

LWE Podcast 96: René Breitbarth



Although he was responsible for four of the techno trance tracks from the 1993 compilation *Cologne Sound Waves Vol. 1*, René Breitbarth most notably kicked off his production career with the formation of Treibstoff records in 1997 with friend Marcel Janovsky. Together they presented their take on techno and house music, with the Cologne based label having now notched up close to 100 releases in its 14 year history. With over a dozen releases on the label over the years as well as two accomplished albums, Breitbarth became synonymous with the minimal and tech house sound of Germany in the early to mid parts of the new millennium. His numerous remixes and releases on other labels helped to bolster his reputation, though in the latter part of the 2000's, Breitbarth turned his attention to a new label Deep Data, leaving the running of Treibstoff to Janovsky. The smoother house sound that proliferates the mostly digital label shows a maturity in Breitbarth's productions that is garnering the German a whole new fan base, while keeping those who have followed his work from his early days very close by. LWE quizzed Breitbarth about Deep Data, his attitude towards releasing on digital over vinyl and how he gets through those marathon sets he plays. He was also kind enough to provide us with our 96th exclusive podcast, a hypnotic journey through house and techno that will show you just how deep he can go.

LWE Podcast 96: René Breitbarth (50:48)

Kotelett & Zadak, "Evoking" [Rotary Cocktail Recordings]

02. Red Axes, "The Tower" [Klasse Recordings]

03. V.Sexion, "Dom Dom" (Ezequiel Sanchez Remix) [Flumo Recordings]

04. Shunsuke Akimoto, "Four Seasons" [TWO.BIRDS]

05. Christopher Rau, "Like Yesterday" [Smallville Records]

06. Pigon, "Painting The Tape" [Dial]

07. Javier Alemany, "La Nuit" [TWO.BIRDS]

08. Matty Heilbronn, "Funky Shit" (Martin Buttrich Remix) [Peppermint Jam]

09. René Breitbarth, "Mystics" [Deep Data]

10. Pigon, "Sunrise Industry" [Dial]

11. Room 10, "Codis" (Michael Ho Remix) [Snubb Records]

12. Motor City Drum Ensemble, "L.O.V.E." (Kyle Hall Remix) [!K7]

Interview:

First of all can you tell us a little bit about how you first came to be interested in music and more specifically electronic music?

As a kid I was buying 80's pop singles and as a result of that I wanted a keyboard. My father said he would buy me an expensive one if I'd take lessons. I ended up with a cheap one.

How old were you when you started DJing and then producing?

I started producing before DJing. I must have been around 15 when I started to compose with my Amiga home computer back then. I tried out mixing on turntables probably when I was 20.

Who were the DJ's and producers you aspired to when you were getting into clubbing and listening to this music?

They are all mentioned in [Scooter's "Hyper Hyper."](#) Seriously, too many to mention.

So I understand you first appeared on the *Cologne Sound Waves* compilation. What were you making back then?

This compilation was a project of a bunch of people hanging out at a studio above the Space Club Cologne, later Warehouse. I was mostly spending my time there producing.

What were the first pieces of production gear that you bought?

That was an EMU ESI-32 sampler. But mostly I used the gear of friends.

Were your friends doing the same thing? Did you have people who were also starting out so you could help each other out?

Before digital production I always had studios together with friends, for example we ran a Treibstoff Studio once.

Tell us about the Treibstoff label, how you and Marcel Janovsky came to start the label and what the mission statement behind the label was.

Me and a friend made a 12-inch by ourselves with no distributor at first, then Marcel and his partner joined to go more professional, thus Treibstoff was born. We were just a bunch of artists who were fed up by sending demos to labels.

When you started the label people were definitely still playing vinyl and hadn't yet moved to playing CDs or mp3s. How much of an impact did these new mediums have on the sales of the releases?

Of course the vinyl sales got less. But I'm not involved in doing Treibstoff anymore other than releasing an EP once in a while for many years now. So I'm not the right person to ask.

Since then you've also started your own label, Deep Data, which I notice is almost purely digital. Tell us a bit about the label and your reasons for going digital.

Mainly, the idea for Deep Data came from playing at Club der Visionaere in Berlin. My vision of club sound changed there a little. It was already different from the Treibstoff sound at that time so I launched Deep Data. I was already DJing digitally for four years and so it was clear that I would go for digital. Besides lower costs and effort it also brought the chance to finally release more of my tracks.

There are a lot of DJs now who have gone back to playing vinyl exclusively. Can you see Deep Data releasing on a physical format in the future or does it seem financially unsustainable?

Actually three vinyl releases were made around 2010. It IS financially unsustainable. However, it's not my focus or desire to release on vinyl.

Most of the Deep Data releases have been your own, though I notice you are now having other artists contribute more. Are you planning to continue in this way and open the label up further to other artists?

Right now I am getting back to releasing on my own again because I simply have enough material, so it makes no sense to invest more effort, earn less and be dependent.

How would you say your own personal tastes have changed over the years in terms of music you like to listen to and also music you like to produce?

Hard one... in terms of dance stuff I would say in the past I was more into techno than house. Now it's the opposite.

I've read another interview with you where you have professed to playing incredibly long sets at Club der Visionaere. What has been the longest set you've played? It must be very fulfilling, though incredibly tiring as well.

With my partner Toby Deschamps I played there 15 hours sets for four years. We would also invite guest DJs once in a while. It was very inspirational and surprisingly not too exhausting. DJing can give you much energy. Club der Visionaere is a very special place for that, but still after this time I needed a break from these marathon sets this summer.

Tell us about your live set up and what a Rene Breitbarth live set consists of.

I didn't play live for some years and now I'm preparing a new set. I will do live drumming/sample triggering with the Alesis pad.

What can you tell us about the set you've put together for us?

Smooth and deep home recording.

And what can we expect from you in the next year?

Besides continuing to release on Deep Data and DJing I hopefully will play more live shows. Further, I will continue my monthly Deep Data radio show on RTS.fm which I just have started.