

Moldover – talkin shop on “Four-Track”

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(http://cwjournal.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/P_Wojnarski - Moldover - Mojo.jpg)

Moldover with the Mojo/ Moldover.com

I first discovered Moldover on Kickstarter and my initial impression was a modern day Charles Wheatstone.

A musician at heart, inventor born of curiosity and innovator by necessity.

Proof of this becomes apparent in some of Moldover’s instrument designs, which are as fascinating in appearance as they are in how he uses them.

SOCIAL MUSIC INSTRUMENTS

THE SYNCOMASHER

THE OCTAMASHER



THE MINIMASHER



(<http://cwjournal.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Moldover-Instruments.jpg>)

Moldover's "Social Music Instruments" series / Moldover.com

I believe the world calls him the "Godfather of Controllerism" for damned good reason.

Recently I caught up with Moldover to talk shop about his new album "Four-Track"

Tell us about some of the projects you have going on these days?

Moldover: My main focus is the new album "Four-Track" that I've been working on for roughly four years now and it's getting close to the end. My first album was released in 2009 and this will be the follow up to that.



"Say-it" from Moldover's 2009 self-titled debut

What are some things fans can expect from the new album?

Moldover: There were maybe one or two song's on the previous album that pointed towards the direction of this one. It's been a long time and a lot of things have changed in my life, so the style and direction of the music has also changed significantly.

The biggest changes for this album are that it's much more song-oriented, there will be vocals on the almost all of the tracks and stylistically its gone a little bit more towards my roots in rock, blues, pop, and hip-hop with a lot of attention paid to electronic production which is the method I use. It won't sound at all like a traditional rock album.

***"It won't sound at all like a traditional rock album."
– Moldover***

What part of the writing process for Four-track has you most excited right now?

Moldover: I think its the vocals. Vocals for me are the most exciting because they represent such a challenge. It's going to back to being a beginner and taking lessons and practicing everyday to embrace some rudimentary musical activities that I haven't done in a long time and for me that's a huge challenge.

It's also a huge risk because it's going to be scary when I start doing that stuff on stage for the first time, but that's what gets me excited about musical activity by learning something new and pushing myself in a new direction to do things that I haven't really done before.

Did the move out west influence how you're creating music these days?

Moldover: I was in New York for six years before I moved to San Francisco, so I'm sure it has but it might be a little bit harder for me to observe because I spend so much time here now. I love the city, it's got a really beautiful art and music scene that's much more comfortable because there's a wonderful group of people out here who encourage me to do what I love.

While we're on excitement, what music are you listening to these days?

Moldover: I'd have to say three categories. I'm digging into some of the music I was listening to in high school, like Soundgarden, Tool, Rage Against the Machine and some of the 90s bands that were coming up when I was young.

I also try to keep my finger on the pulse of what's going on in electronic music which is having a resurgence with some people calling it EDM as this blanket term for the genre, but there's a lot of fantastic producers like James Blake and others who are doing some interesting stuff.

I'm also really into roots blues artists like Robert Johnson and Muddy Waters right now because for the first time ever in my entire life I feel like I can understand everything about blues that totally mystified me before both musically and conceptually.

Inspiration and tragedy have their place on Four-track

In a short documentary on the making of Four Track, Moldover revealed that shortly after relocating to San Francisco in 2009, he experienced some family and romantic tragedies in his personal life.



Four-Track Documentary (2013)/ YouTube

When I asked how those experiences played a role in influencing Four-Track, he explained that music for him has been an outlet for working through some of the tough times.

Moldover: Music can be motivated by a lot of different things. When I was kid one of the things that got me deeply into music was the tragedy in my life at that time, so experiencing that again later in life brought me back to a similar place of using music as therapy in a way to express and work through feelings of grief and loss.

Those aren't the only emotions expressed on the new album, but when I started writing it, the first seeds for them were planted because I was going through some intense tragedy that definitely had a big impact on it. I think that's the major reason why my stylistic shift was back to my roots in the kind of music I was exploring when I first got serious about music."

The "Godfather's" take on controllerism

My time with Moldover would have been incomplete if I didn't mention controllerism. I admit feeling guilty knowing so little about controllerism amidst interviewing one of it's most respected artists.

It was akin to interviewing James Brown and knowing next to nothing about Soul. But then I realized something. The world declared James Brown "The Godfather of Soul" – without stopping to ask him what Soul meant to him. Instead, we just slapped a label on him, loved him dearly for satisfying our selfishness and never looked back.

