

Ata

Location: Frankfurt, Germany

Record Labels: Live at Robert Johnson, Playhouse

Booking: Worldwide

Let's face it: there are more DJs in the world than basil leaves in Liguria and they come in all sizes, shapes and colors.

Despite the latest developments and modern hotchpotch like laptopdeejaying there still is this almost metaphysical little extra pinch that's so hard to describe and that separates the wheat from the chaff. And for that Ata is a prime example. How exactly this man manages to fascinate when stoically spinning records for hours on end, mixing emotion and intention, guiding the crowd is his secret. We may assume it is experience. And experienced he is in nearly all fields related to clubbing: as graphic artist, fashion designer, DJ, label manager and impresario. It all started rather humbly when he, still a boy, shared house with a GI who owned a vast collection of Kraftwerk, early Hip Hop and black dance music and who substantially widened his musical horizon. Frankfurt soon witnessed the fruits of that neighbourly education when Ata carried a boombox blasting out Grace Jones' 'Nightclubbing' - the writing on the wall.

Some years on the city had quite a considerable nightlife, though clubs like the 'Vogue' still played a mixed bag of musical styles, when Ata was flabbergasted in a small Barcelona club: "the full load of Acid House, strobes, and a DJ that was in full control - that was a totally different way of clubbing" he still waxes lyrical, his eyes gleaming. Returning to Frankfurt, he was determined to become a DJ, the acid test being a private party that (according to his own words) flopped totally. Nevertheless something caught on. By the time clubs like the 'Music Hall' or the 'Plastic' heard it through the grapevine and started booking him, Ata was already selling vinyl at the 'Boy Records' store, a beacon at that time. There he met Heiko MSO, and with Jörg Henze he founded the next legendary institution, the 'Delirium'.

At this record shop not only did Ata's private enthusiasm for haute couture translate into his own clubwear label, but in 1992 / 93 he also cofounded the trinity of the Playhouse, Klang and Ongaku labels with Heiko, Jörn Elling Wuttke and Roman Flügel. Soon the production of music consumed more time than the daily work at the record shop.

As a DJ Ata was a mainstay by that time and with nights at the 'Omen', the 'Dorian Gray' and the 'XS' presented himself as the man with a keen sense for the many varieties of electronic music. But he gained the status of immortality only with the 'Wild Pitch Club', where he set out to touch Frankfurt's soul with Deep House music, together with Heiko, Roland Leiser and later ND Baumecker. For five years they celebrated mass every Thursday, with the big and small stars of the international House scene being shepherded through the warm basement club at the 'Konstabler Wache'. It all ended in 1998 and Ata's mind already was somewhere else: in Offenbach. At the edge of Frankfurt's rival city he and Sebastian Kahrs founded the Robert Johnson. The interior lived up to the unusual name: white walls, astounding neon lights, and a majestic sound system. All this combined with an immaculate sense of style regarding the musical programme and a will to progress made this club one of the most important places for electronic music in the whole of Europe.

The club still holds this position today, especially when Ata plays one of his marathon sets. When not spinning records, he spends much of his time designing T-shirts or cooking for half the city in his 'Club Michel', a DJ being an entity of the art of living. Or as he puts it: „I don't know any good DJ who doesn't have his personal style regarding fashion, art and cuisine".

Dear readers, rest assured: Ata has definitely has that style.