



Early OMFO performance



The Children of Lieutenant Schmidt



Sputnik



OMFO at the IJsbreker, Amsterdam

OMFO

Biography

A line-up of extraordinary people

OMFO is German Popov's stage name. He was born in 1966 in the port city of Odessa, USSR. Growing up in the biggest country in the world and being brainwashed by communist propaganda he proudly marched through the glory and misery of Soviet reality until all this came to an end. Unable to endure the pain inflicted by Perestroika G. Popov headed for the west, arriving in multicultural Amsterdam - a city associated with tolerant cannabis policy and frivolous behaviour.

That was where G. Popov rediscovered the rich cultural inheritance that was left to him by the past. Utopian ideology, the moral and cultural decay of the Brezhnev era, the pathos of space exploration and ethnic diversity: all this made him ready to become OMFO. G. Popov began his musical career playing gangster ballads and prison epics in caviar restaurants and fugitive hangouts together with **Alec Kopyt**. Taking advantage of world music lovers they played under the name **The Children of Lieutenant Schmidt**. After a while when this became no longer tenable G. Popov shifted his focus of interest towards space and cosmonauts. Jointly with a group of Soviet expatriates he created a band called **Sputnik**. Noticed by the adepts of electronic extravaganza **Sputnik** soon released their only album **The Favorite Songs of Soviet Cosmonauts**.

While the band was beeping around glamorous clubs and private parties G. Popov explored another path musical folklore. During one of his solo performances he was approached by a producer of a major Dutch new age label, who offered him his studio to make a recording. Shortly after, **Oreade Music** released an album under the mysterious name **Isirik**. To G. Popov's surprise this work was classified by the label as World Healing Music. Paradoxically, the album continues to inspire young intellectuals to experiment with psychedelic substances all over the former USSR.



The secret of its popularity lies in the mix of Russian lyrics of exotic Siberian and Central Asian melodies, skilfully played on weird instruments and sung with quaint vocal techniques. Probably this was when G. Popov fully realized the inseparable unity of ethnic wisdom and electronics as **the true folklore of the 21st century**.



Milano, Italy

As the nineties were wrapping up their legacy OMFO focused on his solo project, **Our Man from Odessa**, collaborating with various electronic labels. Most of his early works were released on the small Dutch label **Kidnap**, founded and run by members of the ex-Soviet diaspora. During this period he also collaborated with a controversial diva from the remote republic of Tuva **Sainkho Namchilak** - travelling the world and playing at big international venues.



Moscow

As the new millennium kicked in, G. Popov and his friends found a new platform for their futuristic vision of sound and music. This is how **Solaris** was born. Presented not as record label, but as an art lab, this project was clearly inspired by Russian constructivism and utopian romanticism. The glamorous alias **Our Man from Odessa** gradually turns into the more succinct and enigmatic **OMFO**.

During this period, OMFO comes into reactive contact with projects and artists such as **Metamatics**, **Aavikoo**, **Jimster**, **CiM** and **Felix Kubin**. All these names appeared on Solaris' releases such as **Aelita**, **Cheap Electric Paradise** and **Omnipresence**. Music distributors and record shop owners still treat these impeccably designed albums as collector's items.

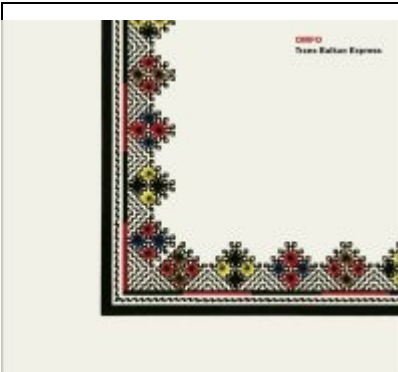


OMFO and Shantel

A few years ago OMFO was contacted by **Vladimir Lomborg** a like-minded person who was invisibly present behind various projects including Solaris and Kidnap. He put OMFO in touch with **Essay Recordings** - a record label that is exploring the hidden potential of Eastern European music. OMFO's works began with a successful remix of a track written by **Shantel** the man who pioneered the fusion of Balkan music with electronic beats.



OMFO performing in Almaty, Kazakhstan



Trans Balkan Express



Mr Lamb serving Chinese Tea Ceremony

After the remix was included in the internationally acclaimed **Bucovina Club** album, OMFO was commissioned by Essay to work on his new album. Responding to the demand for something new in this field, OMFO created **Trans Balkan Express**. Shortly after its release this album became popular throughout Europe and beyond, scoring hits; it was played on the radio and covered by the media.

Experimenting with fresh concepts and ideas, OMFO immediately distanced himself from the rest of the producers working in this genre. The peculiar and somewhat humorous vision of a Carpathian villager, playing a native tune on an analogue synthesizer, made OMFO's music natural and accessible for people from all walks of life and religious or ethnic backgrounds. Only this quality could attract an audience that includes criminals, shepherds, astronomers as well as taxi drivers and even terrorists. Regardless of the simplicity of the album, many music critics hailed **Trans Balkan Express** as cutting edge.

The songs from Trans Balkan Express were licensed by other labels and included in various compilations. It also came to the attention of famous comedian Sasha Baron Cohen better known as **Ali G**. [Two tracks](#) from OMFO's album are featured in the new 20th Century Fox film production **Borat's "Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit of Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan"**.

Due to its very strong Arabic influence, one track called **Bagdub** was not included on the album. It was released by **Dorfmeister's G-Stone Recordings**, becoming one of the most outstanding tracks of the **Dub Club compilation**.

Last spring G. Popov was introduced to **Señor Coconut** himself. The Sound Wizard kindly agreed to participate in the production of the new OMFO album. Separated by the Atlantic Ocean but united by a common goal, the two men started to exchange midi and audio files, to manipulate sounds, pushing to the limits of their software and hardware. As a result of their efforts, the album was ready within one month! Under the name **We are the Shepherds**, this project became the logical continuation of the previous Trans Balkan Express. The ironic reference to Kraftwerk in both titles was intended to underline the electronic concept of music.

To promote his projects, OMFO put together a line-up of five extraordinary people: the Transylvanian gypsy wunderkind **Vasile Nedea** on cimbalom and accordion, the Azeri sci-fi writer and virtuoso **Rassul Kazimov** on tar and guitar, the freedom fighter and storyteller **Bakhtiyar Eybaliyev** as percussionist and singer, often compared to a nightingale, and **Fay Lovsky**, The Lady from Beyond, who plays extremely rare instruments such as theremin and the [singing saw](#), adding an eerie and mysterious mood to the music. All these musicians took part in the recording of **We are the Shepherds**.

The spectrum of OMFO's works is wide. He produces **soundtracks** for adult video clips and composes **jingles** for **Turkmen radio stations**. OMFO contributed his tracks to the russian made blockbuster "**Manga**" by **Pyotr Khazizov**. For the **Venice biennale** he wrote the soundtrack for the first ever Central Asian pavilion. Also, OMFO gives solo concerts and performs as a sound artist, as well as collecting field recordings.

OMFO is now looking forward to your comments and suggestions.