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## FAQ Moderat

1. Hello - why the long gap between the BPitch Control EP "Auf Kosten der Gesundheit" back in 2002 and the debut album?

When we started Moderat it was more some kind of fun live project. That was before our solo projects went off. We played totally improvised gigs together. It worked pretty well live, but when we tried to do this EP it was pretty tough. It took ages. It's not always easy sitting in the studio with 2 other guys. A lot of discussions and talking is involved. Plus, we're never happy and change things 10 times. The day before the mastering appointment of our EP several years ago all of us got sick due to exhaustion, but we knew we would do a full length album one day, despite of it. It just took us a while before we could afford taking 1 or 2 years off from Modeselektor and Apparat. Our solo albums went well and we started playing a lot. And when one of us had time, the other ones didn't, so Apparat did the record with Ellen which was great and important for him as well. After "Walls" and "Happy Birthday!" we felt like taking a break would be good. We wanted to do something different and Moderat was just perfect for that!

2. How long did the album take to make? What was the process for working together in the studio?

We started to collect song ideas in 2007. That was right after we decided to do the album. Each of us had unfinished songs which we couldn't finish on our own and so we hoped another one would reanimate those dead ideas. We produced some new ideas as well and by the end of 2007 we met and picked the best ideas to have something to start with. We spent most of 2008 together in the studio to work on these ideas. It wasn't like being in a band where the drummer would be in chagre for his thing, we are 3 producers and each of us had different ideas about every little detail. We had endless discussions. Sometimes we talked more than we made music...

3. If you guys have been 'homies for a long time', how did you meet in the first place and how the working relationship developed?

No. It's a joke. Most of the press info is a joke. We were just tired of the same topics to talk about so we invented new ones... We met at some kind of label showcase party in Berlin 10 years ago. Apparat played for Shitkatapult and Modeselektor for BPC. Modeselektor didn't even have a record out on the label but Ellen liked them so much. Apparat met Ellen the same night and she tried to sign him for her label too ; ). All of us instantly noticed that we had a lot of things in common and started inviting each other to our parties. Later we started playing live shows together which was pretty much the start of Moderat. Gernot and Szary had a lot of analogue stuff and told Apparat that they "play noise". Apparat played with an early powerbook, a futuristic motormix controller and custom made software. Gernot called it "girl-electro". We really liked what the others did. Plus Modeselektor were really into the technologic side of Apparat's set. At this time people were like "Wow, so much sound with just one laptop" when they saw a laptop set! Well, we started working on our live setup, Apparat integrated some analog stuff again and Modeselektor switched to his software, which they still use now, 8 years later. Of course it grew over the years. One of the Modeselektor guys always called Apparat after a set to talk about what we can change and how to improve the software...

4. When did you first decide to start playing together, and what were those first shows like?

It was around 2000. We used to play live shows together. 3 people on stage, no plan, just synchronized computer jams. We never really managed to capture this improvised sound on a record. Then, at some point we really forced ourselves and it was really tough.



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5. Can you describe what it was like growing up? Where did you first discover music, what kind of music did you listen to, and when did you begin going to clubs, shows, etc?

We are from different parts in East Germany but the way we got in touch with electronic music was pretty much the same. In the early 90s, techno came over to the "East" and we started organizing parties in warehouses and old Russian military bases. If I listen to a techno track today I almost see imaginary midi notes. I hear music from a very technical point of view. When I first heard a techno track back in the days it was just something really different and totally new from what I've heard before. Raving all night on techno music was something physical. I felt the music. Unfortunately I lost this feeling after sitting in the studio for years and years... Might be the price you pay if music is your life.

6. Does the album take a hugely different direction from the music you are both used to making?

The main idea was to develop a unique Moderat sound. We only had a few ideas in mind when we started. Nothing specific. Then, sometimes, while working on it we kinda slipped back into Apparat or Modeselektor paths. But hey, there are things we can do very well so why not do them. And these songs totally changed during the whole process quite a few times. So sometimes an ambient track ended up as something totally different. In any case, it was really refreshing as we worked in a different way as we normally do and this was one of the main intentions to make this album. We wanted some fun.

7. What are the benefits of working collaboratively rather than on individual projects?

Sometimes you get stuck in the way you approach a song. You find some little tricks you do all the time and maybe use them a bit too often. Collaborations can be a way to see how other people work. A way to get some new ideas. When we go back to our own projects after almost a year of Moderat, things will be different for all of us. And that's what's important. No one needs the same record twice...

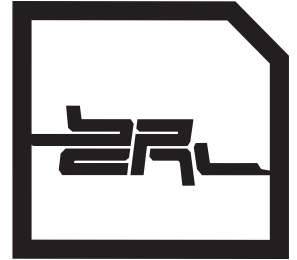
8. Is this session any lesson for the future in terms "cooperation vs ego and our ideas vs his/their ideas"?

