

ISOLÉE

Billing — Pampa | Maeve

Based in Hamburg, Germany

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

The iconic “Beau Mot Plage”, a melodic, psychedelic somehow balearic dance track is most certainly the title Isolée is best renowned for and which established him as an innovative Producer in electronic club music at the end of the 90ies and early 2000.

While Rajko Müller aka Isolée was influenced by 90ies minimal techno and deep house music and looking out for giving his own contribution to the club, he became almost overnight one of the figureheads of a new subgenre that music journalism gave the name of “microhouse”. Actually, Rajko never felt devoted to this or any genre in specific, he likes to specify his music as electronic (dance) music in the broadest sense.

Rajko Müller was born in Frankfurt, where he grew up just until starting going to School. That's when his family decided to move to the Mediterranean harbor-city Oran in Algeria for the next five years, meaning he had to change to a French school and learn French. At that time, his musical influence mainly came from radio, playing late 70ies music like Bob Marley, and his elder brother bringing home AC/DC tapes from his school mates.

Flipping through his father's newspaper one day his attention was caught by the Cover of a record and the strange name of a band called “Kraftwerk”: that was so German. No doubt the search for identity at that age in a foreign country made him feel like he needed to have this record. Therefore, he asked his dad to buy it. This was probably the first and only album on tape he ever owned, all later being on vinyl, and it turned out to be good music, suiting to adults as well as to young kids like him and his two brothers now easily singing “we are the robots”.

Back in Germany, as a teenager, Rajko was attracted by 80ies pop and synth pop, so that he tried to imitate it with his best friend from school. They bought their first synthesizer, a Yamaha DX27 and a TR-505 drum machine, but of course they couldn't sound like Depeche Mode with that gear.

Later in the 80ies, Rajko started discovering Frankfurt's nightclubbing, places called Tekkno-Club playing late 80ies EBM music as well as early 80ies new wave music or indie clubs playing music from The Smiths, The Cure and the Violent Femmes.

Friends introduced him to early electronica from Labels like WARP, to hip-hop and minimal techno, names like Robert Hood and Jeff Mills. One of these friends is Andreas (ND) Baumecker, working at the local record store for club music at that time and starting his career as a DJ in Frankfurt's “Wild Pitch Club”. They became flatmates for a while and ND brought all those new releases home for long listening sessions, introducing Rajko to 90ies house music from labels like Prescription Underground, Chez Damier and Ron Trent as well as Detroit techno.

Now things were going their way as Rajko's elder brother came up buying now classic synthesizers like a Roland Juno-106 and a SH-101. It was Rajko who ended up using them most of the time instead of his brother. Also, it was his elder brother who introduced him to Cubase and using a personal computer.

It was just a matter of time that his friend ND took some tapes with these early productions to the record store where Ata and Heiko MSO were working at that time while running their labels Playhouse, Klang Electronic and Ongaku together with Roman Flügel.

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The first four EPs led to the breakthrough EP „Beau Mot Plage“ in 1998, being played on the radio by Sven Vãth first. This strange title referring to a beach of Rajko's childhood in Algeria was then licensed to Classic Records in the UK who did a remix EP, including the gorgeous “Freeform Five Remix” that pushed the track even more, being licensed on many dance compilations at that time.

The much acclaimed first long player “Rest” followed shortly after and clubs started to ask for live performances . At first, it wasn't easy at all to find a way to transfer the recorded home studio work into a live set that was fun to play, but over the years' experience, new software and technologies made things more comfortable.

After several EPs and remixes, of which Isolée's “Cardiology” remix for Reclouse is probably one of the most outstanding, the second long player appeared in 2005. This was a tough one after the success of “Beau Mot Plage” and rest. Instead of taking the same line, “We Are Monster” became a much more disco- and indie-influenced album, becoming a key album to discover electronic music for many listeners not familiar with this genre and was considered of one of the albums of the year.

Meanwhile, Rajko has moved to live in Hamburg, which led Isolée to DJ Koze's new label “Pampa Records” in 2011. The third album “Well Spent Youth” appeared there as well as the so much celebrated tune “Allowance”, with its catchy synth theme.

Besides several other releases that followed, Isolée's EP on Maeve Records in 2017 is probably the one to mention, especially the A-Side “Pisco” with its percussive and hypnotic groove being played by many DJs and listed on many DJ playlists and top lists.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

Ginster EP – Mule Musiq [2019]
Mangroove EP – Maeve Records [2017]
Well Spent Youth LP – Pampa Records [2011]
We Are Monster LP – Playhouse [2005]
Rest LP – Playhouse [2000]