

A C T I V E S U S P E N S I O N



Active Suspension records is a label located in Paris, directed by Jean Charles, who replied to our questions on August 19th, 2002.

- **I'd like to know a little biographical information about you, such as how old you are, where you grew up, your schooling... Any sort of information that could help readers to understand how you got to be who you are today.**

Hello, I come from normandy where I was born in 1973, and did travel a bit in the past. I've now been living in paris for 4 years now. My schooling was more comercial oriented wich allowed me to start working in the business part of the music... but since that I don't want to have nothing to do with commercial & proper business... more with attitudes... My parents never taught me anything on music, they never cared about music & they still don't... so I think my past experience can hardly explain my situation now!

- **Which friendly piece of advice would you give to someone who wants to start his label ? What used to be tape-only labels are now CDR-only labels. Do you think it makes it easier for people to start their label and run less risks ?**

From my point of view, to start a label, it is very important to keep thinking u're doing it for some bands/ artists and not especially for yourself, and it is also very important to believe in these artists. It can look evident but from my experience, it is not clear for every label!

I used to release tapes & fanzines in the past and think it helped me to learn a lot about what a label really is... So I am not against organisations that put out cdrs but I am sometimes scared by the prices these records are sold as I can't believe a cdr label can think about making money! It is against the former idea, isn't it? I like Evenement label that keep going ahead w/ a limited number of copies but a free download available on their website. I also like the idea behind microwave... but didn'tlisten their last stuff! I think that by the time cdr labels started, there were some really good things going on, but from now on, I think that it is a good way to absorb the overproduction shit...

- **To me the role of a label should be to discover new acts, help them get promotion, distribution, spread the word on their creativity. It seems that could be the motto behind your label. Right ?**

That's about it really. I just want the label and artists to be considered and recognised for their works and creativity ... and I really feel useful to act this way. If one day a famous artist asks for releasing an album on my label and if I really like it, I think it will be a very hard choice for me. However, we're not against collaborations and things that can help unknown artists to get recognition from more people, so I decided to start a serie of records for that. I feel uncomfortable doing compilations albums or collaborations because it helps selling... So this serie brings a real outside vision on artists works wich is a project really... Last record on that serie was a 8 remixes LP of Shinsei by Kpt Michigan, Isan, Ultra Milkmaids... Forthcoming one will feat. O.Lamm remixed by Sutekh, Team Doyobi, Alejandra & Aeron... and many many more... Sometimes remixes are a-creativity when it is a question of buying it (the remix, not the record)... I mean anybody who's gpt the money can buy a remix of autechre or El-p... but I prefer the idea of exchange or people who do it because they really like the project and really want to do it... Seth Sutekh asked o.lamm for doing the remix as well as many others did and that's the main idea of this serie so I think it works...

- **I have noticed in your list of distributors that some of the companies are mailorder rather than proper distributors, or better say mailorder-lists that have extended their activities and sell to some very specialised Indie record stores. But they do not sell to chain stores. So do you think that it would be useless for your records to reach those music supermarkets ?**
- **Your Parisian distributor is helping you out with worldwide distribution. Are you satisfied with that solution ? I assume it doesn't help to keep things, prices under control in certain countries ?**

I have a wide range of distributors... Chronowax is my main stock holder... They sell in chains in france and national distributors abroad... I had too many problems getting paid by distributors in the past to do it all by myself... and accounts is not my cup of tea! So this is a good point really... But on the other hand it is true many distributors margins sometimes makes records prices crazy ... but as I keep the selling price really low, it is not such a problem. However, I keep working straigh with tiny mail orders and record dealers because it is sometimes very important not to wait for national distributors to do their job as they sometimes don't bother about you... and I like the idea of people being able to buy records from any place in the world as mail orders are best for that... and I don't release comercial & popular music that suits to big chains and supermarkets, so I don't feel the necessity of working w/ some people that only belive in marketing resuslts... Links on the website are not really updated anyway... and I think that the idea behind these links was to show where people could get hold on our records easily.

- **Today, there are more and more chain stores and less and less passionate/smaller record shops. Are you affected by that (de)evolution, or did you deliberately chose to stay away from that "market" ?**

I am affected by this national anti-cultural drama that is fortunately not the case everywhere. France is really bad with that... but I think that in other countries such as uk, US or Japan, there are still a lot of these 'small' record dealers. I am not against selling records in chains as it is now my job to sell as many records as I can, but I still have a big preference for real stores.

- **What gave you the reason, or motivation to start your label ? Weren't you satisfied with other labels'music ?**

I started this label in 1998 with the idea of showing my environmental works. First artists on the label were friends really... I was thinking it would have been best for them to send 7" records to labels more than cassettes really... I was only sending these records to other labels at the beginning as I wasn't thinking that I would be able to promote + distribute... these musics as well as others were doing at that time... It was only pleasure and fun... I wasn't considering myself as a proper label, I was just a link really, that's mainly why I only released singles during 2 or 3 years.

