

Forest Roots are just about to drop their new album 'Wanderings'. We had the chance to chat to them about this new project, along with the creative process behind it.

The album itself is released 21st December 2015. Available in CD sleeve and a beautiful collectors edition boxset. The boxset is a work of art in itself. A lot of thought and love has gone into it's making. It's one of the most beautiful boxsets I have ever seen for an album, certainly in the dub techno scene. It's limited to 50 copies so be VERY quick. You can pre-order the album from their bandcamp page.

We have also put together an exclusive preview mix of Nemo and Jaymons forthcoming Wanderings Album featuring a few unheard tracks from the album.

DTB: Hi guys, thanks for taking the time for this interview. At first, tell us about yourselves and how you both met?

FR: Hello! Thank you a lot, we are happy to receive your interest for an interview and are glad to talk with you. My name is Marcel, I am acting as Nemo on Forest Roots and will answer all your questions here. I also speak on behalf of my friend & co-founder Heiko, who is known under the name of Jaymon.

I am also known as The Nautilus Project, a moniker which I chose back in 2008 when I started with music production on labels such as Arteqcue, ZeECc and Confineless Recordings (all closed now). I also have releases and remixes on Entropy Records and Ornaments, and I am happy to say that I worked together with artists like Marko Fürstenberg, Fluxion, Quantec, Xoki/Hieronymus, Christian Dittmann and some more – which formed my person and my musical experience, too. I was a DJ for about 5 years, but then decided to stop – it was time to leave that scene for reasonable grounds.

Heiko's artist name is Jaymon, he doesn't have a second project name, and that's that since I know him. He was a DJ for a long time, but this status is currently frozen. Jay's path of music production started at almost the same time, just some months are between our first releases. His appearances are on labels such as Mancha Recordings, Etui, Insectorama and later on Entropy Records and Confineless Recordings, too. He came to the last two mentioned labels through my invitation in order to write remixes for my productions, I remember it was in the very last time before we founded Forest Roots.



We first met at a deep house party back in August 2008, named “Electronic Pearls” or something like that, which was supported by the two members of Zero in Something. They are friends of Heiko and one guy of the members was a colleague of mine at that time. There was a dancing guy near the DJ desk in a Thinner T-shirt with a camera in his hands, having some fun. Maybe this was the initial moment where we had eye contact the first time in our life. I remember we shared a gentle smile, but no words, no drinks or something, just that and nothing more. It was a strange moment with something unsaid, something still unveiled within the ether. None of us could have known what will come to us in the future. I assume it was because of the T-shirt that I memorized Jaymon’s face, because I liked Thinner a lot and was a regular listener to most of their releases.

Then it happened 2 or 3 years later that Jaymon found my MySpace Profile, still a lot of people used this platform those days, even though it became unimportant – Facebook and SoundCloud took over the dominance. But we were connected there. One day I clicked my way through his online gallery for no reason and saw a summer picture of him on a hill near my home village. It is that hill with an enormous importance for me and which is close to the huge untouched forest area around my home village. This hill is a natural hub and a sacred place full of druidic and metaphysical energies. You can see the top of the hill even far away from other localities, but the place is very rarely visited, because you would have to walk through forests and over plains to reach it. To me, the whole area around this hill is full of magic, huge forest mixes with plains of grass and hills, and all of that is part of my own habitat since I am a child.

The fact that Jaymon entered “my” refuge was the ultimate reason to ask him with an email what he was doing there. I considered it as a sign, because I suddenly remembered the guy with the Thinner T-Shirt. From then on, further emails followed back and forth. And so it came by a very cold day in March 2012 that we had our first tour through the epic forests of the Roschertal (Roscher’s Valley) with its magical Mandau River. It was a short and gentle tour to get to know each other, we were equipped with pen and paper, digital camera and cheap field recording hardware. It was, by the way, exactly this region I’ve written about with my ambient/drone release of “Excursions” one year before. It seemed that all those things were connected and it felt like much more was about to come.

DTB: What was the idea behind the new album, can you talk readers through what they might expect?



FR: The idea behind was a sequel to the first part (“Seasons”), which was published in 2013 on our label. “Wanderings” has much more density and is very colorful. We used new production methods and a lot of the tracks were recorded from a very rough song arrangement, which led to better dynamics and new directions. We wanted to have it deeper, but with our typical fingerprint. Another important part was our use of the lower sound spectrum and a collection of new field recordings. Everything on this longplayer sounds much stronger and creates a very dense atmosphere; we worked a lot on the sound engine and gained some new impacts from our own side projects, which influenced the release additionally. It’s all about the mixture of the sounds and how we brought them into context with the song titles. There are a lot of textures and a myriad of non-linear layers within the tracks. The differences between our alternating pieces in the tracklist stand out – but they complement each other and you can hear it who is who.

