

# SCHKEUDITZER KREUZ

## BIO (MECHANICAL):

Variously termed “Industrial Synth Crust”, “D-beat Raw Synth Punk”, and “One human and some machines making noise, in the face of it all”, [Schkeuditzer Kreuz](#) is a mutant post-apocalyptic hybrid: a synthesis – or an *intersection* – between harsh, confronting, mechanical noise and the comparatively raw, organic materials of hardcore, crust, and d-beat punk. It is a noise wrought from the anguish and despair of Antipodean punk veteran **Kieren Hills**, from a cabin that he built in the Blue Mountains of New South Wales, Australia.

Playing in bands for around 35 years, Kieren began his journey into underground music in New Zealand, during the late 1980s, before relocating to Australia with riotous Wellington NZ punk rock group, [S.M.U.T.](#), in 1993. He turned up a few years later in Stuttgart, Germany’s [Murder Disco X](#); followed by countless Sydney underground bands, including crust punk / d-beat merchants [Vae Victus](#); hardcore legends [Dark Horse](#); and deathrock / gothic punk outfit [Death Church](#), to name just a handful.

Beyond punk, Kieren traces his discovery of noisy industrial and experimental electronic music to his youth in New Zealand, influenced by a previous generation of punk musicians who had begun to explore different possibilities: [Skeptics](#), [Headless Chickens](#), [Froit Head](#), CeLL, [Invisible Dead](#), and [Children’s Television Workshop](#) among them. These local groups in turn led Kieren to the music of Throbbing Gristle and Cabaret Voltaire; Laibach and Einstürzende Neubauten; Big Black and Butthole Surfers. In later years, Kieren also became a fan of Australia’s [Knife](#), [Religious Observance](#), and [Kollaps](#); and [KUBINE](#) from Yokohama, Japan. Following “the wreck of the plague year twenty-twenty”, Kieren says, there was a “greater affinity with machines, making the creation of [Schkeuditzer Kreuz](#) inevitable.”

Named for “a rather complex set of autobahn loops on the border of Saxony and Saxony-Anhalt” near Leipzig, Germany, Kieren later explained the origins of the name [Schkeuditzer Kreuz](#) in an interview with [nOteeth](#) (UK):

*“Years ago, I was driving from Leipzig to Berlin... and as we drove past the intersection I looked up and thought “Schkeuditzer Kreuz - I’m going to call a band that one day”. It took 20 years before I did it because nobody else thought it was a good idea, so I had to wait until I was solo to fulfil that particular dream. When I started this, I didn’t think I would take it very far. But here I am, several records and a bunch of tours later and I’m stuck with it.”*

In response to a comparison to the collision of man and machine in the apocalyptic deserts of *Mad Max*, Kieren went on to say:

*“I think of my music as road music in a way. I love driving. Not just because I like travelling but also the symbiosis of human and machine. I remember when I was young, playing with Lego and building machines and putting little Lego figures in them. I would build the cockpit with instrument panels and everything the pilot would need all within reach. When I closed the hinged entrance I would feel a deep sense of comfort. I wanted to be that little plastic bloke. Everything in its place and all controls being at his fingertips.”*

*The world at his feet. Nothing else mattered to him - he could go anywhere and see whole new worlds, but the controls would be the same, be familiar, and be within reach.”*

The five-song debut [Schkeuditzer Kreuz](#) EP, [Give Me Nothing](#), first appeared online in September 2020, followed by the video-singles ‘[Amerika](#)’ (November 2020) and ‘[Give Me Nothing](#)’ (January 2021). In March 2021, the EP received a physical 12” vinyl release through Kieren’s own label imprint, [Dorf’punk Tapes](#). Launched with a fifteen-date tour of Eastern Australia, the birth in earnest of [Schkeuditzer Kreuz](#) also signalled Kieren’s commitment to a DIY ethos of touring anywhere and everywhere. Sydney’s [Mongo Cult](#) observed: “*Abrasion is the intent here... Despair and hopelessness morphing into a strange defiance, in a fashion that again mirrors the genesis of the project itself... Kieren is dragging this beast onto the road, nudging it to slouch towards Bethlehem throughout the month of March. As in his ‘more ketamine than ecstasy’ take on electronica, his punk sensibilities shine through here.*” Brisbane’s [Onyx Music Reviews](#) added: “*Should you ever get the chance to see Schkeuditzer Kreuz live, take it. The experience will blow your mind...*”

The EP sold out on tour, leading to the two-song 7” release [D-Beat Raw Synth Punk](#): an industrial tribute to the noisier end of punk rock, released on the [Inner City Uprising](#) label (May 2021). The third [Schkeuditzer Kreuz](#) record was a 12” split-release with Sydney’s [Low Life](#) on Winter Garden Records (September 2021), with both bands covering the title track ‘[State Violence State Control](#)’ by early UK hardcore outfit Discharge.

