



When he was just a kid, David Moufang's father took him to see 2001: A Space Odyssey. It blew his tiny toddler's mind and he started to dream of

being an astronaut. Playtime became space-time as he built space-ships out of Lego, junk and a youthful imagination.

"I was space crazy as a child," recalls Moufang. "When the others were riding around in their little toy cars I'd be building my own spacecraft. I'd put in a small engine, put rubber on the wheels so it made some noise and stand there

provoked ripples of interest rather than waves. The duo also collaborated with Frankfurt's Dr Atmo to record two sweetly ambient outings as IF or Intergalactic Federation for Namlook's Fax label. But it's his most recent work, a solo LP under the name Move D and a collaboration with San Francisco's Jonah Sharp as Reagenz that suggest Moufang is about to become more than just another dude jamming with samplers, machines and everyone else's ideas.

The Move D album, 'Kunstsoff' and the 'Reagenz' project share Eno's definition of ambience as sampled by Mixmaster Morris on his 'Global Chillage' LP: 'it never changes much but it never stops changing'. Both records

factor as well, to make more music out of less notes. I am for reduction."

Raised by cool parents, Moufang grew up with a family record collection that spanned early Pink Floyd to the first Kraftwerk LPs. His grandmothers were both classical concert pianists and he can remember sitting under their pianos as a toddler, lost in sound. From the age of twelve he realised he wanted to make music and by his teens was playing guitar in school bands. Before starting Source Records he worked as a semi-commercial dj spinning electro and black funk in a local German club. He also played guitar for five years with a Byrds and Prefab Sprout influenced band called Rivers and Trains. He still

Text Sean Besson

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with a walkie-talkie and my headphones on. It was very techno.

Now 28 years old, David runs a label, Source Records, with partner Jonas Grossman and has so far produced seven LPs and a handful of 12's. Each of his releases has played both subtle and wild-ass games with the sounds of electronic dance music. Most of these games are about slowing things down, pulling rhythms apart and writing tracks which stimulate careful movement and deep thought rather than mad dancing. Working with Source partner Jonas, he records as Deep Space Network. Their 1993 debut 'Big Rooms' had an impressive but ploddingly Orb-ish depth and dark, sonic fudge. It put their Heidelberg studio on the map but

unfold slowly, carefully adding new sounds and building rhythms out of tangled percussives rather than straight-up kick drums. Listening to them both is like a sweet and lazy adventure into sound, a space where time and stress are suspended. But where 'Reagenz' chills with a softly sci-fi psychedelia, 'Kunstsoff' seems more rooted in the jazzy, laid-back, but still hip-tugging tradition of Larry Heard, Carl Craig's 'Microlour' or 'The Wonders of Wishing' and NY's Burrell Brothers.

"Jazz," purrs Moufang, "that's what I listen to really. Miles Davis has always been the greatest influence on me. I can really dig his quality of not being super technical but still have more to say than everyone else. And that's the ambient

plays with them sometimes.

But it doesn't sound like he had much direction or success with his music. The band weren't going anywhere while David's dj work was too mainstream to be truly interesting. And then, in late '89 a friend of his, D Man, invited David to a club called the Milk Club he was running in Mannheim.

"It was a real culture shock," recalls Moufang, "as it is for everyone being in their first techno club. And even though I didn't directly identify with the music, which was very hardcore and nightmarish, I could still appreciate a strong movement. I could grasp that this was a scene that wasn't just about money."

And like everyone getting into a scene,

he started to find the areas where he belonged. He remembers listening to early 808 State, Nexus 21, Detroit and ambient tracks that had a simplicity, raw edge and musicality that he liked. He seems to have stuck to this path as tracks on 'Kunststoff' don't bother following current fashions for linear analogues, harsh distortion or reliable 909s. Instead he does his own thing, like the track '77 Sunset Strip' where jazzy chimes and cool space noises are locked into a late-night, slow'n'low electronic rhythm.

"I always get the feeling," sighs David, "that I'm not fashionable at all. And that's not the point of it anyway, all I can say about my music is this is me and hope other people share the same ideas."

Like an interest in ambience, slow motion and subdued rather than banging rhythm. Even at it's funkier, 'Kunststoff', like Vulva's recent records for Rephlex and David's Source label, is more like electronic jazz funk than dance floor techno. Or his recent 'Solitaire' LP on Fax which locks loops into the echo chamber and chases them with long, slow and meditative electronics. It's the kind of music that's easily labelled as boring.