While Jaymon is mainly a kind of person who plays with experimental, direct and much clearer type of sounds, I am more the melancholic guy and I also express myself that way. My world are the harmonic elements of epic synths and pads, modified field recordings and smoother sound rhythms. This is also reflected in our own music taste: Jaymon listens to dub(techno), dubstep, reggae and deep house, I am more a listener of ambient, deep techno, tribal, abstract and oldskool electro/vintage. However, each of us has a harder and softer side. Jaymon is more dry, I am more wet. All these things come together. Additionally, during the last two years, a lot of things happened in our life and we went through some important processes. I think it also affected our music. Something happened with our sound, I discussed it with Jaymon a lot of times. For example Jaymon’s music has developed very strongly and he became more openminded, whereas I have transformed myself more into a person of mysticism, like a mindful wanderer with a stronger sense for nature-related things, with druidic characteristics and hermit aspects. I think some of these things may be heard on the album.

Jaymon created a lot of wonderful sounds during the last two years, however, I found my very own sound in music after years and tweaked it a long time. Especially for our collaboration tracks on this album we are very satisfied. There is also a certain otherworldly touch throughout the entire album, it can’t be brought exactly into words, it feels like from the intermediate worlds (which we touched somehow). We brought a lot of things into this longplayer, it is a journey to yourself through a spiritual world of nature, where civilization is left behind. It is also a very colorful path, full of sound and taste and sense. The album tells about things that are beyond deep and it shines with a new light. Although it contains some melancholic memories from the past, you will be rewarded with rich inner experience while listening to it.

The order of the tracks on both CD’s describes our (spiritual) journey in its different phases including some of the most important places we’ve visited during our tours. Each track name has been carefully chosen due to its own little story. All of them together shape the complete release like a book of two chapters, evenly distributed on two CD’s, one for each year. And fortunately, we have the best mastering engineer in the world for our needs. Sergey Kosov is our friend and really a down-to-earth-guy, he always fulfils every wish of us. He made again a brilliant mastering with all the accentuated details in each song, everything came out exactly how we wanted it to have. We would never choose another person for this job, he is with us since the very first minute and into the sound of Forest Roots, he just listens to our songs and knows what to do.

DTB: Was there any inspiration behind the album?

FR: Of course. A lot of inspiration. As I already indicated, the album is mainly a sequel of the “Seasons” release. At this stage, we assume that each “Nemo & Jaymon” album will be a continuation of its previous one. It feels like a neverending story, separated into different albums throughout the years. So, there is enough space for coming ideas and I think we will cover all those themes and fill out that space. Besides that, we are also working each on our own albums. Another inspiration was to wander the paths of the first album again. We wanted to go some levels deeper and immerse into the atmosphere of the same environment just one more time, because it was so fascinating, touching and kept us in its grip. Some of the most important places were so incredibly moving and they filled our heart with love, warmth and melancholy that we felt not yet everything was said through the sounds we used on the first album. It became obvious to write some further

detailed songs.

DTB: What is your production setup? Mostly hardware or software? Did you use anything out of the ordinary in this album?

FR: Our production setup is as much colorful as our natural environment. Varying and very different. The most important sound sources are field recordings and sound samples. Over the years, we collected a huge amount of field recordings: short and long recordings, bright and dark recordings, meditative and organic recordings, earthly and ethereal recordings, loops and samples. Some of them have natural chorus or phase shifting effects directly taken during the recording process, some of them were pitched or taken in slow motion. We also converted the audio tracks from our video footage, because the microphone has another signal processing and made the sound sometimes a bit warmer.

Jaymon owns professional and much better field recording hardware and bought some additional stuff for his device. It is always interesting to take field recordings simultaneously at the same place with different devices and then to layer them through a chain of different effect modules in order to modify their frequencies and characteristics.

Another significant point is the work with effect chains and samples. I saved a lot of my own signal chains and presets for later purposes, some of them can be traced back to the very first time when I started with my Nautilus Project. All of them have developed over time and I am able to insert anything I want to have in my music projects, to then modify it again. The same is for samples – synth snippets, pads, chords, everything. We like the work with samples, this applies not only to field recordings, we also bring some sounds from our own projects into the releases of Forest Roots. Of course, we also work with synths and these things. Everything is balanced.