In December 2021, [Schkeuditzer Kreuz](#) released the video-single ‘[Broken](#)’, as lead single from the project’s debut album. Kieren told [Regen Magazine](#) (USA) that ‘Broken’ was written to address longstanding issues with mental health and “*misfires in my head,*” and coping with the deaths of several friends, exacerbated by the isolating effects of lockdown. “*I (like others) didn’t get to hang out with those I am close to, to help process those losses, and instead went down a spiral that nearly ended up with me joining them.*” Not quite two weeks later, [Schkeuditzer Kreuz](#) released the debut full-length LP, [Isolated and Alone](#) (December 2021) through [Bad Habit Records](#); distributed by Bad Habit and [Already Broken Records](#) in Australia, and [Pyrrhic Defeat Records](#) in the UK and Europe.

[Louder Than War](#) (UK) described the album as “*a heavy brooding self-abusing slab of darkness that seeps menacingly over an arid soundscape, enveloping all in its path... a bleak, deathly and desolate project*”. [Cave Dweller Music](#) (USA) called it “*a perfect example of how to make dark, menacing industrial music with gothic and d-beat hardcore elements*”; while [Sonic Seducer](#) (Germany) called the album “*Dust-dry, tough and extremely dirty... As if encouraged by nothing but hopelessness, this mixture of d-beat and synth-punk chugs stoically through unadorned, raw tracks... an expression of absolute sincerity...*” [Rocknerd](#) (UK) described [Schkeuditzer Kreuz](#) as “*punk rock in early hardcore style through industrial electronics... The cover of “State Violence/State Control” by Discharge works particularly well... This sort of electropunk works better than you might think, and we need more of it.*” In Australia, Brisbane’s [4ZZZ FM](#) wrote: “*Taking the politics and fury of d-beat and anarcho-punk, then blending them with treated vocals, harsh industrial synths and queasy dance-punk rhythms... a terrifying yet enjoyable journey into the darkness of dehumanised, repressive society... It will never be mistaken for an easy listen – it’s challenging and even nightmarish – but Isolated and Alone sounds emotional and vital despite its*

*synthetic elements.”; and local extreme music fanzine/blog [Devil’s Horns Zine](#) wrote: “Australia continues to set the standard for extreme music, pretty much year after year. This one-man assault declares this premise perfectly... The album from start to end is a raging beast of a release... S.K. is that fantastic intersection between crust punk and hard industrial synth... This band is doing something way different for extreme genres, it’s also amazingly original and heavy as hell... an essential purchase.”*

*[Isolated and Alone](#) also included an updated album version of ‘[State Violence State Control](#)’, released as the album’s second promo-single / video in February 2022. The video showcased [Schkeuditzer Kreuz](#) live in Melbourne, and [Post-punk.com](#) (USA) called it “...a ferocious reworking... dissonant static, an eerie voice cutting through the din and scratches; a disembodied Big Brother.” Despite touring being rendered almost impossible by Covid-19 and the resultant lockdowns, the [Isolated and Alone](#) LP sold out against a backdrop of rave international reviews throughout 2022.*

In May 2023, after a brief period of relative quiet, the video single ‘[Joy](#)’ appeared: a gargantuan, loping, droning, doom-laden megalith of downtempo industrial grind, and the first single from the forthcoming second LP. Speaking to Belgium’s [Side-Line Magazine](#), Kieren said: “*Joy is the end – unbridled ecstatic destruction – the warming glow of smashing glass, the satisfaction of a hammer through a wall Break what breaks you – find the structure that’s keeping you under, and tear it apart, raze it to the fucking ground.*” Kieren meanwhile told [Orkus! Magazin](#) in Germany: “*The song just came naturally, like I had the whole thing in my head before I started. I put together this growling synth sound and it just flowed; the only thing I changed from the first recording was a spoken sample. It was simple, it was loud and full of bang.*”

‘Joy’ was followed by the album’s second video-single, ‘[Second Life](#)’ in July 2023: essentially a hardcore punk rock song played by electronic instruments, which voiced Kieren’s revulsion at the ineffectual politicised response to gun violence in the US. [CVLT Nation](#) (USA)’s Meghan MacRae wrote that the song “*perfectly captures the disgust and fear I felt watching the country descend into yet another Libs vs Cons debate... he samples soundbites from the dizzying and disorienting media bullshit that follows a mass shooting, chanting “Another one dead / and another one fucking dies!”*”

