

# D O M I Z I L



**Domizil is a label located in Switzerland, operated by bernd schurr and marcus maeder who replied to our questions on August 26<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 am 30 years old, born in zurich and still living here... i've been studying fine arts in lucerne, so there was a longer period where i was much more involved into the fine arts than in music. During my teenage years, I played in some local new wave/industrial bands. my musical work began again when we started to build up an independent project space in zurich, called 'kombirama'. at the same time, i met bernd in lucerne, the second part of domizil, and we started to organise concerts at the kombirama. out of that context of artists and musicians grew a musical project, called 'audiorama'; we were first three persons: bernd, i, and stefan altenburger, better known now as 'golden boy'. a bit later, bernd and i have founded domizil, first a cassette and cdr label.*

*domizil was for a longer period part of some bigger contexts; we called it the ear of kombirama and later, of k3000, an artists collective and following project of kombirama. k3000 still exists as an accumulation of studios and people working in the same building, but without common projects; it seems that the time of such 'collective' projects with public approach is over...*

- **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 ?**

*every dj has today his own 'label', and specially the 'electronic music scene' defines its structure, content and hype (?) via more or less 'virtual' label concepts. if i look back to the 80ies or even earlier, as punk began, labels were built up with the intention to be something like an alternative structure against a perverted music industry; counter- and subculture and subcultural behaviour and economics were the main issue.*

*the manner of this 'do it yourself', 'everyone can do it' was reissued with the start-up of techno culture in the 90ties, and there is still a huge number of small labels, like us, which put more importance into being the platform of a social context than generating big income. the problem today is, that a certain 'hype' of electronic music seems to be over and as you maybe also state, the small market of 'independent' music generally, disappears in the public attention. not the best time for building up a label...*

*i think that the discussion of 'in which direction an independent pop culture wants to go' has been forgotten whithin a certain 'goldrush' in the last ten years and the disintegration of (sometimes very ideological distinctive) subcultures. and here's my 'friendly advice'; everyone who wants to start a label should ask himself: where could be ways to define another idea of music distribution and an economical structure which corresponds to the real needs of the participants and how should be the 'interface' to the public?*

*this discussion isn't a new one at all: the history of commercialisation of subculture is quite a longer one. and it's clear that i got here a romantic attitude. but i believe my work as musician and label-net-worker as an oppositional one. otherwise i would be a&r in a big company. much labels who fucussed on that mail-art idea of sending around tapes and cdrs or producing small editions of singles, dissappeared. and sometimes i've got the feeling that pop culture changed from an idealistic counterpart in the society to a meaningless and endless reproducing advertising machinery.*



- **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 ?**

*well, yes, of course.*

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

like many other labels, we started first with bringing out our own music. the network idea was more located in our activities as concert- and workshop organisers. then,

the number of people releasing their music on domizil, has grown with the time. maybe it is important to know how the situation was and still is here in switzerland. before the time of the techno movement, there was absolutely no structure for swiss musicians, making electronic music. while in germany a certain scene has grown up fast and already a longer tradition existed, bands and musicians in switzerland were all single fighters in an environment much more oriented to club culture than into producing content. in relation to that topic, which is surely also one in other countries, i named my first album 'solipsistic\_motion'. it is quite hard to change that mentality; that's one of the reasons, why the number of participating musicians is still a small one at domizil.

we came then into contact to the 'micromusic'-network, some ex-members of etoy, which started to focus with their server on 'lowtech-music'. We have been making two releases till now, which are the product of an intensive process together: 'micro\_superstarz\_2000', a compilation of uploaded tracks after one year activity, and remixes of a micromusic member, psilodumputer, 2001.

then some single musicians went inmates of domizil: rm74, a guy from aarau, and steinbrüchel from zurich, which released till now his records himself. our main focus lies recently into expanding our musical radius. we don't want to be a programmatic label, specialised on digital electronics, like raster-noto or mego, to which we got good relationships.

next releases will explore the field of improvised/noise music: there are projects of joke lanz/sudden infant and rudolf eb.er/schimpffluch, two swiss noise legends, in the pipeline, and next year, we would like to publish more artists from other countries we know since a long time, one will be a cd of asmus tietchens.

- **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 ?**

*well, regarding a maximum public attention, it would be good to be in chain stores. but i am afraid that they're not really interested in our stuff... we didn't had any requests from that side till now...*

- **Do you wish to keep your music within a certain circle of specialized connoisseurs ?**

*...no!..but we have to live with the circumstance that the range of people interested in our music is a small one...*

- **Or did you chose to keep things, prices under control and thus avoid mass-distribution in certain countries ?**

*it's what i mentioned before. we try to provide free artistic expression, related to a social structure, which isn't reality in major contracts. at the other hand, self-exploitation is a factor; we're all working for free; income of sales is used for new releases. and i think one thing is clear: the music we're releasing is not a mass-distribution's issue..*



- **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" ?**

*well... see above. but for shure, there's for us a certain frontier of how we would like to grow and how much business should determinate our activities.*