I am a huge vintage buff and I love it to work with my hardware synthesizers, I own three different units and there are a few more to follow. At the moment, it is a Yamaha MSX vintage computer (CX5M) and another Yamaha synth module (FB-01), both comparable to a DX11. I also still have my C64-II, but this unit is more involved into my Nautilus Project tracks. The sound of vintage computers and synthesizers have always fascinated me and I am still collecting games from the good old days of this era, sometimes just because of the sound. I love the workflow with this hardware pieces, because you must work with their sounds in other kind of ways in order to get what you want, especially with the FM synthesis.

I wish to establish a perfect mix of hardware and software in the future including virtual environment and sampling. Jaymon owns a Roland MC303 and we are excited to try out some new things and production methods in the future. We also plugged some things together in the past, our new album includes some of the first experiments. Jaymon also told me that he thinks about some further hardware integration, maybe he will buy some own stuff, too. We are building up our music studios much slower, but with love. It is not necessary to buy expensive stuff and pretentious units, you can make wonderful ambient music up from a simple base and then go into detail. All you need is time and passion, and everything comes from alone.

DTB: Forest roots describes itself as ‘forest music’ – what is it about the forest that you enjoy so much and how has it influenced your music?

FR: Forest is essential and the most inspiring place for our music, for our personality, our spirituality, for our inner peace and much more. Forest gives us everything we need for our music, and we are in very close contact to nature. We feel that the forest speaks to us whenever we wander through the green realms. We are always led to places where something significant happens, to places of things that might have been. We feel the energies there, the story behind the place. Of course, the mood and our imagination plays its part, but there are also other important aspects, such as finding back to inner peace and positive energy while wandering the paths. It is meditation. We leave behind all our stress and problems exactly at the moment when we enter the forest. It is like switching between realities, a transition to a world full of experience and

possibilities, with all its wonderful wealth of atmospheres. This is the source, a kingdom, a green empire full of secrets to unveil. And I can say we had a lot of really deep and astonishing moments, we felt our clear and close connection to nature's entity.



There is also a lot of thankfulness involved, this is why we generate our songs from recorded material of the forest. A lot of our percussions, bass kicks and beat elements are reconfigured samples from these field recordings, sometimes modified beyond recognition. There is a very natural and organic sound in our tracks, because it comes from the forest through us, with stories from and about the forest. Of course, music needs a rough categorization, even though we operate in the territory of ambient most of the time. But all these things are just one way of ten thousand possibilities to express what we want to say. We receive nearly everything from the forest, so it was the best choice to give our music the tag of “forest music” instead of writing everywhere we are doing “ambient/deeptechno/dub/ electronica/experimental/minimal/drone/chill”.

DTB: What do you feel each of you bring to the creative process?

FR: A lot of things. We feel our connection to nature and we automatically find the places where we express ourselves. We hear the voice of the forest. All those atmospheres around us, they directly flow through us into the music. Jaymon is the guy of the brighter side of nature, while I am more the darker part of us. Therefore we are intuitively acting on our tours, each of us has his own focal points and when we are done with our things we compare what we caught and continue with the tour. Then, back home or in the studio, we share our recordings and process them further, each in his own way.



Photography is another part of the creative process. I guess it is one of the most important things and gives a clear insight into our perspectives and how we perceive the world around us. For example, when you look on Jaymon's photographs, everything looks structured and has a strong focus to a point he wants to accentuate. And then, when you look on my photographs, everything fades into the depth of the space to an indeterminate point somewhere behind, through the layers. My photos are always a little bit muddy and have a smaller area of sharpness. Jaymon is sharp, I am playing with the blurring. From a technical standpoint, Jaymon is the guy with the professional field recording devices, while I am the guy with the professional analogue photography equipment. My stepfather gave me his old Zenit-E camera, a Russian model from 1979 (very meaningful, because it is my year of birth) including two lenses. During 2015, I ordered two further lenses from Eastern Europe. I am in deep love with this old camera. It was an upper class camera produced during the times of the GDR and has its very own magic. It is a pure vintage object and captures the essence and the special atmosphere of each place like no other camera. It became a key component on Forest Roots and is an important part of our inspiration.