There wasn't so much "vs" when we made the record. It's not really how we wanted to do this collab. Each of us tried to hold back a bit and integrate into the Moderat construct. If everyone had wanted 100% of his in a track it would have been a nightmare. You must be quite disciplined when you do such a thing.

9. Any major disagreements between the parties involved!?

All the time. We had some pretty tough discussions. The whole production was a democratic process. Fortunately we are 3 people and if everyone votes, you end up at least with a 2/3 majority. We had endless discussions about certain hihats and rimshots. And it happened pretty often that we had different opinions. Sometimes one of us left the room being pissed. And being in a little room together for months isn't that easy all the time either! But we were mostly chilled. Sometimes you have to trust the others when they are on something you don't really understand. It's important for collaboration. Another plus: You don't have to come up with something all by yourself. When you have a strong musician at your side, new ideas pop up by themselves. It's the same with remixes - you have an original track and you want to do something on your own with it and invent something completely new. This way some of the best tracks are born.

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10. What did Modeselektor bring to the project?

A lot of bass. And plenty of espressos.

11. What did Apparat bring to the project?

A lot of strings, coke (the drink!) And a lot of very good ideas.

12. How was the album made? Did you brainstorm in the studio?

Each of us came up with some song ideas and almost all of them completely changed during the whole process. Those tracks weren't really written, they came together. After collecting the initial ideas we started to work in the studio - all together.

13. The album was recorded at Berlin Hansa Studios, where Bowie recorded the classic Heroes album. Why did you choose to record it there?

We thought we needed a regular studio with all the possibilities. We wanted to record lots of stuff but in the end we ended up with a 100% computer record. Still, it was great to just record a rimshot if you thought that was the way to do it. It didnt happen very often though... We actually didn't record at the Hansa studio. We just wrote it in the infosheet cause writing infosheets is boring. We wanted to make fun of the hype about special-hype-places or whatever. It wouldn't have made any difference for the record, even if it would have been produced at Abbey Road. It's an electronic record and not a symphony. In the end it's about you and your ideas and not about the ghost of John Lennon spooking around while you make a record.

14. Apart from the tailor made console and emt 140 plate reverb, what other instruments/programmes/methods did you use to make the album?

It was really important for us to have a certain analog satiation. Sometimes we don't like to use tracks as internal bounces. That is why we got the legendary EMT console and had it restored. During production we often recorded the rough tracks on tape in order to get even more noise on our recordings. But honestly, the EMI was a joke as well. Its a huge plate reverb and it would be quite tough to get it from L.A. to Berlin! We love nice gear but were not that crazy about it. You can do great records with just a laptop! We had quite a lot of possibilities in our studio. We used it for recording subtle things and for special details. For one special rimshot we turned the hallway in front of the studio into a reverb-chamber and it sounded great. But the mayor part happened in the computer. I guess that's what happens if you make electronic music. Sometimes with multiple computers at the same time. One of us would be in the kitchen or some place else and do edits while the others worked in the studio doing arrangements.



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15. If your recording space isn't such a factor in shaping the album, then what inspired the musical ideas?

I am usually most inspired when I have nothing to do with music at all. I usually go on vacation in January and write lots of things in a little book. I went to Costa Rica before starting with Moderat and when I came back I had 2 books full of ideas, lyrics and stuff. I guess it's just the silence that makes you think about sound at some point...16. After completing quite different solo albums recently, how did you combine musically and decide on the overall sound/feel of the album?It might sound weird but for us all those records aren't really sooo different. Of course they got some extreme Modeselektor or Apparat tracks on it but they also have some similarities and we were trying to start from there. People mostly compare our recent work and don't see the whole thing. We were trying to come up with a new sound that isn't just Modeselektor and Apparat. In the end you can, of course, still totally hear both of us, so maybe we didn't succeed with our intention ... But hey, we made a good album!

16. After completing quite different solo albums recently, how did you combine musically and decide on the overall sound/feel of the album?

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17. The album was originally meant to be an instrumental, tell us more about how the vocal contributions came about and what they add to the songs?

The album wasn't really planned at all in the beginning. No one knew how it's gonna sound. We had a certain atmosphere in mind but no idea how to achieve it. The vocal songs mostly just happened. A lot of the initial ideas changed 3 times and turned into completely different songs. Mostly we just got inspired to turn them into vocal tracks somewhere along the way.

18. Tell us about the special guests that are featured on the album.Modeselektor met Busdriver at a festival in France and they just liked each other.

We didn't think that he'd be something for Moderat as we didn't plan on doing rap stuff. But this one song was just perfect for his fast mc-style so we sent it over and he came up with a cool idea two days later! Frank (Eased from the German band Seeed) has a studio in the same building as Apparat does and he just came by one day and said hello. He's pretty much a superstar in Germany. And he's one of the most optimistic guys we have ever met. Whenever we were in a shitty mood and he came by and all of us instantly recovered by sucking up some of his positive energy.