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

*ups, i think that i gave my answers too soon above. we were one of the first labels here in switzerland. most of the musicians here have published their records on labels in other countries or by themselves. we can't provide to our musicians an income with the sales, but a well functioning network of publicity and exchange. we were at the beginning of domizil quite impressed and influenced by other labels in germany or austria. and a platform, a publisher was strongly needed.*

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

*we strongly try not to have a concept; basically, domizil is an artist label, this means that some people are interested in other people's stuff and publish it. we'd like to move a bit away from our close interest, digital experiments, and i hope that this will be succesful for every participant.*

- **How would you describe a typical Domizil act ? How did you chose the name of the label ? Why ?**

*'domizil' was first a cassette edition. this means that our music was produced at home with cheap equipment. this mentality is still very present in all domizil acts: working with sonic accidents, malfunctions, a hazardous attitude, experimenting with humour or its opposite, seeriosisity, longing:  
bernd/teleform is a deranged programmer brain  
steinbruchel his own trip*

*rm74 a notorious piano destroyer, micromusic the electroshock-children's garden, ...not too bad, the mixture.*

- **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 ?**

*of course: we feel close to mego, touch, subrosa, luckykitchen, ski-pp, gagarin, stora, staubgold, mille plateaux, grob, faellt, fals.ch, metamkine, etc etc.*

- **Any label that you think has been influenced by yours ?**

*hm. no idea. maybe the labels above...?*

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

*the domizil 'brand design' is my domain. most of the records are designed by françois chalet, a swiss designer who lives in paris. He made a beautiful book about his work and the domizil covers at the 'gestalten verlag'.*

- **What is according to you the most beautiful record/art-object you ever issued ?**

*well, i like all our records... 'hot piece' was the little domizil house at this year's sonar stand, where we presented an overview about related swiss artists, labels and bands.*

- **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**

*maybe yesyesyes, but i don't care. our music is an offer which needs to be listened with a bit attention. concerning our records: take it or leave it. concerning our concerts: we can be VERY unpleasant, if needed...*

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

zurich defines itself as a party town... street parade and other crap... you got here loads of clubs and boring djs. it's a consumer oriented city... with some exceptions: there was and still is the substrat club/philipp meier, who released 2001 the substrat compilation covering all musicians from zurich, who played at this important meeting point.

the 'rote fabrik', bit old fashioned concert place, but good programme, the younger labels like 'spezialmaterial' and 'maika'. older musicians like voice crack, stephan wittwer. record shops like karbon...zurich is a small town...



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

there is something like more dynamics here, people become active and build up labels etc. but most of the music and activities are oriented to a local context. the main problems concerning the swiss music scene are: a big number of people do not move outside of switzerland. and: there's no environment; no magazines, no discourse, few venues for experiments. on the other side: we're often recognized as some strange, retarded mountain people...

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

most of our releases are product of an intensive process together with the musicians. we're discussing several versions till a record will be released. domizil isn't an output machine, it's a platform of intensive collaboration, also with the option of volunteering a release, sending a demo. it simply depends on the needs of every musician.

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

yes, there are several things i'd like to change at domizil and in the world... haha. concerning our own house: i would like to involve more people into our label's activities, that means a higher degree of participation.

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

that would be a long list... one of my most favourite: der plan, electro-legend from germany

- **What are your goal as a label. Futureplans ?**

*one of the biggest plans since a couple of years is to make domizil to a real 'domicile' in zurich. it's now three years ago, we had our own concert/event space, and we're looking for a new one since a longer period. biggest chance this year was that we planned to reopen the historic 'cabaret voltaire' here in zurich. it is a shame that the governement of zurich didn't found the courage to support this project. and the owner, an investment company (just hack: <http://www.swissville.ch>), just decided to build there luxury apartments and localities for a better paying clientship...*

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

*september: rm74 - instabil - cd - domizil 18*

*december: sudden infant/ch. weber - cd - domizil 19*

### **discography :**

domizil 1-4: untitled, cassette edition, 1996, n/a

domizil 5: v/a, supermarkt, cdr, 1997, n/a

domizil 6: marcus maeder, DEMONstration, cdr, n/a

domizil 7: marcus maeder, achtung heilmittel, cassette in box, 1998, n/a

domizil 8: v/a, supermarkt-die single, 7", 1998

domizil 9: teleform, dito, cd, 1999

domizil 10: marcus maeder, solipsistic\_motion, 12" lp, 1999

domizil 11: rm74, microsport, cd, 2000

domizil 12: micromusic, v/a, micro\_superstarz\_2000, cd/rom, 2000

domizil 13: burch renders & reducers mama, dito, 12" lp, 2001

domizil 14: psilodumper, v/a, full of sid remixes, 12" maxi, 2001

domizil 15: steinbrüchel, zwischen.raum, mini-cd, 2002

domizil 16: teleform, cosine *f*, cd, 2002

domizil 17: marcus maeder, quiconque, cd, 2002

<http://www.domizil.ch>

some useful links:

<http://www.kombirama.ch>

<http://www.k3000.ch>