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Mike Darlington:
Channeling his inner
monstercat



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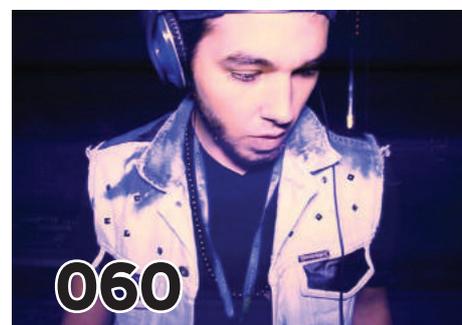
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MIKE DARLINGTON:

CHANNELING HIS INNER MONSTERCAT

BY LINE ABRAHAMIAN

“WHAT’S THIS TRACK?”

a bewildered Mike Darlington asks, to no one in particular. Certainly not to the moist fellow dunked in neon whose spirited demands for the DJ to “drop the bass!” seem to be losing steam the wetter and more out of breath he becomes. Or to the parched-looking young lady hoisted onto sturdy shoulders, flaunting red-glow-stick mouse ears and an ill-fitted tube top (surely, a headband in a former life) that keeps threatening to travel south with every bounce. No. Darlington, decked out in a sensible black V-neck shirt and blue jeans, isn’t so much asking a question as expressing awe. The house track now flooding the Kool Haus in Toronto is unlike any he’s ever heard before—and it’s knocking his sensible pants off.

Perched atop a dazzling cube in a giant grinning mouse head, Deadmau5 has just rolled out “Strobe,” and its haunting prelude has lulled the audience into a trance. Like a capricious maestro, he adds and strips away twinkling synths, honeyed piano and soft bass in a delectably slow buildup, until he finally chases a stray beat to the brink and leaves it there, driving an increasingly fidgety crowd bonkers. Sweaty neon boy orders “Drop the bass!” with renewed oomph, and with a blinding explosion of white light, Deadmau5 unleashes a mighty *boom*.

Suddenly, 2,000 bodies launch into the air. Arms and smartphones flail

wildly about, snapping pictures destined for Facebook. Girls leap onto boys’ shoulders and bounce gleefully, tube tops be damned! Trippy light beams swirl dizzily around the room. And bopping merrily among them all—and gripped with a sudden desire to peel off his V-neck (he doesn’t)—an electrified Darlington turns to his friends and shouts, “Daaaamn, this is amazing!”

DAAAAMN, INDEED.

“That show was life-altering for me,” recalls Darlington. “That whole scene was new to me: the cube, the light show, the thousands of people jumping around. And being there with my friends—everything came together, and it turned into more than a musical experience; it was an emotional experience.

Then hearing ‘Strobe’ and seeing the crowd’s reaction, it opened my eyes to how powerful electronic dance music can really be. And I wanted to be a part of it.”

A year later, in July 2011, Darlington and his friend Ari Paunonen created independent EDM record label Monstercat. “We didn’t start off thinking we were gonna be a record label,” says Darlington. “It started off as a YouTube channel. We wanted to create a fun place where our friends could share their music and promote themselves and each other. Monstercat evolved from that, with a community approach to music sharing. We saw a bunch of talented young artists who didn’t know how to get their music out there, so we wanted to fill that gap and also remove that competitiveness between artists.”

But what would a graduate in biology (Darlington) and a management engineer (Paunonen) know about the music business? Turns out, quite a bit. So far, Monstercat has released 15 compilation albums, seven of which have hit No. 1 on iTunes’ dance charts. And numerous singles have clawed their way to No. 1 on Beatport, including Rogue’s “Exogenesis,” Pegboard Nerds’ “Fire in the Hole” and Project 46’s “Reasons.” For a young label, it sure has its fingerprints on a lot of successful artists—most notably, a breakout EDM trio from Chicago with killer female vocals.

THAT’S A FUNNY STORY, ACTUALLY.

On a mild December day in 2011, Darlington and Paunonen were at Vancouver International Airport, waiting for their flight to Toronto, when Darlington’s cellphone rang. **It was Jake Udell. Who? Jake Udell. He manages badass EDM trio Krewella from Chicago. Right. Never heard of him. How did he get this number? Not important. Would they listen to Krewella’s track “Killin’ It”? Sure, he should email it. Great, but why email when... And before Darlington knew it, Udell had hit play and Krewella’s snarling bass, sultry vocals and biting lyrics had grabbed hold of his ear and refused to let loose.** “Their vocals were aggressive, dirty and kind of made me a little uncomfortable at first,” says Darlington. “We hadn’t heard female vocals of that style on an EDM track before. All our tracks had an uplifting, traditional EDM sound—and this was completely different. We took a chance and said yes on the spot. To this day,

I still don't know how Jake got my number..."

