



# Molchat Doma

After emerging from the relative obscurity of Belarus with their self-released debut LP *С Крыш наших Домов* ("From the Roofs of Our Houses") in 2017, **Молчат Дома (Molchat Doma)** have created a buzz around their sound: **danceable and dark** with a heavy dose of **cold synth sounds**. As a trio, **Egor Shkutko** (vocals), **Roman Komogortsev** (guitar, synths), and **Pavel Kozlov** (bass/synths) have experienced widespread acclaim for their work and sold out gigs around Europe with plans to tour North America when the world reopens. With a **new album promised for fall**, we spoke with Roman Komogortsev about the choice to write and sing in Russian, creativity in a time of uncertainty, and, of course, the 80s.

**What is the story of how your band became Молчат Дома (Molchat Doma)? I've seen some debate online about whether the proper translation in English is "Silent at Home" or "Houses are Silent"; which English translation is correct?**  
Roman Komogortsev : Our band name is a purely random combination of words; it seemed to us that it sounded cool. Later it was already tied up with our love for the architecture and gray landscapes of our city. "Houses are Silent" is [the] correct translation. We [sing] in Russian.

**Молчат Дома is based in Minsk, Belarus. Not many of our readers are familiar with this region. What is the alternative music/fashion culture currently like in eastern Europe and Belarus specifically?**  
RK : I don't even know, since I don't really follow some popular events. There is a good underground music scene, as well as a popular one. But in order for some

kind of fame to [spread beyond] Belarus, we are probably the flagships of the Belarusian scene at the moment (although we sing in Russian).

**Is there a particular genre of music that is gaining popularity in Minsk or Belarus overall?**  
RK : In the renaissance, indie music of various kinds: indie pop , fake jazz, the same postpunk, hip hop. Many bands play garage rock or something like that. I advise you to pay attention to Lubber Louie, Weed & Dolphins, COIO3.

**What is your process for selecting album artwork? Have you been inspired by a particular art movement or have any specific artists influenced your album artwork's creative direction?**  
RK : At one time, I was inspired by a book with various buildings of Soviet archi-

ecture [from the] 1960-1970s. Just then brutalist buildings were being built like the one depicted on the cover of our second album. Since then, this is the concept. Now, we decided to try a little different, you will see the result soon, but it will be similar in spirit to the previous covers. Get acquainted with the site SocialistModernism; it perfectly describes our taste in architecture.

**The success of Молчат Дома has thus far been mostly in Europe but not in your home country of Belarus. Why do you think this is?**  
RK : Well, lately we have been noticed all the same in Belarus, but this is after we made some noise in Europe. Most likely, this is due to the fact that we, as people think, are very similar to the "Кино" (Kino) band (which at one time was very popular in the CIS), and people associate us with it, saying that it's just a miserable copy. Well, plus the overall mentality, people don't really want to listen to new music that does not play on the radio or on TV. Again, among these people, of course, there are exceptions, for which many thanks to them!

**What are some of the misconceptions you've heard about your music, whether it's related to the genre, lyrics, performances, or visual style of the group?**  
RK : Many call us "right wing" (embracing fascism). This is not accurate. What we sing, "I'm Not a Communist" ["Я Не Коммунист" from the album *С Крыш наших Домов/From the Roofs of Our Houses*, 2017] is a kind of protest against the fact that in 2020 some of the manners of the Soviet Union remained. Aesthetics is all that we like in the Soviet Union, otherwise it represents a terrible, poor, stagnant time. We can also add to this that we wear Fred Perry clothes. We wear them not because we are football fans and belong to the right movement, but because they are stylish and comfortable clothes. People, do not invent anything in your head and do not take this kind of nonsense to the masses please.

**All of your songs are written and sung in Russian. Many artists choose to write and perform in English in hopes of reaching a wider audience. What led to you deciding not to go this route and sing in your first language? For example, Farin Urlaub of 80s German band Die Ärzte said of singing in German instead of English: "I think it's hard for a German band to become famous in England or throughout the world because if you are an honest band you have to do German words, German text and nobody understands them."**  
RK : The Russian language is a convenient form of creativity for us. We speak it every day, it is convenient for us to write poetry in this language. People primarily listen to music and perceive the voice as an additional instrument, and the semantic load comes later. As practice has shown, people are not very confused by the fact that we sing in Russian, they are imbued with a vibe.

**How would you describe the sound of Молчат Дома?**  
RK : Home cassette recorder sound.

**Many bands are releasing music on cassette, vinyl and streaming instead of opting for CDs. Where do you stand on this: do you prefer to have Молчат Дома on vinyl, streaming services or something else?**  
RK : As a collector of vinyl, of course I prefer the band to be released on vinyl, but not everyone is fond of it. Someone likes cassettes, someone else CDs. Therefore, our music is on all media types (except for cassettes, I would very much like to make a circulation in the future).