Consequently, I realized was in good hands to learn what controllerism means by asking Moldover not just what controllerism is, but what it means to him.

Moldover: I think the best way to explain controllerism is that it's using a computer as a musical instrument except the computer is not really the instrument because it comes in all these packages like desktops, laptops and mobile devices. The actual computer is not something we can touch as humans with bodies, so the controller is really a generic name for that point of digital and human interface."

"The actual computer is not something we can touch as humans with bodies, so the controller is really a generic name for that point of digital and human interface."

Does creating controllers inspire new music or does making new music inspire creating new controllers?

This led to what I described to Moldover as "the chicken or the egg first scenario" in his creative process as both artist and designer of controllers.

What I wanted to understand was where the drivers of necessity exist in his innovation. Did creating a new controller inspire new music or did satisfying a vision for new music create the necessity to make a new controller?

Moldover: It's really both chickens and eggs. I think for any serious music maker it's a conversation between yourself and the instruments you use. So many of the artists I look up to have innovated instruments and I'm not the first person to do that. It's really an exciting time because we can do it now in so many incredible ways.

From your viewpoint, how has controllerism grown in popularity?

Being a Godfather does have its privileges, so I took the chance to catch a glimpse of the world of controllerism these days from one of the best seats in house – Moldover's own perspective on its growth as a genre.

Moldover: Most of the music makers in my strata or generation didn't have the word controllerism. I'm the first person to use controllerism because I didn't really relate to the existing terms of live electronic music performance or in the academic world it was computer music. I really didn't think any of these terms really summarized what I was doing and I wanted to be able to quickly translate the whole concept with one word.

It's definitely become popular. Music makers who are coming up now hand me business cards now with controllerist on them and I see advertisements for companies selling instruments and software to those music makers.

There's plenty of people who bump into the term and never trace it back to me, which is totally cool because it was never my intention to make some sort of empire around it. It was never to be the Godfather or the inventor or the creator, it was really just to have a new tool to translate my art for more people, you know.

Now it's your turn to be a controllerist

How Moldover's art translates with fans will be a big part of his new album when they get their hands on the "Voice Crusher," his latest controller design that gives them a small function interface of their own.

I asked him to share some of his thoughts on the voice crusher and what people can expect.

Moldover: The Voice Crusher is a really simple musical instrument that I designed because I love albums and the physical artifacts that came with the music I got when I was younger. Mostly it was art and photographs, but sometimes bands like Tool for example, would do these special 3D moving cases with transparent booklets and overlays.

In looking at their delivery format as a work of art, the Voice Crusher was my way of doing that. I even studied some musical instrument design to make an affordable musical instrument that would contain the music on the album and give people a fun interactive work of art that is a duo of art and functioning instrument.

Kickstarting a controller

This is where I caught up with Moldover during his crowdfunding campaign for the Voice Crusher.

Waaaay more than an album campaign/ Kickstarter

The campaign was a success for Moldover so I asked him to share some his thoughts on the impact crowdfunding had on creating Four-Track.

What was the crowdfunding experience like for you?

Moldover: The crowdfunding experience for me was wonderful. This is the first real one that I've done and it pulled me and the fans together in a really beautiful way.

It was also something that I've never done before so it forced me to up my game and work harder and now I'm truly beholden to get the album done for the people who have committed to supporting me.

To learn more about Moldover or how you can pre-order Four-Track check out www.moldover.com (<http://www.moldover.com>)



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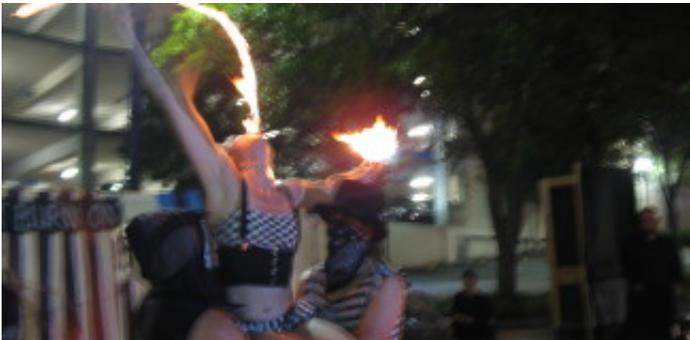
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John Tackett is Crowd Wire's founder and current Managing Editor. You can usually find John scouring the internet for crowdfunding campaigns, hassling their creators for interviews and sharing his obsessions with anyone foolish enough to listen. He also writes and edits for three digital marketing publications and loves spending free time with his wife Mooshoo and their dog Brooklyn Zoo.

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