

BUZZ KULL INTERVIEW

So how're you goin? What's been happening?

Good. Just prepping for a show here in Melbourne. It's the first show in twelve months. I've been playing around with some new gear that I'm using and some new songs, which is always fun. It makes that reintroduction more exciting; it's not like you're going back in overthinking old songs you've played a thousand times before. It makes it a little more nerve-racking, though, because anything can stuff up and some people may not like it. When people do like it and you can see the adjustment in the room when that happens it's nice to see. Mainly just focusing on that and recording in the studio with Morgan on a new project DSMV, we wrote a new album. Besides that, it's just been a matter of figuring out how to pan out the year.

Your sound is unique with regard to the conventions of Australia's sound when compared to your darkwave sounds. How did you manage to find that kind of a sound?

I think I've always been drawn towards a darker electronic sound. I find it difficult to like music that has that kind of positive or happy element to it. The sound I came across really was just by default, I came across it and everything has aligned perfectly. To this day people come up to me saying "you have a sound" and I don't know what that is but people seem to think so. There is something, but I try not to over analyse it too much. I guess it's just a part of my personality now. If you want to make a sound you can appreciate, or you feel is worthy of going in a song I think that's a reflection on the artist. There are so many bands in the world and there are probably a few that sound similar but for me, I know nothing will be quite the same as my music.

Speaking of artists and your rise in music, were there any bands that influenced you?

It was always a lot of pop music from the eighties or even the late seventies. There was the movement in pop music where it became a bit more experimental with Gary Numan and even the more extended use of synthesisers with bands like Depeche Mode. A lot of that real romantic quirky romantic pop music of the eighties is something I've been drawn towards. It's like what Italo-disco is to people now, it's accessible to everyone there's no culture or subgenre of person that's drawn towards it. It has quite a universal feel where it's grabbed by everyone. I felt like that with the eighties and now I feel like that with Italo-disco music, like I just listen to a bunch of Italo-disco now. I'm sure if I knew what it was back then I'd be just as drawn towards it. With that being said there's a lot of Depeche Mode for sure.

In your Spotify bio, it states that you come from Sydney, however, talking to you now it seems that you don't base yourself there. How has being a journeyman of sorts affected the way you create your music?

I grew up in a coastal town. Before Sydney where I used to live was quite small and a bit strange. I always knew that whatever it was that I wanted to do, I couldn't do it there. I moved to Sydney and it took a long time to figure that out; during which time I worked all types of different jobs. I didn't have a strong place for my project here in Australia. It was

fine I didn't try and exhaust it and try to push it into people's hands or even push it on radio stations that didn't want it. It wasn't very accessible; even in those earlier days where I had a lower production and everything. It was grainy, and it was kitschier due to the grainy element and that lower production. As time went on I saw where most of the listeners came from and I saw that it was all from Europe. That whole world of darker music is always relevant and present there. No one changes a genre of music over their lives, there. They find one thing and they become so dedicated to it. In Australia, it's very similar to America where popularity changes so quickly. Something can last a month and change to something completely different after. In Europe, people wear their passion for their music on their sleeves. It took a while for me to start figuring out how to tour the project and perfect its structure. It didn't take long to realise what was needed. Just touring with other bands and seeing how they did it; like how they curated and structured their performance. Some of the bands I toured with were so good that it made me feel so half-arsed.

What bands were you touring with?

There was a German band called Deselection and there's a Melbourne band as well Forces who was based there for a while; another band called Zanyus (not sure of the spelling). They had so many elements to their live performance that made it that much of a performance. Everything from enough smoke onstage to enough darkness on stage to strobing lights. It felt good to be in a dark room with a really strong performance. I set my head around that and thought I need to make my music in that kind of format. Each time I went back it just kept getting better and better and selling out and I got invited back. I couldn't go back all the time, but it became a financially feasible trip for me because I was making money that I felt like successful artists would make here in Australia. I would have to keep constantly flying overseas to do it, but it was ok. I divided my life in half with half of the year touring and half the year doing another job on the side. It felt like everything had the right amount of time spaced from one to the other.

