roman: Both the salads and the musical pieces are without meat and melody. At the same time there are many vegetarians and connoisseurs of extreme sound. It's a splendid fact of real alternative. But here is one moment that pushes to alternative, I have in view ideology. Man can listen to extreme sound because he founds own persuasions for it. I have such persuasions too, and noise or electro acoustic music can be interesting for me as a scientific effort. But anyway I suppose that natural

way, when I like music because my soul caught melody, is better than when my mind wants sound experiments.

6. What you think of EU? Can it be said that they are one of the best bands that in some way present the essence of the spirit of the contemporary Russian electronic music?

Roman: I don't like their music very much, because they produce many songs, but only one in ten is a worthy effort. Besides they just make good self-promotion. Regarding the spirit of Russian electronic music, it lives somewhere in the years 1960-70, when Eduard Artemiev and others created their own best pieces. The modern Russian electronic still hasn't got any life, if England or Germany electronic still have such faces for examples.

7. What's Novel 23? What does it mean?? Does it have something in common with your real name: Roman = book = novel...? :-) Why 23?

Roman: Yes, you absolutely right :) I played with Russian and English words. 23 is a magic number with various interpretations as we all know, but I just started to create music when I was 23 year old.

Questions by Boban Ristevski