"When I first heard about the big ambient slag off going on in England, I just thought that's how it is over there. It's all very trendy and there's always another new thing every three months. But I didn't feel that it actually meant anything because this is music to chill out to; to contemplate or meditate to and listen to on your own or with friends. And I was always sure that no matter what the press said you will always need music to play at home, in subversive gatherings, with friends and on your own. And this need will always be there and people don't care about trends if they care about these things.

And, of course, it was difficult, if not embarrassing for the media, djs and a lot of us to admit that we liked a record

because it soundtracked a lonely night at home and a bit of meditation. It's much safer to admit to liking the rush, the madness and the raging communal highs of the dance floor. But if Moufang makes distinctions it's simply between good and bad ambient or felt versus formulaic music.

"Ambient became really easy to make," complains Moufang, "people would play one chord for twenty minutes and then sample some ethnic stuff. It got to be as much a recipe as dance



music and this dependence on formulas is something I hate in any category of music. So I hope I can surprise people with my music. Of course it will always reflect my personality which is rather moody and mellow, but I still think there's a lot of room left to explore, like with more jazz."

Or like on 'Solitaire' where he calls a track 'Indian Mantra' but wields cool machinery rather than sitars or tablas.

"You don't have to use an Indian sample to get there because a mantra is a natural or a psychic thing. There are

different ways to get to a goal. You can experience meditation without being a Buddhist. There's the possibility that doing a tab of acid will make you a lot wiser and things will come into your mind..."

Talking drugs, and Moufang feeds his trip experiences with their resulting ego-loss back into the idea of ignoring fashion and just following his own vibe to make honest, 'unfashionable' and ego-less techno.

"I did DMT once and that really was like some sort of life or death situation. I mean on acid or mushrooms it's still mellow and you can still relate to your environment and appreciate a tree as a wonderful being with life in it. But with DMT it was like everything around me for 360 degrees was totally strange. In colours.

And I felt myself atomised into just one molecule in a world of molecules. And it's that same point again, I'm not a star, I'm not special because I'm doing something. I'm just happy because I'm doing something that I like."

And he suffers for it as well. International demand for experimental and well chilled sounds isn't large. So despite the high profile of Source Records with releases from Planet Jazz, The Forgemasters' Robert Gordon and Elfish Echo, David was radically skint for most of last year.

"I was really starving last summer. It's like I'm poor and I have an account with a bank. But it's overdrawn big time and after Love Parade their machine ate my card. And my parents don't have money and my friends don't have money and all of a sudden I was hungry. That's no joke."

So were you like collecting all the loose change that was hanging around the flat?

"There wasn't any change left. I literally got to the end. There's three or four friends I gave credit to on the sleeve notes of 'Solitaire' and these are the people who shared their meals with me

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and that's the truth."

Just like the mates who gave him meals his native Heidelberg seems to have a small community of the skint and artistically switched-on. David's been hanging with them at an underground club called KM20 where he's set up an analogue studio to jam with anyone who turns up and wants to make music.

"It's an illegal club in a small house," he says, "downstairs is an art-gallery and upstairs we have our machines. And I sit there and if somebody wants to know something I show them and we work together."

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It's a vibe that's influenced his next LP, working once again with Source Records' partner Jonas. Calling themselves KM20, they're releasing an album of raw, live analogue grooves. Who knows what it will sound like. At his best, Moufang has proved he can cut tracks to rival the fiercest. There are moments on 'Reagenz' that easily match the widescreen sci-fi ambitions of Global Communications or RAM's Ant C and Andy Miles. And there are grooves on 'Kunststoff' that rewire the sounds of late-night jazzy house and techno to make space, calm and cool moods.

"I've said it before," says David, "I don't feel hip. And that's not what life is about. It's not only one situation, it's many things and you have to be open to as many as possible. Then," he pauses and adds confidently, "the happier you are, I think."

Deep Space Network are playing live at Oscillate in Birmingham on March 31st, Sonora in Glasgow on April 2nd and The Big Chill in London on April 16th. 'Solitaire' is currently available on Fax Records. 'Reagenz' and Move D's 'Kunststoff' are on Source Records. 'KM20' is due for release this spring on Rising High Records •