Not important. Though Darlington does launch into a pre-emptive plea not to send him demos that way. (Other offences sure to land artists on the blacklist include spamming and seeking him out on Facebook—"There's nothing worse than getting a message on my personal Facebook account that says 'Check out my track.'") After signing Krewella, Monstercat got to work. They sent out promos. They kicked off fierce social media campaigns. They partnered with some of the biggest EDM YouTube channels—think UKF, MrSuicideSheep, Proximity. Soon after, Krewella blew up, and so did Monstercat. "Was it because of Monstercat that Krewella broke?" says Darlington. "No, we were just a small piece of the puzzle. We gave them the platform and early opportunity to make it big. Those who do are the ones where the music is there. And for Krewella, the music was definitely there."

MONSTERCAT gravitates toward EDM music that's melodic, energetic and catchy. It has to be unique. "If we release a track that has a similar sound to what clubs or the biggest artists in the world are playing, we're slammed with criticism by our fans, because they see Monstercat as a place that builds new artists, so they expect new sounds," says Darlington. And most importantly, it has to affect even after it leaves the dance floor. "When you're in a club or festival atmosphere, it's easy to love a track just because everybody's jumping up and down, hungry for the biggest drop possible—you get sucked into that energy," says Darlington. "But I want our music to be the kind that when you listen to at

home, with your headphones, you still love it and lose yourself in."

After Krewella's success, something changed. No longer just a basement label with a couple of dudes releasing their friends' music, Monstercat had become a launching pad for newly minted stars, and emerging producers all over the world took notice. As thousands of demos started flooding their office, Monstercat chucked old criteria—namely "just cool music," says Darlington—and forged a new blueprint.

"We started looking deeper into the artist to see if they had brand potential as well as musical talent," says Darlington. "Their logo, their art, their image, but the first thing I look at is their name. Monstercat, for example, is a pretty ridiculous name and we know it, but it's fun, short, memorable, and we can brand it. (It was a toss-up between Monstercat or Velocilobster.) There are some artist names out there that I can't see myself ever taking seriously, so how will others? Some are too long, unpronounceable, unmemorable—it's difficult to turn them into a household name. And artists are reluctant to change their names, and that's why we've had to pass on some, because at this point we have to look at the full picture."

Darlington also doesn't care how many fans artists have on social media. In fact, he prefers they not have many "because that means we're truly working with them from Day 1—we're building them as artists, together, as a team," he says.

And therein lies the hallmark of Monstercat. Between the majors and the artist-owned labels, Monstercat has carved out its own space by being there at the ground floor, growing with their artists and taking chances that no other label is. And yeah,

maybe that's because "we don't know any better," laughs Darlington, but that's okay because they have the backing of artists who've become like family—among them, Pegboard Nerds, Project 46, Lets Be Friends and Haywyre, artists we should be on the lookout for in 2014—and a community of fans who've struck up an impregnable loyalty to the label because they were invited on the journey all along.

And being Canadian has a little to do with it, too. "Living in Vancouver, we're disconnected from all the Hollywood agencies that hang out every day and share ideas," says Darlington. "That means we're out of that loop, but it also means we're not doing what everyone else is doing because we don't have any outside influence. We're in our own little bubble, doing what feels right."

What feels right is welcoming all EDM genres. Diversity is what'll give Monstercat its staying power, says Darlington. That and producing EDM that doesn't stray far from its roots. "Electronic music may have evolved over the years, but its core hasn't, in the sense of why an entire generation listens to it. It's music that people can create their own stories and assign their own meaning to, especially songs without lyrics. And you can create memories based on that, and that's very powerful," says Darlington, recalling his favourite memories driving up to the mountains with friends, listening to Gareth Emery's "Citadel." "I think electronic dance music makes you feel in a way that other music can't. And as long as it does that, it'll be around."



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TREVOR GUTHRIE'S HITTING ALL THE RIGHT NOTES

By Rachael D'Amore

It's been a year full of celebration for 40-year-old Canadian musician and vocalist Trevor Guthrie. Between a chart-topping song with the worlds biggest DJ, Armin Van Buuren, embarking on a worldwide tour and a recent Grammy nomination - Guthrie couldn't have his life sit in a better position.

"I mean, c'mon, a Grammy nomination is like the Stanley Cup for us, right?" he laughs.

Although a longtime musician, the former frontman of the 90's boy band soulDecision, confesses that the dance music industry is something he still hasn't quite figured out. Well before *This Is What It Feels Like* developed into the Billboard chart-topping track we know and love, Van Buuren was still selling out shows in Madison Square Gardens - a format Guthrie was new to.

