

365MAG INTERVIEW: TODD BODINE

Special

365 Interview (2009-10-29)

Born in Berlin, Todd Bodine is a musical child par excellence of Germany's capital of electronic music. Strongly influenced by the atmosphere after the fall of the Berlin wall he took his first credits as a resident DJ in the world famous Tresor Club. The place where he performs his action loaded DJ-sets once a month until today.

But that's just one side of Todd's musical activities, being a DJ on the floors of international known clubs in Barcelona, Paris, Tokyo or Rio de Janeiro, just to name a few. Beside this career he's active as a producer since the year 2001 - and that with great success. At the beginning stood releases on the Berlin based Cabinet Record, followed by releases on Tom Clark's Highgrade Records, the Swiss Morris Audio label and last but not least: Tresor Records. With Tom Clark he shares a long term creative friendship, which is by all means not the only reason why Todd Bodine is an essential part of the Highgrade-artists-family, thus being one of the most profiling musicians from that label.

First of all, how's life?

I'm good thanks.

Tell us, how did you first get into contact with electronic music?

My first contact with electronic music was here in Berlin at the Tresor-club. It was 17 years ago :). At this time I did not know what techno was. I didn't know any DJ-names or how this DJ-thing works. But I liked the vibe and the music was fascinating me. I began to get interested in it. I wanted to know, who is this guy behind the turntables and what did he play. So I bought a record player and started buying records. That was in Berlin quite easy because here we had a lot of record stores. But it wasn't easy to find the right records (I had no playlist from Richie Hawtin). At the end I started DJing.

How often do you get confused with the other Todd Bodine, the NASCAR driver? ;)

Not really often :)

You run the Highgrade Records label together with Tom Clark. What's the main vision of the imprint?

First of all we love music. But I think our main vision is to search for new stuff and to give a platform for our friends and us. We try to bring different people together and we try to be colorful. I mean it's really important for us to surprise the people with different styles. Some records are more housey and some are more techno. It's like when Tom and I play music - it's a good mixture. Another goal is that labels should work together and not against. Therefore we invited the French label Freak n'Chic to our label-night at Panorama Bar / Berghain at the 17th of October. Actually in the current situation the labels have to talk to each other. I hope that other labels will follow and that they start to talk to each other.

You use Scratch Live for DJing. In your own words, what do you consider the biggest plus in performing with Scratch Live?

For sure the big plus is when you are traveling. The other point is that it's really easy to test new your stuff and demo-tracks. But actually I love the sound of vinyl. The current systems can't reach this phat sound. Scratch Live is also a really stable system and it's also easy to install.

You also perform live. What does your live set consists of in terms of gear?

I would love to have more equipment on stage but if you travel you have to be efficient. Although I try to bring as much as I can on stage. I've a MacBook Pro (Ableton Live), a Edirol soundcard with 8 outputs, a controller from Beringer, a MFB Synth II, a 12 channel mixer from Mackie (onyx series) and some cables. The important thing for me is that I don't want to touch the computer. I do everything with my controller.

You are about your third album titled Forms. What has been the idea behind this album?

The main idea was to create tracks which stay in your mind for a long time. I wanted to create an album which you can listen to over years. Such an album is 'Departure in Time' from Aril Brikha for me. I'm not tired of listening to the album. It has so much balls for me. On the other hand it's cool that you can try different things if you do an album. You can do more laid-back stuff.

How long has the album been in the making?

All in all I made it in 4 or 5 months. But the most intense period was at the last 2 months. At this time I was nearly at the studio every day.

We've heard there's also going to be a worldwide tour... What advice would you give to aspiring producers?

Try to be unique! It's not necessary to sound like somebody else. There is enough space to be yourself I think. And use analog equipment! I think it's really important to use analog equipment, because of the sound and it can be a good add on to your digital stuff.

You've been around for over a decade now. What have been the main changes in your way of working as a DJ/producer?

The main changes are that the music becomes digital. When I started producing music I had only hardware and a Atari computer. There you can't use audio-files. Only midi. Then I was recording everything on DAT. Now everything is much easier. You can open a project which you've started some months ago. That's really nice. There are also some changes in the way of working as a DJ. Former I can only take 80 records with me. Now my library contains around 2000 tracks. That's really a big advantage. I can also play new stuff. From studio direct into the club. That's really nice. Also medias like FaceBook, Soundcloud or Myspace are amazing. Now you have the possibility to be connected to so much more people. On the other hand the digital revolution has also some disadvantage. I mean the problem of illegal downloads. This point really sucks. I don't understand such people.

What can we expect from you in the near future?

Now I'm working on a new EP for Claude Von Stroke's Mothership and for Absurd. On the other hand I'm working on some remix projects. But the most of the time I'm working on Highgrade Records.

Is there anything else you'd like to share with our readers?

Thanks to all who support underground music.

365Mag would like to thank Todd Bodine for his time and answers.