The Collector's Edition of "Wanderings" includes some of the most inspiring photographs in a special format, taken with this camera. Another point of the creative process is the feeling for sound. Jaymon is often inspired by a certain synthesizer sound, a part of a rhythm or a sample from a song or from natural ambience, for example in a room or under a bridge. All of these things have an impact on his creation process, it is the moment and the combination of the things which come together. For me it is quite similar, but I like it a bit more mystical and with an epic touch. I am bewitched by the movement of rustling trees in the wind and their different noise types. I love it to catch the birds in the crowns with my camera and a massive telephoto lens. And while I am taking the snapshots, the field recorder records in the background.



Also important for me are the hidden sounds in the forest. When I've noticed a sound from a point I can't discover immediately, I love it to search for the place where the sound came from and then think about what might have happened. Also very important is our relationship. It is a friendship, but deeper. During our tours, we don't talk that much, but we have our own language where it is not necessary to speak. We go into the same direction. When the road forks, we automatically know which way we will choose, a quick glance between us is enough to communicate. Sometimes our attention is drawn by something and then we pause on this special place for a while, recording here, taking snapshots there, or having a short meditation with closed eyes while standing in a fairy ring, which I prefer to do. And then we find back and continue the path as if it was just a short break. Over the years, we found very close together, especially during our tours. We complement and support each other, it is a little bit like Yin & Yang. We create our things together, sometimes it is easy, sometimes it is difficult. Sometimes it happens fast, sometimes it takes time. But we really grew together and learnt to be thankful for the small things of life and for nature, especially in the forest.

And last but not least, we want to mention Jeremy Clarke, the British-born poet. He is a member of our label, but not in the classical sense. With 2014, we were delighted to welcome him as poet in residence at Forest Roots. His graceful voice and contemporary word art are unique and everything a music composer could wish for; we feel very fortunate to have him at our side and are blessed to involve his prose and his vocals into our productions. We used his voice during our live sets in order to amplify the mood of our works like from a point of a storyteller. His words have a great spiritual power due to his Christian perspectives and his modern expressions in a way that is beyond deep. We have the permission to use his publications, spoken by himself, but he is also willing to record other works not made by him. He is a good friend of mine and I got to know him since 2010 during the production of "Excursions", when he commented to a demo track on Soundcloud. From there, one thing led to another.

DTB: Favourite tracks or experiences while making this album? Did you venture into beautiful forests to

record sounds?

FR: Of course! Forest is always a part of our hike, but we also like the changing landscape, for example hills, fields, plains of grass, mountains and waters. Walking on a wide and open field is as beautiful as wandering through a forest, and it makes no difference for us to record new sounds, we take what we can get, but in a forest it is much deeper. Every tour was a special thing and we repeated a lot of our tours, but then with different conditions (starting point, season, time) and with a new route. Sometimes the area was too large to explore everything, so we had to come back and continue the tour. It also happened that we had to go back into the same forest or to the same place we visited before, because it was so touching that we wanted to inhale everything one more time again.



As far as music is concerned, Jaymon is heavily inspired by dub and infected with the “virus” of Rhythm & Sound. He further likes a lot of the works from Bill Laswell, Lee Perry’s 70s dubs and recent works from the Kompakt and Echo Beach label. He also loves the works of Burial and Om Unit, as well as some modern productions and house tracks. Whenever I visit Jaymon, some very nice techno tracks or reggae/dubwise songs are playing in the background of his apartment. For me personally and according to my character, I am listening to a lot of ambient. I also love it to enjoy deep techno, drone, tribal, vintage stuff, oldskool electro and soundtracks (games and movies). It must be spacious, that’s it. But because I am a sentimental guy, I am further addicted to the early works of Frank Sinatra and Tommy Dorsey from the 30s and the 40s, whose records I am collecting since years. I am also listening to the works of Bvdub quite regularly, and for a few more examples I would mention: Variant, Fluxion, Uusitalo, Docetism, Mr. Cloudy, Donato Dozzy and Thomas Köner.

DTB: How successful has Forest Roots been in your eyes, do you prefer the self-publishing platform of Bandcamp compared to the more mainstream outlets?

FR: Well, our label exists since October 2012 and with the exception for a few cassette copies of the “Forests-apes” production, every physical release has been sold out successfully. It seems people like what we are do-

ing and we currently see it with our newest release, because we have a run on the Collector's Edition, already during the pre-order phase! That's fantastic, and it might be sold out faster than we expected. We are very happy and a little bit proud about all that, because we ship our releases all over the world now.