But for nearly a year now, I have decided to think different and take advantage of my international and specialised distribution to develop artists like a proper label should. So, mid 2001 has been a new start really. Think we keep the original spirit but we now we try to fulfill some ambitions.



- **Did you start with a certain idea, concept ?**

no

- **How would you describe a typical Active Suspension act ?**

When I decide to sign a band, it is really important that I feel a general subjective atmosphere getting out of the demo... I also need to enjoy all of the work, the general idea, then I try to meet or speak to the person or know more about him/ her/ them before I really decide. It is really important that I share some ideas w/ artists, that makes things easier and it prevents bad surprises ... That's maybe why every single active suspension artist appreciate one another... They all listen to many different stuff, all have different music experiences... but we've all got about the same ideas on what we should do to preserve the music, that's it really!

- **Could you introduce us to some of the acts on your label ? (names, how you met, anecdotes...)**

First time I met Olivier Lamm, he interviewed me first for a fanzine called Planet of sound (he's still doing it)... then he sent a tape to me... he knew what he had to sent to me, and it worked! All other nowadays AS acts have been signed on the faith of their demos.

- **Most labels have an example, or a favorite other label which they like, and you ? Any label you could say was an influence on you ? Any label that you think has been influenced by yours ?**

I think that labels that influenced me in the past are different from today's influential labels... I started the label being really fond on kill rock stars or K records or other Wurlitzer Jukebox or earworm or even rephlex or mute labels for their attitudes... Labels I now feel close to are Fat Cat, 555, kitty-yo, kranky... labels w/ no 'etiquettes', no 'labels' on it, and labels w/ strong attitudes again and again... Think it's very important for a label to follow its ideas more than a certain style... I don't know if I personally influenced some people and don't really care... but there are a few people who ask recommendations to me before they start a label!



- **Often people do not consider "microsounds" to be rich and believe that very few is happening... Often associating it with the theory of "less is more", whereas a lot of things and ideas can be noticed in the music of many so-called "microsound" artists.**
- **Would you say that this is because many listeners :**
 - a) do not listen**
 - b) do not care**
 - c) can't understand the subtleties**

I think that 3 answers are linked as when u don't take enough time to listen to something w/ enough attention, you don't really understand its subtelties, and then u get bored and afterwards u don't care and don't want to care about... This is mainly a journalist problem I suppose (I mean most of daily journalists, not the passionate ones)... One of the main problem today is to bring new things and ideas... many

people are too lazy or just want to know about, and medias don't help really... we're not living in a 'mass' society where risks are tolerated/ accepted.

- **Could you give us some precisions on the actual scene in Paris? Any other label, activists that you feel close to ?**

In paris, there are so many good clubs (ah ah ah !!!)... Unfortunately, there are not that many good things going over here... but there are a few... I feel really close to people who do the evenement and clapping music record labels... as well as reiko and her tsunami-addiction organisation (we share the same office)... Otherwise, my other best friends are not into music! But I like these people : Ruminance rds, list rds/ fabrique de couleurs, deco rds, buro organisation... and Le batofar that will soon become a proper club so there won't be any other good venue apart from les instants chavirés! Oh and yes, the good radio programs on aligre 93.4 fm (solenoide, helter skelter, songs of praise...) and also on libertaire 89.4fm (sepuku...)... and sorry for the other ones I have forgotten...

- **Anything to say on the musical situation of France today ?**

nothing to say, lots of things to do!

- **How does your selection process work ? Looks like you mostly sign acts from Paris ? Are they pieces personally requested, or volunteered to you ?**

T slection has nothing to do with our geographical situation... Lots of artists were signed when they were living outside of paris like stephane from domotic who came from brest (originary from marseille)... I just signed with a guy from strasbourg, and since that, he's just moved to paris... I didn't do anything for all these people to come here and meet each other and all become really good friends... but I like their intentions and the way they all start working together, share their lives and experiences... I never wanted to construst a scene or anything like that as I really don't want to build a ghetto or closing doors to others... but in a general way, I mostly receive demos from france... Aerosol I released a 12" for comes from danemark!

- **Is there anything that you regret or that you'd change if you could ?**

Nothing but my nickname... maybe...

- **Any album or band that you wish you had issued on AS ?**

there must be yes... the Velvet Underground maybe!

- **What are your goal as a label. Future plans ?**

I just want want to be able to live w/ my ideas as it is very hard to do it now... and I really don't want to start working for some wankers again!

