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Simon Rahm became an acclaimed producer and labelowner under the pseudonym Psilodump. His works is tagged as 8bit or chiptune, though his sound is much more complex, contradictory and even more polyphonic. He has recently finished his new album – that was the time we asked him about making music and our contemporary culture of music.

Listen to: Psilodump - Live @ En Festival i 8 Bitar ([mp3](#))

PRAE.HU: At this right moment you have more than 13.000 listeners on last.fm and you are there as a registered user on it as well. How do you like last.fm? Is Myspace a better way to spread music?



SIMON: Last.fm is fun. I find it interesting to see that there are many people actually listening to my music. Also, one can see certain patterns in peoples listening habits, such as material being more successful in relation to exposure and association. This is all very interesting, but it has very little to do with my own relation to my music.

On the other hand, I find Myspace being super-crappy. The grotesque assimilation of art on a platform to present your works makes me

worried and sick. It's almost as if myspace functions as some sort of certification of you being something. The more friends you gather, the more plays you get the better you are? Naturally, if one can reach out to more listeners then there is a benefit, but to present yourself in 6 tunes in low quality playback, doesn't really say anything about your works, your background or abilities unless you are some sort of gimmick. I find the concept not only being extremely superficial, but also a mirror of the cultural narcissism of our times. Instead of using myspace as a community to present interesting ideas and experiments, it's rather considered to be a quick reference of what the artist is all about. I have no idea on how much myspace helps to actually spread music, but it certainly does something.

PRAE.HU: "Is it just me or has the Internet become somehow more or less pointless?" - you pose the question in one of your posts, and you point out it is indeed true, mentioning the main symptoms and reasons for that... What would be a so-called solution for this problem?

SIMON: A few years ago, artists usually had their own homepages where they would present themselves, their music and could put a more personal touch and substance into the whole experience. Today everything gets squeezed into all sorts of places, such as myspace, where "everybody is", rather than people bothering to make homepages which nobody is sure if anyone ever visits. The more personal and interesting ways of putting forth your works are decreasing and everything is assimilated into the same format for quick consumption. Everything should be displayed on a portal instantly and you are offered to sell your stuff, get photos and videos displayed in a one brand supermarket fashion. Everything is placed to somehow compete with each other and the demand to be able to compare artists, not by their works, but rather their popularity, is crucial.

If you are not on the popular portals and communities, are you considered being anything, and why

would people be interested to look you up? Promotion and competition becomes more important than finding interesting content. The need to participate and be a part of something has become so great, because nobody wants to be alone and left out. Are people more concerned to hunt attention rather than doing something decent? Eventually, who will be left to consume the items presented by everyone?

I don't see a solution. And I see to that I do what I can to try stay out of the circus and continue doing what I do best. Soon I will finish my new homepage, and hope to redirect my own fans attention to it, rather than to my myspace or any other portal. I hope my fans are interested more in the depth and width of all my works rather than surface and my "successful" efforts only.

PRAE.HU: One of my friends said that if we abandon "straightforward" and indeed "crappy" mediums, we cannot do anything else, because we'll reach the other extreme, that is, cultural elitism. What would be those ideal "decent things" then for you concerning music?



SIMON: By decent things I mean something that is good. Not by chasing ratings or feedback to base a standard upon, but something you yourself would find being something you might want to listen to and enjoy. Now, this is not easy to do if one is navigating through the rewards and punishments of ones peers. Asking friends and/or acquaintance for feedback isn't always much of a help either, since they have their own visions and ideas of what you are as a person, and what might suit you and what

not. Even if one does everything by the book, buy the right synthesizers, or do exactly as other people do, it does not guarantee success or fame. It doesn't even guarantee enjoyable music.

I don't believe music itself is important in the game for fame. It's more of an excuse or an icon. Most things happened by chance and coincidence. I'm not saying that successful people aren't doing an excellent job or aren't talented. What I mean is that not everyone is welcome to join, and once a representative is selected, other applicants will be sent home. If you look at the history of different subcultures, you will see what I mean.