The number of fans has increased, slowly but steadily. It all started with the “Excursions” release (by The Nautilus Project) and from then on we build up a solid circle. It was the best decision to start with an own label, also because we had some bad experiences in the past on other labels. All we do now is just going our very own way. If you want to have your things done in the right way, do it on your own. Always. Regarding Bandcamp: yes, we prefer it. It is the best platform for us to distribute our releases. Besides that, we ship some copies to Interstellar Sounds in the UK, Alan is a really cool guy and our number one choice in a list of resellers. There might also be a third publishing option available in the future through our homepage, but for now we will leave it as it is.

DTB: Favourite labels / albums/ tracks from 2015 and before?

FR: There are so many good labels, wonderful artists and beautiful songs out there. It's hard to decide, so we give you a bunch of artist/label names and song titles which we think they have a strong relevance and a deep emotional impact. Regarding the labels, we would mention the following: Echospace [Detroit], Nichts, Milieu Music, Silent Season, Prologue Music, Serein, DataObscura and Left Of Field Records. As for the individual music taste and our favorites, we would say:

Nemo:

Bvdub – Everything Between You And Me
Bvdub – Strong Again (Teach Me To Feel)

Bvdub w/ Loscil – Moirai
Earth House Hold – Gone But Not Forgotten
East Of Oceans – 9 Winters To Tell You
Variant – Aurora's Dream
Fluxion – Prospect II
Fluxion – Subliminal Tone
Docetism – Hortus
Deru – Addictive Yearning
Joel Tammik – Teisiti
Mr. Cloudy – AM Chords
Gas – Oktober
Thomas Köner – Unerforschtes Gebiet
Jeremy Clarke w/ ThE AsSoCiaTIonN – Praise

Jaymon:

Annagemina – Oh I (Live)
Docetism – Waldweg
Yagya – Rigning 6
Four Tet – Back2TheStart
Myk – Flevopark EP
Sofia Kourtesis – Fresia
Valeta – Dream Cities
Kabaka Pyramid – Liberal Opposer
Cocoa Tea – Young Lover Dubplate (Ondubground Remix)
Irie Souljah – Learn & Grow
Protoje – Resist Not Evil
Overcast Sound Feat. Jenny Mayhem – Settle
Agent Lexie – Carribean (Teka Remix)

DTB: Outside of music, what else do you guys enjoy to do?

FR: Besides our label and its music production, Jaymon works as an artist for sound collages at local exhibitions and acts in a small theatre group here. He also invests his time into video production (for example at local movie contests in our city) and is involved in a registered association of a house which provides free rooms for artists and events. Jaymon is a creative person and he further contributes with his technical skills to projects and construction measures within the house. From time to time it also happens that he participates as an artist with his sounds at music events launched by this society or cooperates with other artists in little side projects, when convenient. He is socially very committed and likes the interaction with the people.



As for me, I am addicted to analogue photography and in love with my old Russian camera from 1979, I use it nearly every weekend while I am dreaming and watching on my lonely walks. I am obsessed with the camera and I like all the processes, from the haptic feel and the mechanical sounds to the otherworldly moods and the memories in the final photographs. Apart from that I like epic fantasy books or poems from H.P. Lovecraft. I am also collecting music and old C64/DOS-Games. And through the entire year, I work in my little garden amidst the forest, because I am taking over this small piece of land from my grandfather more and more. Actually, I am focused on the garden much more than I expected, and I love it. I am interested in wild plants, herbs and gardening. I guess I inherited this from my grandfather. I am really a nature guy and an outsider in this world, I like it to be alone, that's that as long as I can remember.

DTB: What can we expect in 2016 from Forest Roots and yourselves?

FR: We are confident to provide exciting releases in the future, but next year it will be a bit quieter. Our own releases had to stay on the sideline during the last three years, and this will change now. Jaymon started to work on his own first solo album, named "Places". I, however, will continue with my "Wanderer's Path" series, a big release with a lot of tracks and conceptual for about twenty different perspectives. I'm working on it since four years now and it will be made under my Nautilus Project moniker.



There is also a secret ambient release with spoken poetry in the pipeline, as well as a modern shaped deep techno release with soundtrack influences. We also try to catch up some new live performances, international requests are welcome. Working live with our sounds is really something special, we have a great pool of sounds and it is much more interesting than sitting in the studio. We want to transport our art to new regions, I think this becomes an essential part in the future of Forest Roots.

Thank you for your questions. We really appreciate it. Nemo & Jaymon