- **Upcoming releases ? Please give some details on every band, name of the record, etc...**

- Very last releases include an album by **hypo**... think there are very few projects that can pretend to summarise the 3/4 past decades in one album.
- Very last record released is a ltd 12" of **Shinsei** remixes by i s a n, aerosol, encre, kpt michigan, my jazzy child, o.lamm, quasar ken and ultra milkmaids...
- Very forthcoming records are two debut singles by the unknown **Colleen** and **Connie Kreski**. Colleen is one of the very first girl acting on active suspension... she does very nice intimates loops from various origins, and u can feel this girlie emotional touch that sometimes miss in the macho world of electronic musics... Connie Kreski is the very first active suspension guitar hero. 3 tracks/ 20mns of prepared guitar only!
- Next releases will include a cd album of **o.lamm** remixes by : Sutekh, Erich Zahn, Gordz, Ovil Bianca, Discom, Alejandra and Aeron , Hypo, Shinsei, Team Doyobi, Domotic, Blevin Blectum from Blectum from Blechdom, dDamage, Steve Roden, Noak Katoj, and My Jazzy Child... and maybe some more!
- By this time, a new **compilation** cd will get released as the first one did well and that there are no one left...
- **Shinsei** "le coeur de celui qui marche sur l'arc-en-ciel" album is also planned but it could be another pop album that will be released in 2005 !
- otherway, **My Jazzy Child** is preparing a great album I can't say more about that now...
- A new signing include **Davide Balula** that's the very first active suspension folk singer/ player... but it is also about a lot of 'microsounds' in that as well. A three 7" box set with collaborations with o.lamm, Hypo and domotic is on its way, the album will follow early 2003 hopefully...
- mmmhhh, there is a very nice band called **concertmate** that is made of different artists from the label and Evenement... The main restriction in that band is the use of cheap keyboards, they just released an album on evenement! Check out!

ACTIVE CATALOGUE / 05/2002

7" singles:

- AS01 DAA "Ring Modulator" (sold out)
- AS02 OSAKA "Lipstick Building ep" (sold out)
- AS03 AVROCAR / MAGNÉTOPHONE split single (sold out)
- AS04 MILS "Nature et Robots Sauvages" (sold out)
- AS05 COLOR UND CLIMAX "Excitation Derivation Series"
- AS06 TIN FOIL STAR s/t
- AS07 TRANSBEAUCE s/t
- AS08 GEL: s/t (sold out)
- AS09 O. LAMM "Sturnin ep"
- AS10 ENCRE s/t
- AS11 MELODIUM s/t
- AS12 SHINSEI "Le Bruit me tient en Vie" (sold out)
- AS13 MY JAZZY CHILD "loops strings and bells"
- AS14 COLLEEN s/t 7" (August 02)
- AS15 CONNIE KRESKI s/t 7" (August 02)**

12" singles serie :

ASS01 O. LAMM "Matière à micrométrie"
ASS02 DOMOTIC s/t
ASS03 AEROSOL s/t
ASS04 HYPO "Singles & Jingles"

12" collaboration & remixes serie :

ASR01 MILS vs GEL: "Fractions" (*sold out*)
ASR02 OSAKA "Twisted Emirates vol. one"
remixes by STATE RIVER WIDENING, O. LAMM, THE BIG KNIFE and PORTAL...

ASR03 SHINSEI 'Nation Solipsiste ep' / Remixes vol.1 (11/06 2002)
feat. remixes by : aerosol, kpt michigan, encre, my jazzy child, i s a n, o.lamm, and ultra milkmaids.

ASR04 O.LAMM "'slow (...) some" remix cd (octobre/novembre 02)
feat. remixes by Team Doyobi, Ovil Bianca, Discom, Sutekh, Blebin Blectum from Blectum from Blechdom, Shinsei, Hypo, dDamage, Steve Roden, Alejandra&Aeron, Noak Katoi, Erich Zahn, My Jazzy Child, Domotic... (CD RELEASE)

ACD-LP / cds - lps

ACD01 v/a variable access (03/12/01) (*sold out*)
ACD02 DOMOTIC 'bye bye' cd album (05/03 2002)
ALP02 DOMOTIC 'bye bye' 12" album (05/03 2002) (*sold out*)
ACD03 SHINSEI 'Le coeur de celui qui marche sur l'arc-en-ciel' cd album (late.2002)
ALP03 SHINSEI 'Le coeur de celui qui marche sur l'arc-en-ciel' 12" album (late.2002)
ACD04 O.LAMM 'snow party' cd album (16/04 2002)
ALP04 O.LAMM 'snow party' 12" album (16/04 2002)
ACD05 HYPO 'karaoke a capella' cd album (18/06 2002)

www.activesuspension.org
www.evenement0.net
www.tsunami-addiction.com
www.hypo.fr.st
www.olamm.fr.st