"It's so weird. The song's not really on the radio but everybody is singing every word. I mean, we got nominated for Best Dance Track, but for me, writing the lyrics, I never thought about it as a dance song. But Armin proved me wrong."

The song now has a widespread popularity and sits comfortably on top dance charts in the US, Canada and the UK. But

none of this was something he had ever expected.

"I wasn't even going to send the song to Armin when I was done. I thought that maybe I'd write something different for him because the song was a bit depressing. I just didn't see it as a dance song," says Guthrie. "I wasn't trying to write a hit song, or win a Grammy, I just wanted to write a meaningful song. So the fact that it was categorized as a dance song didn't really matter to me."

But the songs feel-good vibe has a surprisingly tragic inspiration behind it. When Guthrie's good friend and neighbour was diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumor and given a short time to live, he put himself in the family's situation and began to write. Although powerful messages aren't a rarity to dance music, it's not often that dance tracks that have a sad connotation make it to the mainstream charts. He says that him and Van Buuren knew the song "just worked."

"Regardless [of the lyrics] it seems to transcend to everybody in the world. I don't know if I could ever do that again or how it came to that, but I think because I approached it in such a place of honesty and had this message in mind that it just worked," he says.

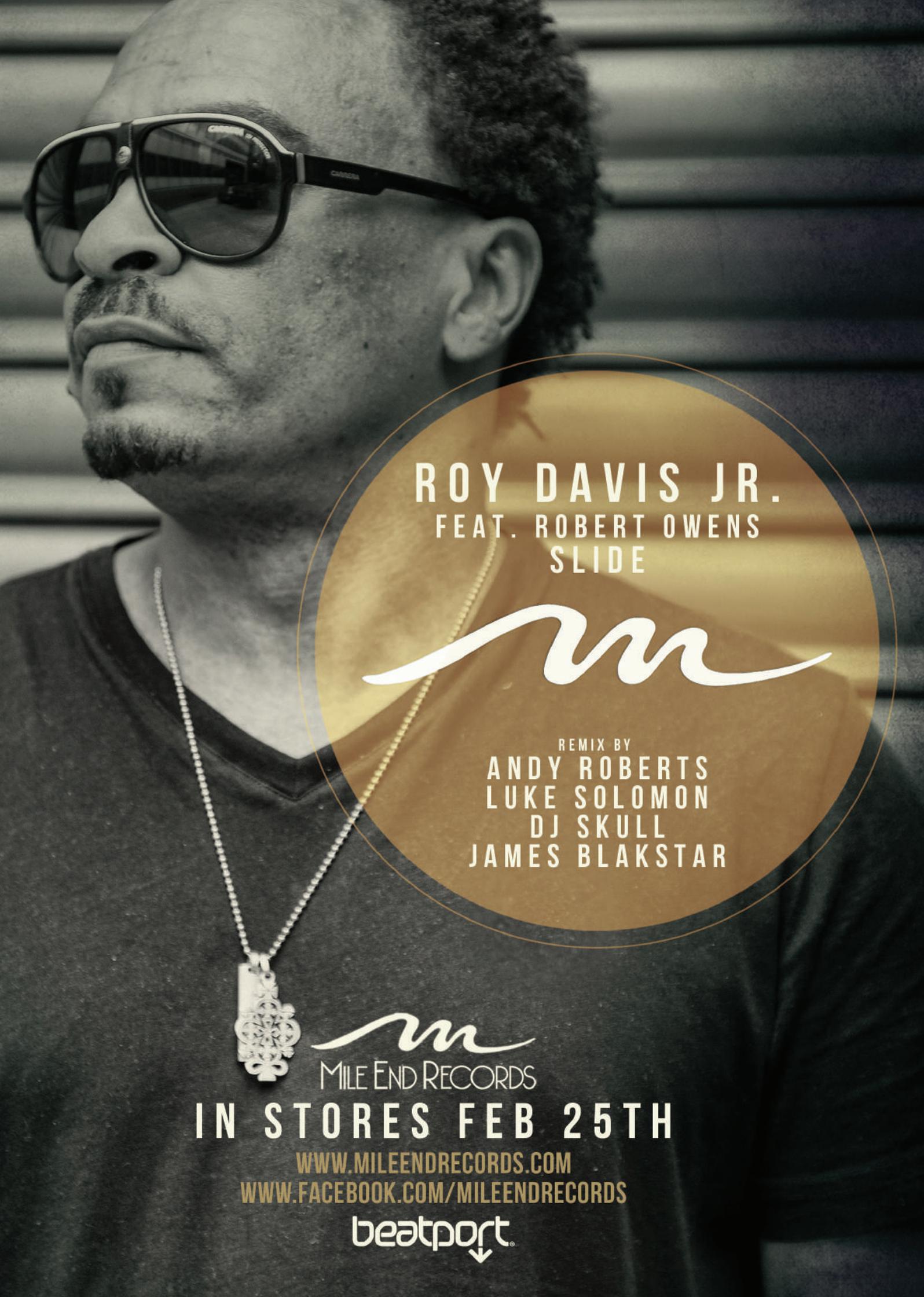
"Better worded: it's the perfect song."

