



THEM 004 brings us new material by Serbian born techno aficionado and cat lover [Lag](#) , with **Unrest EP**

; two fresh cuts with an exemplar

[Paul Birken](#)

remix to complement the carnage.

‘Nemir’ is a thunderous drum workout in a tight breaks pattern. The track utilises a subtle effect which Lag used on his most recent EP ‘Fiend’. The technique is known as mondegreen, ‘a misinterpreted word or phrase resulting from a mishearing of a lyric.’ This vocal line builds cathartically throughout, with the snippet only being fully expressed on the breakdown. The effect is that the vocal sounds different each time it is listened to. All in all, there is a great cascading, shuffling rhythm to this track, with chattering pulses to get hands in the air.

‘Bumer’ is a stepping workout, making the most of a pitched down repeated vocal snippet. There is a real thrash element to this track, where two distinct drum patterns are counter to each other, with a serious bassline sitting under the intermittent crashes from the high end. Similar to ‘Nemir’, there are machine-gun style pulses thrown out at the listener. The drum breakdown is a serious affair with a swirling crackle of hi hats adding to the heavy off-kilter step.

The remix of ‘Bumer’ by techno veteran Paul Birken is more extreme in its application. Slightly mental, slightly vaudevillian; there are more drums interspersed, creating a cacophony of noise atop a firm trammelling rhythm. The track is pretty loopy, and is everything I have come to expect from Paul Birken production.

LAG, whilst retaining his high ping, has met with me over the intertubes to discuss games and music. To his credit, he answers the questions in a timely manner, perhaps the connection was not so bad. We talk about writing and books: Lag is reading the third book of the Takeshi Kovach trilogy, one which I have not heard of, whereas I am halfway through Catch-22.

CGNY: What sort of games do you like to play?

LAG: I usually go for really competitive stuff. I grew up on Quake 3 and Starcraft so right now I'm into Company of Heroes 2, Dawn of War 2, a bit of LoL and Call of Duty 2 as well. Whatever fast-paced game which requires skill, outsmarting and plenty of mother-mentioning - I'm in. I also started playing some co-op with my good friends where "spending time with them" is more important than whether I enjoy the game or not.

CGNY: Is there a balance between work and play?

LAG: I play a lot of video games. Usually a minimum of 2 hours a day but often more. I used to bum myself about it a lot but then realized that is the only thing (aside from the internet) that I'm hooked on. I don't drink, I don't do drugs, I don't really go out unless there's a really good party around so I'm now okay with it. Someone once said "everyone wastes their time the way that suits them best", and that's it. The rest is work and spending time with people you love. I'm lucky to be in love with doing all three of those.

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CGNY: How do you deal with writers' block?

LAG: I don't really have that. The great majority of projects and loops I start - I finish. I also usually have a really clear idea about what I want to do with the track before I begin with it so there's rarely "how do I go on from here?" moments in my process. The only thing I have issues with is doing a transition or a trick in the track and feeling like it could be better but not knowing immediately what I could or should do differently. When that happens I just start changing stuff around until it's right. But then again - finding that one thing that makes me go "yes, that's it!" is more satisfying than anything else I experience in music making.

CGNY: How did you meet Paul Birken? Did you know he has released his whole back catalogue for free download?

LAG: Yeah, that sounds like Paul... I knew about the man for a good while but never met him or talked to him. Then there was this moment when most of the producers who were my heroes in my early-clubbing days suddenly "felt like doing" the same fucking genre at the same fucking time (which incidentally was the time when that style was bringing money to whomever made something like that, no matter how boring and uninspiring it sounded). At that point I realized they don't really care about music that much and that their heart is not in it, but at the same time my respect grew for the few producers who stayed true to what they stand for - Surgeon, Ben Sims, Paul Mac, Dave Clarke, Paul Birken... Then I ran into this project of Birken's where he would do blues music with his synths and drum machines and that made me go "whoa". I realized he lives for this stuff and I remember wanting to get in touch to, if nothing else, say that I'm a fan. He's just one of those people who inspires, motivates and honestly enjoys what he does. A precious figure on the scene.

CGNY: Finally, what are your opinions on mondegreen used as a musical technique?

LAG: I'll just quote Brian Eno here: "As far as your mind is concerned, nothing happens the same twice, even if in every technical sense, the thing is identical. Your perception is constantly shifting. It doesn't stay in one place." It's fun. Even if the vocal snippets I put were words it would still shift how we see it in our mind after enough repetition. But I think this is the beauty of

repetitive music in general.

Unrest EP is released on vinyl on the 3rd of June.

You can pre-order the record here:

<http://themrecords.bigcartel.com/product/lag-unrest-vinyl>

You can stream the full tracks on Soundcloud here:

<https://soundcloud.com/officialthem/sets/lag-unrest>

<https://www.facebook.com/This.is.Lag/>

<https://twitter.com/ThisisLag>

<http://www.residentadvisor.net/dj/lag>

Words by [Alastair Schwarz](#) for CGNY