Now I actually do see your point in the matter of elitism. Maybe not everyone can make an own homepage, or at least make it decent and/or representative. Therefore different platforms such as myspace might be a good way to show that you exist as a new band/artist. In that case, I guess there is a certain balance between good and bad with this phenomena, as with any other. Still, I see no solution, really :)

PRAE.HU: What is your opinion on "chiptune remixes for at a major label"-situation. It receives harsh criticism in some chiptune forums... Maybe are we just infected with cultural snobism?

SIMON: Yes, indeed. I find it being a sort of (sub)cultural clique-behaviour to be bothered about what is mainstream-this and underground-that. Something being exposed to mainstream attention doesn't ruin anything for a so called underground subculture. I think subcultures do the job of ruining their own movements quite elegantly themselves. It's a severe hypocrisy and basically the other side of the same coin. Both sides exploit the music and creativity for other aims than developing or improving the sound. Music functions as a passive currency and an excuse to try to

get a movement to grow and gain fame. To succeed in this, norms and assimilation must be incorporated and the music peeled off to match the agreed upon parameters that define the style or genre. People within various electronic scenes argue about what is real-this and fake-that, while there are plenty of people still arguing whether electronic music itself is "real" music or not. The same oppressing policies are applied which scenes originally claim themselves being freed of. People should chill for a moment and think about what it's all about.

I'm not concerned about forums. Those who are making loud statements are often loudmouths who think they have things figured out, and it's a mistake to take their words as if they were representatives of what everyone else thinks. Otherwise, who cares :) I hate forums ;)

PRAE.HU: What have you been doing lately? You stated that you have to do a break now, since you feel a bit tired...



SIMON: So for the past two years I have been working on a new album to be released on Demon Tea, an Australian label who actually gave me what I always wanted; totally free hands to do whatever I want on it. Originally I planned on doing a 1 disc full-length concept album, as my previous albums, and immediately started working on new material, rather than putting in anything already existing. I ended up with tons of new excellent tracks, only I hadn't finished a single one of them.

This quickly became a problem, since I hit a writer's block finishing all the tracks, and the work on them turned out to be much more tricky and troublesome than I expected. Not only did I have too much material to finish, but also too much material to fit on a single disc, without mentioning all tracks being extremely complex and filled with details. Also, I could not get an overview of the tracks to figure out a concept. So I got depressed over the pressure, and found that having free hands to do whatever I wanted, without a deadline or anything brought a

heavy responsibility with it. In addition, I didn't want to disappoint the label, who were as excited about the album as I originally was. The album became a horrific pain in the ass for the 2 years, and the phrase "I should be working on the album" became almost a painful catch phrase in my everyday life.

Finally, I explained to the label that I had way too much material on my hands for one disc, so they were more than happy to make it a double CD, instead. All the sudden I had much more elbowroom.

At the same time I decided to let go of all my plans, fears and expectations, to do some introspection in order to find out what I really wanted to do. I scrapped many of the new tunes that I was the slightest unhappy with and threw in some old ones, which I reworked into new versions.

I ended up with a bit too many tracks again - after some additional work I threw out even more tracks, and ended up with the 25 best ones. The result was my most diverse, complex and worked through (non-concept) album I have ever done.

The album is now mastered and ready to be released. The only thing missing now is the artwork, which is made by Edwin Van Aalderen, from The Netherlands, who made the covers for my previous album, "Never Heal". After the album is released, I have been planning on taking a hopefully well-deserved break from everything, and maybe try restoring some of my social life somewhat. However, I think it will be difficult, since apparently I'm still a bit of a crazy workaholic.

Psilodump webpage - <http://www.psilodump.com>

Psilodump@Discogs - <http://www.discogs.com/artist/Psilodump>

Psilodump@Last.fm - <http://www.last.fm/music/Psilodump>