The launch of the second album, [No Life Left](#), followed in August 2023: again on [Bad Habit Records](#), and distributed in the US by [Sorry State Records](#) and in New Zealand by [Centennial Conflict](#). The album release also saw [Schkeuditzer Kreuz](#) embarking on a 30-date tour of Europe, between September and October 2023. Talking about the new album to [Devolution Magazine](#) (UK), Kieren said: “*I have learned a lot about recording since ‘Isolated and Alone’ – what can be done with sound, and how to make what I hear in my head come through to other people’s ears. It’s all still just me, playing a few different machines and bashing on random pieces of metal; but I have learned how to refine it and make it bigger and, to me, better... It is me. Pure and simple. It is loud and abrasive and energetic and at times possibly disturbing – but that is all me.*”

[Auxiliary Magazine](#) (USA) said that [No Life Left](#) was “*raw and at times brain rattling but speaks of profound humanity and dealing with one’s own mental health... full on head trauma rhythms, with screaming electronics extruded through pedals and near manic vocals from Hills. Industrial d-beat noise on a grand scale.*” [4ZZZ FM](#) called the album “*an ever-topical soundtrack to the apocalypse, equally suited to noiseniks, industrial music aficionados and anarcho-punks – or anyone who can have a good time with bad time music. A sonic tapestry of fury, if you will And you can dance to it*”;



and [ReGen Magazine](#) called [Schkeuditzer Kreuz](#) “one of the hardest, grittiest voices in modern industrial music... If you are looking for something different and you like harsh tunes, *No Life Left* is a must have album for your library.”

The remix release, [Second Life: No Life Left Remixed](#) followed in December, bringing together glitched-out breakcore, synth-driven dark electro, and sludgy industrial doom, from guest collaborators [Distruster](#) (US), [Max Rael](#) (UK), [Creassault](#) (NZ), [Non-Bio](#) (UK), and [Crash-Scan](#) (NZ). The remix EP appeared both as a standalone digital release on Bandcamp, and as a second bonus disc as part of the CD version of *No Life Left*. New Zealand’s [Undertheradar](#) wrote: “Roaming from ear-scraping breakbeat-scapes reminiscent of Tetsuo: The Iron Man to pulse-pounding EBM to skull-trepanning powernoise to mind-mashing doom, *Second Life: No Life Left Remixed* provides an ominous appetiser before Schkeuditzer Kreuz’s first ever NZ tour.”

January 2024 took [Schkeuditzer Kreuz](#) across the ditch to New Zealand, before returning for Australian shows with [Striborg](#) and [Mortiis](#) during March. In April 2024, ‘[Ratchet // Amerika 24](#)’, the third single and [video](#) from *No Life Left*, was released, and continued Australian tourdates for April-July 2024 were announced. Kieren told Australia’s [HEAVY Magazine](#) that ‘Ratchet’ was “about the show, the performance that is both what I do with music, but also the performance that is life... reanalysing what is going on in my head as I try to throw everything I have into life, whilst always hearing that clock ticking: knowing I am getting older and falling apart, and that it is going to end one day.”

[The Devil’s Mouth](#) (Portugal) said that ‘Ratchet’ “comes out of the speakers with blown-out organ vamps over assertive industrial strut with a carny creepiness... like ‘Carnival Of Souls’ soundtracked by an angry loner. ‘Amerika 24’ is a crust punk Ministry, all distorted beats, fizzing synth riffs and Halloween top line keyboard melodies. Dystopian samples and hectoring voices aggregate the paranoia leaving the vocals building to a grand gothic denouement.” [CVLT Nation](#)’s Meghan MacRae wrote: “At what point in our lives do we agree to take part in the performance of human society? As SCHKEUDITZER KREUZ’s beats rain down on me like hammers from the sky and the buzz and hum of “Ratchet”’s melody interferes with my brain waves, I think about that point where I lost who I really was to the game of getting along with everyone else so I could grasp at feelings of being safe and cared for... I’m starting to understand that this doesn’t indicate some deep flaw in me.”

[Undertheradar](#) (NZ) added: “industrial synth crust propagator Schkeuditzer Kreuz discombobulates our eyes and ears with new visuals for ‘Ratchet’...”; and [Melodic Machinations](#) (Australia) called it: “a cacophony of industrial chaos and off-kilter melodies... a haunting and raw exploration of the human struggle... not just a song; it’s a visceral experience... a stark reminder of the fragility of the human condition and the relentless passage of time.”

In June, *No Life Left* entered its [second pressing](#) on [Bad Habit Records](#), as regular touring continued. As of August 2024, [Schkeuditzer Kreuz](#) is about to embark on a seven-date tour of Japan (Aug-Sept 2024), and on returning will join UK industrial-darkwave legends [ATTRITION](#) on a nationwide Australian Tour (Oct-Nov 2024). The ATTRITION tour is followed by a split-release EP with US anarcho-breakcore outfit [DECIDE TODAY](#) (Cincinnati, Ohio), and a 17-date tour through Southeast Australia in December, before Kieren returns to the studio to finish recording the third [Schkeuditzer Kreuz](#) album.