



BARAN RECORDS

As soon as I have published my first release on Baran Records I went to one of the so called "music meetings" that are often held here in Germany in order to promote the production of my label. There I was introduced to new people, young musicians and other newborn labels. We had plenty of time to exchange ideas and records, to visit workshops and just to communicate. A lot of demos were presented to me as well. One of them was given to me by east european band called "Elektroherd". They passed me a CD-R titled "acid folk". Usually I am quite skeptical with demos and accepting new artists on board but, according to the words of the band, the idea of their project was worth some attention. Guys told me that the actual music on their demo has nothing to do with the contemporary singer-songwriterism, folktronica or home-recorded drugs-influenced lonely guitar chords, as the title "acid folk" suggests. Besides, their demo had a stylish artwork. Curious, when I got home, I took a listen to it. The next day I have contacted these guys and in a couple of weeks we were ready to work on another release on Baran Records.

Elektroherd are Max Shubski and Pavel Golubovski, both hail from Ukraine and now residing in Germany. The duo's first attempts of making something musically sensible date back to 2003 when the group was just jamming at home and making the parts of their lo-fi home recordings available to public via a small output on such netlabels as Arterija and Earth Monkey Productions. Sometimes the band produced their more succesful works on limited CD-R editions. Stylistically they didn't have any clear and lucid idea, the band tried various approaches to their music — electroacoustic, lo-fi, poppy, neo-naive, dadaistic, post-rock-y, ambient-y with a lot of noise and harsh computer processed sounds. Everything was mixed together with no apparent vision of what is being done but with lots of humour. Since the group liked to record and process an acoustic guitar and lots of other acoustic instruments (pipes, ocarinas, melodicas, tom-toms and so on) they dubbed their style as "elektrofolk".

After moving to Europe in 2007 the band tried to make a further step into making something more consistent and it became clear that they must work out some basic idea of how they should sound like. In the meantime Pavel improved his guitar sound, making it really heavy, with lots of FXs, pedal effects and hardware digital sound processors. And Max, who was always interested in artificial sounds and had some experience in doing electronic music (he used to create laptop soundscapes as an electronic music performer under pseudonym "Ceckj" in Ukraine) started to build up a small collection of analogue synths, drum machines and sequencers. The sound of the band got eventually more mature but it still lacked for some basic concept thus complicating the stylistic determination. Everything became clear when the fabled Roland 303 Transistor Bass was obtained. Since nearly everyone know the story of this sequencer, I'll keep it short: When it was presented in the market in the 80's it was originally supposed to replace the bass player in the rock bands. Because of complications in programming and funny artificial sounding it was neglected for years until its rediscovery by Chicago house and techno producers. Since then it slowly became a legend and is a very rare and collectible item today.

The idea of the Elektroherd sound is simple: to use the TB-303 in the way it was originally designed for. Acid basslines were literally torn out of the techno context and implanted into the folk/folktronica mellow and melodic songs.

From what I can see this experiment is not going to be finished and currently shows us some interesting results. Though the Roland 303 programmed bass line doesn't replace the live bass player completely, it takes a main lead in their songs and remains their basis structure, their skeleton and carcass, thus keeping them solid. One particular feature that the bass-line is highly melodic and not just some blindly programmed spontaneous looped patterns like in the most of acid techno tracks.

Thus "elektrofolk" turned into "acid folk".

A couple of results of their experiments are presented on this 7" record. Both tracks were recorded and produced in Germany, it took about a half year to complete them. Side A is an ambient soundscape based on acoustic guitar loops which are pursued by a powerful bass-line, making the whole track to pulsate without any beat at all. Side B is a splendid bossa nova track, simple, melodic, analogue and groovy. It is just a perfect song for the hot summer of 2010. Since it is obvious that this work is the highlight of this record, the track name and info for side B are intentionally written in russian and is being translated as "transistor bass bossa nova". By the way, the band name "Elektroherd" translated from german means "electrical oven". The artwork concept was worked out very carefully too, the band made it possible to fit it into "retro socialist style", into something you may see in the 80's clothes catalogues of Hungarian, Polish, Czechoslovakian or Ukrainian magazines.

The music of Elektroherd reminds me of some abstract soundtrack to imaginary USSR movie, however sounding not old at all but fresh with a big deal of melodism, melancholy and yeah, kitsch. The last one is what we here on Baran Records especially like.

In spite of tremendous technical problems when preparing the release (it was scheduled to be out on May 2010 and was delayed, delayed and delayed) it is being released just in time — this summer.

I hope this record will expand the current sound of Baran Records to a certain experimental extent and hopefully there are much more better things to come soon.

Maxim Løy, July 2010