

The press on OMFO

The press on "Trans Balkan Express"
(Essay Recordings AY CD 02)

It's rumored that cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin, the first man in space, came from a family of shepherds. Forget space travel and moon landings, the very idea that dub pioneer Lee "Scratch" Perry can live on the surface of Switzerland, opens a universe of musical possibilities. O.M.F.O.'s merging of Eastern folk and Kraftwerkian dub on the Essay label is therefore only as surprising as, say, finding Osama bin Laden in his cave listening to Joe Meek. (*PopMatters* [D.M. Edwards, 9 January 2007](#))

Could German Popov be the Señor Coconut of the Balkan states? Our Man From Odessa is armed with a trusty 808, a vocoder and lots of digital synths to create a disc that is both entirely sincere and a freakin' riot at the same time. One could imagine these ultra clean digital versions of traditional and post-modern Balkan sketches being PSAs on a state run radio station or a floor-filler in some breathlessly hip Brooklyn club. I've yet to hear a neo-electro album that so successfully balances the robotic fun of drum machines with such inspired songcraft. It's not all whimsy though "Cucoo Dub" is one of the great dub tracks so far this year. (*Exclaim*)

With flutes and stringed instruments, Jamaican dub techniques, laptop producing, kosmonautic lyricism and electronic sound engineering, Trans Balkan Express mixes the musical spice of the Southeastern European provinces with the club culture of the West. O.M.F.O. travels from Amsterdam via Berlin to the hinterlands of the EU, the Karpates, the Black Sea, right into the front garden of Asia. The result is an album featuring music located somewhere in-between space and a Balkan wedding, happily ignoring musical boundaries of any kind. Trans Balkan Express is where modernism dances with tradition, and where the "old" Europe flows into the "new." (*Tonevondor*)

Is there such a thing as traditional Eastern European electronica? There is now! The album varies from knees up music to soft and gentle, beautiful melodies, but all done in such a unique style. You're unlikely to hear anything quite like this anywhere else. (smallfish.co.uk)

A great album and one of the best examples of how tradition with modern rhythm makes a perfect marriage. (*Progressive Homestead*)

German Popov pulls off a startling stunt here. The Kraftwerk nod of the title hints at what's inside - sharply flavoured East European instruments and melodies getting a highly tweaked electro treatment. Add to that a penchant for Jamaican riddims and dub production and you've got an incongruous amalgam that works amazingly well. (*Rupert Bottenberg/Montreal Mirror*)