**I've heard that Drab Majesty are fans of Молчат Дома. How did you hear of and connect with Drab Majesty? Do you like their music?**  
RK : We love Drab Majesty! They are very good guys. We played one concert with them in Hamburg, a very cool sound and visual. And what great people they are. As far as I remember, they wrote to us on Instagram that they are our fans, which made us wildly delighted. Later they offered a ride with us on a support tour, but alas it did not work out. Andrew has our vinyl in the collection; it is an honor for us.

**Who are the musical heroes and most profound influencers of your creativity?**

RK : All 80s popular music is our heroes, like Depeche Mode, Kraftwerk, Gary Numan, The Human League, Yazoo, Кино (Kino), Кофе (Kofe), Биоконструктор (Biokonstruktor), Альянс (Al'Yans) etc.

**Your latest tour, spanning from January through May 2020 has been canceled due to the pandemic. Any plans to tour again once the restrictions on social gatherings ease up?**  
RK : We are lucky that we managed to finish the European tour right before the lockdown. And now working on the rescheduling of concerts, South American concerts have already been rescheduled for the fall, but with North America and Canada it is more difficult. We hope that everything will work out, we really want to come and play.

**How do you think this pandemic will change the way we enjoy live music?**  
RK : I think when everything comes back to normal, people will begin to appreciate the live performances of the bands more, because live is always much sharper, stronger feelings and emotions that you experience during the concert than [when] you watch it on YouTube.

**Was your 2020 tour going to be your first time playing shows in North America?**  
RK : Yes. We are very excited. For us, it seemed before that for a Belarusian band it was unrealistic to play in the US. But dreams come true!

**Many creatives have stated that the extra time at home during the pandemic has become a productive time. Has this been your experience, too?**  
RK : Yes, quarantine has partially benefited us. On the one hand, we thought of all the details of the album, thought of all the lyrics. On the other hand, we cannot meet to record all this. [laughs] But this is only a matter of time.

**Did you know that a fan made a video of your song "На Дне" ("Na Dne")/"At the Bottom") set to scenes from the film *Christiane F. – Wir Kinder vom Bahnhof Zoo* (1981)? In a way, it works very well with the music. Even the colors of that film and the dark nature of the story involving Christiane F. mirrors the darkness in the sound of Молчат Дома's music and lyrics.**  
RK : And we thought we knew where it came from! Well, yes, it looks cool.

**Are you familiar with this film or the autobiography it is based on? The lyrics of this song seem fitting to the film.**  
RK : No, not familiar. About cinema: this is not for us.

**Belarus has recently been in the news for possibly building business relationships with the West. Given that Belarus has had the same President since 1994 (Alexander Lukashenko), not long after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Soviet Union, how do the current geopolitical events of the world and in Belarus impact your creativity? Does it inspire you to create?**  
RK : We do not meddle in politics, this is not our direction.

**Does the culture and current events inspire your creativity, even if you are not directly referencing it in the lyrics?**  
RK : Absolutely yes! This is already on a subconscious level. I think if we didn't live here, our group would play other music.

**1980 was now 40 years ago! How did you become interested in creating a sound so referential to this period of time when none of you were born in the 80s? How do you perceive that era and the music, art and culture of the time? As we know, things were very different on either side of the Iron Curtain back then.**  
RK : We were born in the mid 90s. Since childhood, we have always played cassettes with foreign artists at home (Modern Talking, Boney M, Depeche Mode). And we just cooked it. Therefore, it was not so difficult for us to reproduce it, because we were partly in this. Since then, this sound and visual has been deposited in our heads.

## auxiliary music .....

**Carrying on with the 80s theme, what gear do you use to create your sound? Some of the thematic elements of your music are the clean synth sounds and refined production with guitar effects and vocals that are reminiscent of the 80s. Do you use vintage gear or effects on your instruments to create the sound you've become known for?**

RK : Yes, these are vintage synthesizers: Yamaha DX7, Roland Juno-106, Roland Jx-3p. We also use samples of vintage drum machines: Linn drum, Oberheim DMX, Yamaha rx11. Some VST plugins. I don't want to explain further how we make our sound, let it be a little secret, but everything is very simple in it.

**What has been your biggest performance/audience to date? It seems like your performance at 2019's Pop-Kultur Berlin Festival turned a lot of new fans on to your music.**

RK : I think our concert in London/Scala [in February 2020] was the biggest. It was something. England in general is pure love.

**How would you describe your live performance? I noted on your technical rider that you need fog... Lots of fog!**

RK : It's not for us to evaluate it, let people say better. Smoke is needed to create the necessary gloomy atmosphere. After all, we are not Taylor Swift.

**What music has been inspiring you lately?**

RK : For example, John Frusciante, Black Sabbath, IDLES, She Past Away, Ploho.

**What's next for Молчат Дома?**

RK : Wait for the new album this fall!

Find out more at [molchatdoma.com](http://molchatdoma.com), follow them on Instagram [@molchatdomaband](https://www.instagram.com/molchatdomaband), and check out their music.



Photo by  
Tommy Sussex.