How did the perception of your music differ in other countries compared to Australia?

It gets better in Australia each time I play shows. There's growth but it's very slow compared to everywhere else. Everywhere else seems a lot more rapid. So many people are willing to push your music there as well. It's a different world, with a bigger population and music there goes so far back with regard to diversity. It's hard to tell where each of those countries differs because there is always gonna be a strong crowd in the goth/ darker music crowd. There's certain people who appreciate just electronic music or techno, and there are certain formulas in my music now that can be appreciated by those people from different genres.

Here is getting better and electronic music is becoming more popular here. Electronic music is just becoming a lot more accessible. Myself, for example, I've always considered myself a phony because I can't read or write music properly. There are only so many people that can do that, but so many people just learn by ear now. People are becoming more willing to experiment on their own or just learn from YouTube videos and stuff like that. That builds up the popularity of the music because people become more dedicated and consumed by the genre as a result. Especially in cities like Melbourne, there's a lot of creativity in the music scene. In Sydney there's not so much, Sydney is quite big but not as big as Melbourne.

Melbourne has got such a big music scene, it's always different here. Sydney is always the same. It's hard going unless you get that support from certain radio stations and so on that push your music, it's really hard. Then again, I guess it's just a challenge accepted.

Your last album release was in 2018 and at the moment you are working on DSMV, what are you planning on releasing or what's on your agenda at the moment?

DSMV came about because Morgan and myself were always working on music whenever I came down to Melbourne. Morgan also built this amazing studio which we are sitting in now. It was nice to work with someone on music as opposed to just doing it on my own. Morgan and I were playing around making music; Morgan came on one of my tours. It was quite a big tour, like three months, lots of dates lots of touring. We shared a bed the whole time. By the end of it, we said we'll book a week and a half on a nice little island in Greece and work on this project. We did that. We brought some speakers in our suitcases we borrowed some equipment from France and we actually did it. We went to Crete where one of my friends was living at the time, she was studying geology. We spent most of the time recording then go swimming and have some really nice food and then we'd record more. Finally, now we've gotten back to work on this album, now that the COVID-19 has diminished a bit. The productivity hasn't slowed down but the versatility of it all has definitely grown. It's exciting to have the DSMV close to a final point. The AB side that came out last year, everyone got really excited about, but they were bummed it was only two songs. With a full album, it will be interesting to see what people say.

What are your thoughts on Russian Darkwave? You mentioned you've met Molchat Doma, what are your thoughts on that whole movement at the moment?

I'm not sure how old Molchat Doma are or how long they've been around for but there are so many bands coming out of Russia that nobody has heard of. There's another band called Motorama that is really great. There are some really good bands coming out of Russia and some don't even break outside of Russia despite the fact they could be huge. I find it so fascinating that there's this unknown circuit of great artists that are highly anticipated and popular, yet no one has any idea about. With bands like Molchat Doma it's cool to see one band break out. They deserve it. They're a really good band and they're really hardworking and passionate. They tour super hard whenever I see a poster from them it's always got a heap of dates on it but they are really willing to give people an opportunity.

Their manager contacted me, and I was about to go on a regular tour with Contravoid. He rang me and asked what's your plans? What dates are you here? I told him, and he asked if I wanted to stay an extra week and come do some stuff with the band, like play a hometown show that was going to be really big. I was like yeh I want to do it but looking at dates there is a time where you are in a place where you don't know anything, so you get really antsy and want to go home. It didn't happen regardless though because we were in Budapest heading to Berlin when we had to pack our bags and basically escape the country to get back to our home countries. Otherwise, we would have been stuck there. I can't wait to go back and see some live music there.

In the future would you want to play in Russia or any post-soviet countries?

I've already played in Moscow and St Petersburg those were quite early in my touring career. I can't wait to get back over there because there are so many people in Russia. You can be this unknown man but if people in Russia like your music it seems that every artist has support from Russian fans compared to other countries. If you become successful in Russia you will play some really fun shows because they are quite passionate people when it comes to music. In Moscow I just sat up at the back of a gig once and watched everyone dance, it was like watching a different world.