

## **MARTIN DUPONT: A RIPPLE THAT NEVER DISSIPATED**

It is rare for a band to be able to control their exit from music. It is rarer for the singer, synth player and creator of the band to become a leading specialist in otorhinolaryngology. To that effect finding Martin Dupont does often feel like finding a diamond in the rough.

Sporting a sonic atmosphere that glistens with insane samples and a unique synthesiser-based sound, Martin Dupont is a cult hero of the post-punk movement. Never gaining the fame of their contemporaries and never wanting it Martin Dupont staked their claim as a voice that would let time decide its fate. Ultimately like every great piece of art Martin Dupont resurfaced with the help of Minimal Wave.

Soon Martin Dupont will be celebrating a long-awaited return with the release of a new album, Kintsugi.

We sat down with Dr Alain Seghir to discuss the short but long-lasting impact of Martin Dupont. Alain described the trials and tribulations that the band had and how sometimes you can control your own fate.

### **How exactly did Martin Dupont form? How was it created?**

I used to play bass in different kinds of groups in France in many genres such as jazz. However, I was fascinated by synthesizers and I have a taste for a special kind of weird or avant-garde music. So, I wanted to make my music and I started with my synthesizer and I asked my girlfriend at the time to sing with me.

### **Were you influenced by the bands around you at the time such as Depeche Mode, Yazoo, and New Order?**

I started about at the same time as the British dance scene. I used to listen to very different things. This could explain why there's a kind of whacky or weird sound to my music. I love people like Stravinsky or more of the classics. At the same time, I was also listening to the underground bands like the Residents or Tuxedomoon and avant-garde kinds of people from England. Yeah. I had a great passion for the British wave and American as well. I loved bands like Devo and Indoor Life from the beginning.

### **How did you get involved with the synthesizer? Were there bands at the time that got you into it? Or was it a certain artist such as Kraftwerk or Giorgio Moroder, for example?**

There was no use of synthesizers that I liked around me. There was a dance synth-like Kraftwerk that I loved. It was something too clean. There were all the German bands like Tangerine Dream or Klaus Shulze. It was too ..... I wouldn't say boring, but, uh, quiet. On the other hand, there were a lot of these big progressive bands or jazz and rock bands that were using synthesizers in their music. However, it was just used as a

little decorative sound. It was not essential for the music. So, none of them used the synthesizer in the way I felt it should be used.

**Would you say that when you used the synthesizer, it was influenced by your jazz and classical upbringing?**

To be honest, I would say yes. I wasn't a real musician. I mean, I've got no keyboard background or basis. I was more of a bass player. To me, the synthesizer was a way to overtake the limitations of conventional music creation. I created an extension board for the DX-7. Do you know about the DX-7 Yamaha synthesizer?

**I've heard of it. Didn't you create the supermax card?**

Yeah. I was able to create a very sophisticated arpeggiator because I wasn't able to make these kinds of sounds by myself. I created these things with randomized functions before it was used as widely as it was about to be.

**Did your use of the arpeggiator help you create your unique sound in Martin Dupont?**

Oh, I don't know. I would say it made it easier for me. Based on the arpeggiator making the music I liked became easier. I was quite lazy at the beginning when it came to completing the songs because it was so easy for me. With the drum machines and synthesizer sequencers there was so much I wanted to make. I was greedy to make brand new songs. I made a lot of songs and I've still got and haven't been unissued.

**Was there a reason why a lot of the music that you released was in English?**

The main reason was probably my father. He had a strong personality. For him, it was very important to me to be a surgeon. He wasn't as interested in the music and asked me 'when will you be a real doctor?' All my sensitivity was in music and I didn't want him to get anything from that. It was much more, that reason that any fashion reason. I also don't sing in English with the same kind of accent that most of your French bands do.

**Initially, I thought you were an English band when I heard Inside Out. From there, I thought you were an English band, but then I looked into and yeah, you were French.**

The funny thing is that in England when I chat with people in a pub, they ask me where I am from and they never guess France. They guess plenty of other places, but not France. It's funny. I don't know why.

**When it came to creating your music, did your home city of Marseilles impact the sound of Martin Dupont?**

Marseilles is very special. It was meant to be a dangerous town with a kind of special mafia. It's meant to be the worst town in France and the musical scene was quite poor. We were the first kind of post-punk band. Before that, us was just rock and roll and after that, it was rap and hip hop.

**You guys were the only people doing post-punk in Marseilles?**

We never made an effort to be known. We never tried to go to Paris; we made no effort. I never thought it would have become as big as it did. I just recorded cassettes for my friends. Some of these friends decided to create a label and produced the first record we had.

**What was it like opening for Siouxsie and the Banshees?**

The beginning was a great experience. I remember when we played the sound was so good. The public was so surprised. I was about to cry with happiness. After one minute the sound engineer turned down the levels. They were the engineers for Siouxsie. They changed it and I don't know why. The sound became weaker, but the set was still alright. In the beginning, it was kind of a miracle. Afterward backstage most of them were friendly apart from Siouxsie, maybe, she had things to do. I didn't know.

Robert Smith was playing guitar. He was very friendly because I met him in Marseilles when the Cure played there. After the show, I went to the restaurant with them. Robert Smith was so sweet and shy. He was a very kind person.

**Did you guys realize that you were popular before you went into surgery or like back into studying?**

Uh, no, I became the head of a big department in my medical field. I was so involved in my professional life which is so fascinating as well. It's very interesting. I thought that music was an old story and that maybe later on I could come back for my pleasure. I was surprised to get more and more feedback and finally, we heard from Minimal Wave. I received an email from Veronica. She said she was a producer of a broadcast on the radio in New York. She said she wanted to start a label and she would love to re-issue Martin Dupont. My first thought was that it was a joke from a friend of mine. Then she came to France. She met me. She took the time to listen to many of my old cassettes. Veronica and I were getting closer and she was delighted to make this box set. Now she created the box set and it was more successful than she would've thought. I would never have thought that people would buy such expensive stuff.

**With your international reception with Minimal Wave, has that prompted the need for a new tour or some new music?**

We just have to get the schedule and find a way to create a proper set yeah. A good live session. I'm working with musicians from Paris. Actually, by pure chance, I met a couple from Paris. I loved what they did. I had all of their records. They didn't know my band

and when they discovered it, uh, they were enthusiastic. They bought a house not far from mine. We started to work together, and it was magic. I mean, we had the right feeling, there were no problems to do with ego or anything like that. We felt very comfortable playing together. That's the beginning of a new story everybody involved in it is very enthusiastic about it. From that, we made the new album, which is ready. We are just waiting for the manufacturers, unfortunately, at the moment there's a bit of a delay.

The name of the album is Kintsugi.

**What was the song writing process like for this new album?**

We made it with brand new tools. My friend from Paris was very helpful because we mostly worked with Cubase, the musical software. In the past, I made all the old stuff with analogues. So, with all this digital stuff, it was much easier to work with my friend and it was a different way of working.

**You mentioned how your father wanted you to do medicine was that why you moved away from music and focused on medicine?**

Well, I made this choice.

I feel music is the main stuff and is essential. I listen to music all the time. Yeah. I buy thousands of records; much more than what I could listen to. More than one anyway. On the other hand, for me the way of the education and soft pressure from my father. Just being a surgeon gave me the desire to get my bachelor's degree. It wasn't for money. It was just for the image. It was not for social position or social status. The fact is I want to make people healthy.

I mean removing pain. It's very gratifying. I must admit that walking in the street every day I could meet somebody I operated on. That for me is fulfilling, I am grateful for the decision I made. I don't regret the choice.