

# DELUXE



Deluxe records is a label located in Seattle, directed by Mike Martinez, who replied to our questions on August 18<sup>th</sup>, 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.

*i was born in 73, so i'm almost 30... scary...*

*i was born in the philippines, and my family moved to america when i was about 2. i also lived in the country of brunei for a few years, which is a small, muslim, oil-rich country on the island of malaysia. my dad was an engineer and his company was hired to build the sultan's palace in brunei, so we lived there for about 2-3 years. it was a really neat experience, to be exposed to other cultures at such a young age.*

*i grew up listening to punk and hip hop all throughout high school, and also was heavily into skateboarding and started playing in punk bands. we started deluxe in 95 as more of a punk/indie rock label, but then took a hiatus for a couple years, and resurfaced around 99 with a more "electronic/experimental" focus.*

- 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 ?

*starting and running a label is hard, just like any start-up business. if you can release the music you like, while sticking to your ethics and have this music available to those that want it or might like it, without losing all your money, that is the ideal thing to me... no matter how big or small your pressings are.*

- 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 ?

*we don't have any mottos or specific agendas. we like to let things take shape as they develop. mainly, deluxe is a platform for music and art... which are 2 things we really love, and it is a way to for us to combine those interests.*

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

*i met drew daniel of matmos when i was working at a record store in berkeley, and he was going to school at uc berkeley which was right up the street. he would bring in tapes of early matmos stuff and we had similiar past connections and interests with indie rock and punk/hardcore... i was quite blown away by the music matmos was doing at the time, so much so, that i wanted to release a record, and it just so happened that they were working on "the west" which had this indie rock/electronic crossover sound that was just the direction we were headed.*

*danielle (my wife and other half of deluxe) met the blectum girls at a party at mills college, where she had studied, along with bevin and kristen of blectum f.b... she was totally psyched by the show they played and the music they were doing... we hadn't heard anything like it.*

*electric birds- well that's me... and danielle does live video with me for live shows. the 1<sup>st</sup> electric birds cd was recorded with the help of many friends, including the matmos guys, and other bekeley based artists.*

*we have 2 new acts soon to release full lengths on deluxe:*

*bizz circuits- is sebastian messner from frankfurt germany, aka random inc and a member of the group autopoieses.*

*warmdesk- is william selman from chicago. i'm sure you know him through the bip-hop tracks he did for your comp... anyway, he has been reworking and is still reworking a new full length for deluxe due out next year...*

- **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 ?**
- **Do you wish to keep your music within a certain circle of specialized connoisseurs ?**
- **Or did you chose to keep things, prices under control and thus avoid mass-distribution in certain countries ?**

*we sell only to people we feel good about on both a personal level and a business level. but we don't wish to keep our music hidden or elitist in any way. i would like for our music to be available to whoever wants it, but we're not trying too hard to get our stuff into big chains like tower or virgin. sometimes, it's just a lot easier to not deal with those larger companies... and i'm not sure they would sell too many anyway, and i don't like the idea of our cds being marked up a ton and costing like \$18 u.s. dollars retail in virgin, which is ridiculous for a domestic cd.*

*actually we still don't have any proper distribution in france... so if anyone reads this and might be interested, please get in touch! :)*



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

*we just wanted to release music we liked with art/graphics that we liked.*

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

*no.*

- **How would you describe a typical Deluxe act ?**

*i don't think there is a typical deluxe act. we like to mix things up. maybe a good description would be 'non-typical'.*

- **How did you chose the name of the label ? Why ?**

*it was a name that really didn't associate itself to any one thing in particular. a very generic name that could be applied to anything: deluxe toilets, deluxe pizza, whatever. we liked the openness of the name, allowing for a more eclectic focus, but at the same time, when you hear the word 'deluxe' it suggests something special...*

- **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 ?**

*tons of labels have influenced us over the years... ecm, dischord, kill rock stars, gravity, chain reaction, warp, mille plateaux, minus, thrill jockey, and tons more i can't think of at the moment. i'm constantly inspired by people doing cool shit, and just fucking doing it rather than talking about it so much.*



- **You pay a lot of attention to packaging and your website is good-looking. Could you give us details on the person in charge of the design ?**

*i do all the website design, along with help from danielle. for the album art, i've done some of the covers like electric birds and panorama. we also work with other designers and artists like common space, revdesign and others... we try to stick to certain subtle aesthetic qualities, but we're always looking to progress and mix things up, rather than keeping all our designs to a strict aesthetic.*

- **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 subtelties**

*all of the above. + some people just don't have the patience or attention span for stuff like that. and it all comes down to taste too. if something is good, people will respond to it, regardless of what genre it may be or if it's "minimal" or whatever.*

- **You started to operate the label in SF, and then relocated in Seattle. Is it easier to run it from there ? Life is less expensive ? Could you give us some precisions on the actual scene in Seattle, SF ? Any other label, activists that you feel close to ?**

*i think we like seattle because it's really pretty and mellow, and we're actually not surrounded by a big music "scene", which allows us to focus more on our own thing, without worrying too much about who or what is "cool", which is more dominant in*

*bigger music scenes like s.f. or nyc. but at the same time, being in a more sophisticated, faster paced urban environment like that also pushes you to do better shit and makes you "harder" in certain ways, which is cool too.... i don't know... for now, seattle is where we feel comfortable.*

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

*punk/garage rock is mainstream now, which is weird but kinda ok... i guess i'd rather hear the strokes or the hives, than creed or p.o.d.i like the neptunes. we saw britney spears live in las vegas. it was kind of disappointing.*

- **How does your selection process work? Are they pieces personally requested, or volunteered to you ?**

*both. we get lots of demos and i talk to a lot of friends, always asking about their music and whatnot.*

- **You have started a series of compilations. Could you please explain this process to our readers ?**

*the night owls compilation series is all original tracks, simply based on the theme of night...*

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

*hmm... yeah but it's too late to do anything about it now.spent too much \$\$ on some releases.*

- **Futurepans ?**

*we are doing a line of tshirts, and hope to expand more with apparel...we are also starting an indoor skateboard park in seattle, which is going to be a whole different thing from the label.... more on that later.*

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

*v/a - night owls 02 - cd (w/soft pink truth, jetone, electric birds, pan american, bizz circuits, warmdesk, sagan and more)  
bizz circuits - the very best of... - cd  
warmdesk - (album tba) - cd*

- **You compose music under the alias Electric Birds, any news on that side of your life ?**

*i've been taking the whole summer off from making music. i did so much over the last 2 years, releasing like 3 albums within 2 years, i feel like i need to chill out for a while. we might be doing a small deluxe tour in october to germany and other countires, with electric birds, blevin blectum and bizz circuits.*

- **I heard you just signed to Mille Plateaux, is this move gonna be very helpful and bring more recognition than the one you had enjoyed when self-releasing your albums ?**
- **Does it give you more credit being signed to another label in opposition to your self-producing ?**

*i've always liked MP as a label, for years now, so it's a pleasure to do releases for them. after releasing my own music for a while, i began to feel a little self-conscious and pretentious with releasing and promoting my own music. it's a lot easier for me to promote and talk about other people's music, as opposed my own... so i feel like another label like MP can promote my music and i don't have to trip out so much on the business and promotional side of it. plus, MP is a label that i respect in a lot of different ways (musically, artistically and politically), and they've been really cool to work with - so i'm pretty stoked. i think i'm scheduled to do another MP album next year, so i'll probably be working on that this winter.*

**<http://www.deluxerecs.com>**