



# MOGDAX

WORDS BY DANIEL WANG

Mogdax represent a 'special corner' of electronic music right now - not many people from Italy are making this sort of 'bridge' between old disco, italo disco, and new electronic. Mog and Dax, together make exactly this sort of connection...

## Introduce yourself. How did you get started, and how long have you been DJing?

Dax: I'm Dario, known as Dax DJ. Living in Vicenza in the north of Italy, not too far from Venice. I start DJing many years ago I was 14 and now I'm 31! Initially using tapes recorded from Italian radio shows and playing them at "Cantina" small parties... After going to high school, I started working in the best DJ record shop in my town: Music Power. They wanted me to work there, because every day I spent my time in this shop looking for new vinyl and breaking their balls! There I experienced a lot of dance music: soul, funk, disco, Italian commercial dance, techno and house music and all the little independent labels that I love. My first 45" was Kraftwerk *Space Lab*, later my first 12" was *Sueno Latino* on DFC's Italian Label.

Mog: I'm Max, aka Mog, 32 years old, from Vicenza. I started playing electronic music in 1991 and since then I can't stop. I have my own music studio where I spend a lot of my time, almost live in it. Since I was 17, I've bought and sold instruments. I'm very affectionate with the ones that are now in my studio.

## Your new label is called *Made in Italo*. Please tell us about the first single by Mogdax, *Jack Ibiza*.

Dax: *Made In Italo Records* was founded by Max and me. I can't do music without Max; we met several years ago and we started to collaborate in his super home-studio, focusing on new musical directions and spending time talking about music, italo and analog equipment. We like electronic music and Max is the heart of Mogdax. Fact One is our first single with two tracks, *Jack Ibiza* and *Black Side*, totally played by Mog. The voice you can hear in *Jack Ibiza* is mine. It's our first tribute to the current electronic scene and the *Black Side* track is very close to nostalgic italo, but with some Detroit feel.

## Mog, you handle more of the technical side of MogDax. I had a chance to visit your studio. Can you tell us what instruments and sound tools you use, and how these affect the results of your production?

Mog: In the Mogdax project, I am the creator of the music not only from a technical perspective, but also trying to craft a sound that belongs to the mix of Dax's experience and mine. I worship the analog sound from analog instruments, but I also like using the new software now available. It was hard to choose between the different types of instruments, I had no choice but to buy one and learn from the instrument itself. Once I'd bought my first Casio drum machine and my first Akai sampler I learned what sound I was really looking for and what machine would satisfy my needs. If I wanted a filtered and dirty bass I would use Roland; if I wanted an accurate and calibrated sound, I'd prefer to use my Korg or Quasimidi... The sound is the most important thing in conveying the exact feeling you have while you do your track. Talking about software, it's useful to help the work of an artist, but it's also standardizing the music scene at the present time.

## What kinds of things influenced your musical background? Disco, funk, soul, or other genres like jazz and classical?

Mog: My dad's passion for music was my lucky charm. He introduced me when I was very young into the amazing world of music. Every style gave me something I brought to my music, from the bossa, through to jazz, to italo disco. But what did really influenced me, and my musical sounds, were the early nineties productions of Warp, Plus8, Kk etc.

Dax: Working in a record shop, I listened to many different styles. Afro music influenced me: a sort of mixture of electronic, funk, disco and tribal - all mixed. At the beginning I played acid house on my radio show (my first Nugroove and Bobby Konders). I'd been into the electronic scene also, and collected all the Aphex Twin, Autechre, Richie Hawtin +8 and Warp vinyl. And after that, back to the seventies, and I became a crazy maniac collector of gems and obvious italo tunes. One of my Italian

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electronic gems: Giampiero Boneschi's *Moog Mandolins & Moonlight* on Durium made with "Strumenti Elettronici." (Thanks Bob Moog!).

Do you find that you can achieve the "italo" sound with new, virtual instruments? Or are you specifically trying to create a newer, more contemporary sound?

