

Interview OFFBEATERS Network / SUBVERSIV REC.

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I discovered this interesting project recently. Basically OFFBEATERS is the network, SUBVERSIV REC. the label, and one of the owners does music as XNDL and in the project GUNPORN.

So I asked one of the main heads behind the network named XNDL some questions. The interview was done via email by Lfo Demon in september 2005.

1) So tell us something about the idea behind the Offbeaters network and your label Subversiv Rec.

Hi and thanks for the interview. It is one of numerous I made in the recent years. In total: three. For the offbeaters history. I started in 1997/98 with 2 mates a turntablism-crew with the excessively funny name Offbeat Turntable Mechanics (OTM) and we were quite successful... some turntablism shows, many parties, DJing and so on...

At this time I discovered during my studies the internet and became addicted. I created our first webpage, thought about a good name and www.offbeaters.de was born. At the end I only went to university any more to browse the net and after I had internet at home I quitted my studies.

After a while I found countless contacts in the net, mostly to activists and artists but also to a store and my later label-partner Matt (Vinylkingz rec.).

The contacts got more intense and I started with the help of people like Spill and Mnemotrauma to collect tracks for our first compilation. Matt already made experiences with a first Battle-record and short while later the first Offbeaters compilation was published. The lineup is even for today's standard pretty good... people like Buck 65 (today at Warner Music) or Sixtoo (Ninja Tune) were on it... but at this time nobody was interested in them. The record sold 1000 copies which was quite a success for a debut record.

We're still expanding with the Offbeaters Network today. We have designers, musicians, vocalists, producers or just people which help us – with the production of merchandise and printing. There should be always someone responsible for each domain. Why should you pay external people which aren't interested in the things you do? The Offbeaters network is a virtual company. When somebody has time and feels like doing something he does it – or not. The active core at the moment is Matt, Gordon & Chojin (designer) and me. But this can change anytime...and it should. But the baby is getting buried only by me one day when it is finally over....

2) What about the situation in South Germany? I think I read one statements of you saying that you sell more of your records in other countries – and that the reactions in Germany are in general not very enthusiastic.

There are hardly any reaction in Germany – and that with a downward drift. The HipHop crowd can't do anything with our stuff. But I'm not mad about that, because the majority of HipHop Releases, especially in Germany, is not only boring and stupid but also poorly made. That doesn't mean that our records aren't stupid or embarrassing but they are at least not poorly made and we try not to bring the standard-shit and go with the current trend. So you have to wait without avail for a pseudo-gangster-battle-boredom record from us. But maybe when people like DJ Tomek make cover versions of German Schlager music and high spirits music....then.

Of course there are exceptions like the "Scheiterhaufen" project and some people from Berlin (not the "sell-out-fraction") but hardly anybody is interested in that. Our records are sold 80% in other countries...Japan, North Europe, France, Switzerland and so on... The listeners are mostly people coming from Alternative / Electronica music. That's at least the majority of the feedback we get and our distributions / shops are all coming from this domain. "HipHip-standard-distros" like GrooveAttack can't (and don't want?) sell our stuff properly as I noticed...

3) You're also producing tracks under the alias XNDL which can't be classified as typical "hiphop", some of the releases on Subversiv Rec. (like the Disflex6 LP) are ... well, "more conventional". What gave you the inspiration for your music? Especially Gunporn (the project you made all the music for) can hardly be filed under any genre. Dark-wave-drum'n bass-hiphop?!

I simply do music and I don't care what comes out at the end. I can't control it – and that is a disadvantage sometimes when you want to produce something predetermined for somebody. Some tracks are good, others aren't. I don't know any styles. I just do music. I listen at home to all music, from Psychobilly to Breakcore, Black-/Deathmetal but also more quiet stuff and pop music. The main point is that it has to be independent and unique. There have to be some emotions transmitted, regardless if it's pure aggression or melancholy.

At the moment I'm looking for a label (yep, me too) that can push my own stuff better than I can because Subversiv Rec. has another focus at the moment. Last year I made with my mate CFX a split-LP on the dutch Dark Elektro/Wave Label *Enfant Terrible*. Good idea, nice record, which sold pretty well but I don't like the material any more today. It was probably a bit early because those were my first tracks ever. But I have to admit that the reactions on it were funny. Wave-Magazines like German "Zillo" gave it for the most part good ratings. But I have with Wave / Industrial as much to do as with some German Yodel-shows on television.

But right, some records we published on our label are pretty straight but that's caused to the fact that we run the label with two persons (working quite autonomous) and each has his own musical tendencies. I don't think this is bad, the mixture of various things is good and straight / more conventional doesn't automatically mean bad. But as I know our scheduling I can say definitely that the conventional records get rather uncommon. It's going directly into more experimental / electronic directions. In my eyes that's the future. The sales and the feedback are backing this statement. Projects like *Bleubird*, *Beyond Space 1*, *Restiform Bodies* sold faster compared to rather the "more normal" records and the responses were better as well.

4) How do you know the MCs from GUNPORN? And how is it for them to rap on non-standard HipHip beats? Were there some reservations first or did they find that sound ok from the beginning on? And what about the reactions of the audience?

I know all those persons personally, they released here and we're all associated and have frequently contacts.

I had, until the Gunporn project, never the idea to let somebody perform over my beats because a, I produce only since 2002 and b, I thought my stuff wasn't fully developed enough. Then Tom from *Cavemen Speak* listened to one of my tracks, liked it and wanted to rap over it... the rest came without doing anything. I Recently made a record with the vocalist *Ancient Mith* under the name *Rushya*.... I made the beats for it. It's a split EP with *Zhark Berlins'* sublabel *Ramadan Rec*. The reactions on it are already astonishing good.

I think I hit the taste of those fraction of people to which HipHop or its "Vibe" means nothing (including me) or nothing any more when listening to most of today's stuff which is boring for the most part. Even when I listen to stuff of people which I appreciated years ago, e.g. Hieroglyphics or Living Legends, I have to stifle a yawn. Why shouldn't other people have the same feeling?

5) How did GUNPORN accomplish? Did you have the initiative to get the different people together? And what about the video to "Deaf people dance" – that looks quite professional for a project from a small label.

As mentioned above Tom from Cavemen Speak had the initiative. In best time he brought together Bleubird, Nomad und Marcus (Stacs Of Stamina) and those fellas recorded the vocals in one week...somewhere between Belgium and Sweden. A friend made the terrific artwork and – done.

The video was materialized because in Berlin on the Gunporn tour last year somebody was in the spare audience and liked the music.... He came to the boys and they recorded the video in one night. Unfortunately I wasn't at that show, cause I only joined the tour in Southern Germany. But it's a good thing and the result is impressing. I'm wondering who has the money to pay for a video otherwise....

6) Some last words for our beloved readers?

Visit our website www.offbeaters.com, listen to our stuff and if you're interested buy some records/ shirts and stuff in our mailorder and by really individual for one time because everybody wants to be like that and be sure you are probably the only one in your town owning so amazing stuff. see you, xndl