

Roman Flügel

(Dial / Running Back)

All The Right Noises

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Described as a non-conformist by the press, and likened to a chameleon by fellow musical peer and Running Back label owner Gerd Janson, Flügel's approach to music is hard to pin-down – a fact he takes great pleasure in. “I enjoy the surprise”, Flügel says about his DJing, “that’s why it’s difficult to describe what I do”. As a DJ rooted in the broad tradition of house and techno, his sets vary between location, crowd and time; change being his only constant. He is a DJ, live performer, producer, remixer and label owner. A chameleon with a broad palette of colours, if you will.

Discussing the contemporary electronic music scene in Germany without mentioning Flügel's contribution would be near impossible. In 1993, alongside production cohort Jörn Wuttke (with whom Flügel collaborated with on many projects, having hit records as Alter Ego, Holy Garage and more), he established the labels Ongaku, Klang Elektronik as well as Playhouse, a now legendary imprint that released iconic records by Isolée, Ricardo Villalobos and LoSoul. It essentially set a new cultural marker for European house and techno.

As a DJ, Flügel is someone that honours the music. When playing, each record is given time to properly breathe, so its form and character can bleed onto the dancefloor, before giving a deep and progressive mix into the next record. There's no gimmicks in his sets, just a great understanding of music and the time, patience and dexterity to blend the tracks into a smooth, free-flowing and inspired narrative. Flügel doesn't just take you on journeys, he is the cartographer, mapping out the entire musical landscape, before sharing with you the broader world he inhabits.

As a producer, Flügel has employed many aliases and orchestrated a wealth of

successful collaborations. Brandishing a varied and expressive discography, he has developed long-standing relationships with some of the most respected labels and artists in electronic music. Seminal Hamburg imprint DIAL, for example, has released much of his music over the years, starting in 2011 with his debut album Fatty Folders, a lauded LP described by Pitchfork at the time as ‘a summation of his career...multifaceted, rich and cagey’. This was followed up by two further albums on the label; 2014's Happiness is Happening and the 2016 LP All The Right Noises, both of which explored the growing diversity of his sound too much critical acclaim. 2017 saw the release of the Black Acid EP on beloved London imprint Phonica Records, then the 2018 EP 1995 on Hard Work Soft Drink, which was followed by Themes, a highly abstract album of ambient drone on ESP Institute, further cementing his ability to explore the depths of even the most challenging genres.

On top of this extensive body of work, he is also a prolific remixer, lending his ear to many of his beloved peers. This has seen him work in recent years with artists including Daniel Avery, Tuff City Kids, DJ Tennis, Sven Väth, DJ Hell and C.A.R to name a very select few.

Finally, no tale of Flügel's commitment to the scene is complete without a mention of his work beyond the buttons. Since early 2016, he's curated his own party series Sister Midnight at clubs worldwide. As someone who still expects to be surprised when on the dancefloor, Roman displays many colours when he plays. “I don't want to limit myself”, he says about his approach to performance. For him, it's all about engaging with the crowd, seeing and reading the emotions, keeping his palette wide open for new paths to wander.