Mog: I prefer to create new and more contemporary sounds even if some of the italo ones are always present in my virtual instrument archive. Nowadays, the available tools help you do unbelievable things by manipulating the sound the way you want. I don't want to follow a path in music creation; I just follow the ideas I have at the moment.

## Do you really eat pasta everyday?

Dax: Yes, all Italians eat pasta every day! I love spaghetti all'amatriciana with parmesan, aglio olio, peperoncino and carbonara. Italian food is the best and pasta is good healthy food. We've got many types of pasta from bigoli, to orecchiette... also the North is different from the South and the islands, Sardegna and Sicily.

Mog: I love pasta with tomato and mozzarella. In Italy pasta is a must in everyday meals.

## You actually know a number of the italo disco pioneers personally, like Daniele Baldelli or Leonardo Re Ceconi (Dr. Togo). Can you tell me about your experiences with some of them?

Dax: Yes, I know Daniele and I'm a fan of Baia degli Angeli 77/78 (legendary cosmic club) and "Cosmic Culture" (check out the new CD collection out on Amarkord

Records). I have many tapes. My friends usually listen to them in the car, smoking. I've got several friends outside Italy that are going crazy looking for italo vinyl! The secret is to come to Italy and go to little fairs in little towns. You can find everything; it's where I met the BAFFO and his super collection of italo and seventies US records and where I met Luigi Figini (known as Dr. Togo) from Emilia Romagna. Actually, he's spending his weekends selling old second hand vinyl at fairs and festivals.

## Are there any contemporary Italian electronic, disco, or house music producers whom you admire, or are working with?

Dax: I have many friends in Italy that do music: Spiller, Beker - Re.Do.It.Stone.Funk. Collective, Duoteque (Dusty Kid and Ferlin), Guglielmo Mascio, Fabrizio Mammarella, Maurizio Dami and Jolly Music. But my best artist, musician and friend is Mog!

Mog: Thanks brother! In the Italian electronic scene my favourite producers are Pankow in the early nineties and now Jolly Music.

## What are the essential elements for a good party when you are DJ'ing?

Dax: Main ingredient: the good music; the feeling: from the location, to the people, to the sound system.

Mog: Cool People

## What is your ideal kind of music?

Mog: A mix between the Orb's dreamlike atmosphere and Richie Hawtin's minimalism, Autechre's syncopated sounds and Lumukanda's tribal rhythms. Dax: I play several styles during a DJ set, I like to surprise people and make them dance with obscure disco tunes and mix them up with electro minimal tracks or moody ones. I love it! Tracks like Gaucho's *Dance Forever - DJ version* (System Music) or *Sounds of Humano* by Sangy (Musix), *Stand By* by Code 61/2 (Many Records) are modern!

## Give us a Top Ten list of favourite records, old or new, and tell us why.

Dax: Several records... You need to check my family-house.net web site every month or listen to the Mogdax sound. Here for you is a quick selection of secret (but not too secret!) weapons:

**PASSENGERS** Girls Cost Money (Durium) Super boogie

**AUTECHRE** Amber (Warp)

Very close to me.

**VARIOUS** Big Bear 002 (Big Bear)

The way I met Stevie Kotey and Bear friends

**MFSB** Mysteries Of The World (Phi'Int.)

Essential juice

**JIMMY CRASH** (Nugroove Records)

This is minimal

**ADONIS** We're Rocking Down The House

Yes, we rock!

**EL COCO** Cocomotion (AVI)

Dancin' baby!

**RAY MANG / LEE TONG** (Hole Subaltern)

Nu-funk dope

**LIL LOUIS & THE WORLD** Nice & Slo (CBS)

When I was young I usually played this at the end of every set. Perfect "ultimo disco"!

## What do you do in your free time, besides making and spinning music?

Dax: I'll tell you. Music is my life ... My free time is just for friends and my doll! **DW**

The first release on Made In Italo Records: *MOG Universe M111* is out now, and check out family-house.net for more Mogdax news...