19. How did the track with Paul St. Hillaire come about?

Those "Slow Match" vocals were made for Modeselektor's first album. It was one of these songs we call "dead ideas". They are on your hard drive but you can't finish them. For Moderat - we just exchanged some of these dead-ideas and the others would reanimate them. When I got the rough "Slow Match" song it instantly inspired me to add something. It was the first song we did and a kind of blueprint for the record.

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20. The album is also accompanied by a DVD which is produced by long term Modeselektor affiliates Pfadfinderei. What can we expect from the DVD? Have you had a big input with the artistic direction of it? And how much did the Pfadfinderei contribute to the album's DVD package and the live shows?

You should regard all of us like a big bunch of dudes making all kinds of stuff. For example, the whole BPitch Control building is full of friends making clothes, music, graphics, videos, and label work... It's a great surrounding and it doesn't happen often enough that we collaborate. Moderat is meant to be a project of Modeselektor, Apparat and also Pfadfinderei. They are involved in the whole appearance. The live show, the DVD, the artwork. We gave them parts of the music while we were making it. They've been involved from the very first minute. We had endless meetings about everything. Sometimes it feels like Moderat is more of a discussion forum than an audio/video project. All of us, Pfadfinderei, Modeselektor and Apparat met at the same party almost 8 years ago. We became homies and did plenty of things in the meantime. We always wanted to do a big project. This Moderat thing is a pretty big package. Pfadfinderei did a video DVD that comes together with the album in a special package and they will produce the whole visual part for the Moderat show. That's a pretty important thing because electronic bands can be pretty boring and thinking about the show is kinda important if you are performing on a big festival stage.

21. What is the content of the DVD? Any special features? Videos? Please unveil us some interesting or funny stories about making of this content?

It contains video footage for special edits of the tracks. Plus bonus tracks and videos for it. There is also some kind of making of on it. The Pfadfinderei guys did pretty crazy stuff. They went to a test lab and filmed exploding concrete blocks in slow motion. They always used to do very fast stuff but the main theme for this release is slowness. They put a lot of effort into this. They worked so hard that one of them fainted during the shoot and hit his head on something!

22. How do you plan to deliver the Moderat live show, what is the planned set up on stage?

At the moment we are setting up the live show. It doesn't make much sense to have 3 laptops on stage. It's kinda boring and you simply don't need it. Instead we are going to look at every song and think about an individual approach to its live version. We'll send this idea to the Pfadfinderei guys and they shoot videos for it, produce images, program lights and whatever. On stage it's going to be 5 of us. Us 3 doing audio and 2 guys from the Pfadfinderei being in charge of video and lights, playing in a special stage setup. It's gonna be something new for all of us and it's pretty exciting as none of us has ever been involved in this kind of production. None of us has ever done something like a "show". We wanna do more of a concert than a club show. Our live PAs have always been pretty improvised. The Moderat show will definitely give us room to improvise too, but we will rehearse the whole thing until everyone exactly knows when to do what. I've never rehearsed for an electronic show... Weird... Video is a really important part of the show. We'll do a special stage setup with 3 screens. Perfectly synchronized sounds and pictures. It's gonna be an audio/visual thing.

23. What equipment will you take on the road (I mean music instruments or laptops which software, etc)?

We don't really know yet. All we know for now is that we'll look at each song individually and play it in the best possible setup. We won't squeeze a song in an existing technical setup as electronic live acts mostly do. That means for example - if "Porc" requires toms on stage we'll play them live. Not everyone will use a computer all the time. No need for 3 laptops and a nerd-trio on stage.

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24. After so much touring in the last few years, how do you all feel about getting back on the road?

We are constantly on the road, every weekend. Since 5 years. It's part of our lives. That's what touring means in the electronic world. It mostly happens at weekends. We'll have a bit more of a regular tour for Moderat but we mostly play festivals that happen at weekends too so nothing for us is really going to change.

25. Which tour dates are you most looking forward to?

We are really excited about the whole tour. It's the first time for us to do that kind of production with so many people involved. There are some specials like Jazz Festival Montreaux, Sonar in Spain, Melt! here in Germany or Mutek in Canada. But really, we only accepted the cool gigs, so each of them is special : )

26. With the amount of travelling you all do and the nature of making electronic music, how important do you think new technology is to you as artists? And do you have any favourite pieces of hardware/software?

I used to be obsessed with new things. I still have a PSP and an iPhone and all this stuff but for some strange reason I go back in time when it comes to the studio. I have quite an oldschool setup and I barely install any new software. Maybe because of the saying "never change a running system". Or maybe I just get tired of all the new plugins, because most of them do exactly the same thing. I get tired pretty easily anyway. That was another reason to do Moderat. A fresh breeze of air in my studio...

27. What's next for Moderat?

A big festival tour and a mix CD at the end of the summer.

28. Finally, why the picture of the woman punching herself in the face?

Well, that's how we felt a few times while making this album. I just wanted to punch myself in the face for getting involved with this.