Granted, he is quick to admit that when you have the worlds biggest DJ as a collaborator and supporter, things are bound to go well. The two have become close friends throughout the process and now aren't often seen without one another. But Van Buuren isn't the only DJ Guthrie has worked with. He gave voice to the Marcus Schultz track *Until It's Gone* and says that opportunity was what "got him into the dance music singer gig." Although writing songs for some of dance music's biggest names was never something that he imagined would interest him, he stresses that he has no desire to become "some singer who only sings on other people's tracks."

"I have no interest in collaborating with another artist just to have it run in the song, all while I sit at my house. I'd rather be involved if I'm going to write a song."

And with his boyband days far behind him, Guthrie says he's constantly writing. An acoustic version of *This Is What It Feels Like* was released on Armada and displays Guthrie's extensive musical talents - playing both guitar and piano as he sings in a video. He's also set to release an acoustic song called *Strong Hands*,





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which he's donating to research for war veterans with posttraumatic syndrome. He credits these new opportunities to the success of the collaboration with Van Buuren.

"I'm always going to be putting out songs here or there, but I won't put something out just for the sake of putting something out. So until I have something really worth saying or relevant, I'm not desperate to push something out there," he explains. "Maybe at the end of two or three years I'll have enough for my own album, but in the meantime I have three or four songs with DJ's, and that's definitely a good platform to be standing on."

One thing's for sure – he's still not quite used to playing to crowds of screaming guys and not only screaming teenage girls. He claims that even though the music he's been making has been a lot easier with one person, the change in fan base has taken a little getting used to.

"I laughed about this with Armin. I explained that in a boy band, we performed to a sea of women and now I'm performing to a sea of guys, or mature trance fans. It was a little difficult at first but I'm there to entertain. And when everyone's singing along and having a great time, who care's who it is that's come to see you as long as they're having fun."

And whether or not Guthrie is new to dance music, he recognizes Canada's deeply rooted involvement in the genre. As a Vancouver native, where electronic music has flourished, he says it's become clear to him why a DJ like Armin would enjoy playing in Canada so much.

"We were in Toronto and played this small venue – small in the scope of everywhere else we had played. But it was just as amazing. The genre is so prevalent here, there's no question about that. I mean, just look to Deadmau5."

Although he never snatched up that Grammy, Guthrie holds a prize just

as exciting – a worldwide excursion with Armin Van Buuren on the Armin Only tour. And with two Canadian dates set this year, there has been some speculation of if Trevor will be making an appearance here too. So to set the record straight:

"If we're playing anywhere in Canada next year – I'll be there."





FROM PRO WRESTLER TO SUPERSTAR DJ: BEHIND THE GIMMICK OF ZEMA ION

Written by Kurtis Hooper

A pro wrestling superstar crossed with an EDM DJ; sounds like an identity crisis doesn't it? The dance music world has been filled with controversial success stories regarding media personalities who take the quick route to DJing superstardom. That is not the case for Michael Paris. His day job is performing as Zema Ion in TNA Wrestling, and is a former X Division champion to boot. Inspired at an early age like many others by the electronica likes of Crystal Method and the Prodigy, Michael has constantly juggled two first loves concurrently. Michael Vam Paris and formerly DJ Foreign Objex, a not so subtle nod to the use of foreign weapons by wrestling villains, are two alter ego's that he's performed under.

More recently Paris has had the opportunity to combine both these passions on live television. The wrestling world has constantly been hot on the trails of popular phases in the mainstream; the EDM craze was not left out. TNA created a new gimmick and Michael is spearheading it himself. Packing all the intricacies of an obnoxious EDM performer into one, he's somehow turned one of the least physical professions into a dastardly villainous persona, under the guise of Zema Ion. DJ Mag Canada spoke with Michael to figure out how the wrestling industry caught wind of the dance music boom.

I think when it comes to the wrestling world a lot of entrance themes and music associated with it has for the most part been country/western or hip-hop. Can you explain to me TNA's fascination with EDM all of a sudden?

TNA is trying to do something new. Professional wrestling has always really reflected pop culture, so it was really only a matter of time before somebody tried to take advantage of the recent explosion of EDM. Thankfully TNA gave me the opportunity to be the guy to do that. As far as music goes specifically, we are doing something cool right now with the Bro-mans and me. Their theme song if you listen to it is kind of

like a hardstyle beat, which goes to show how younger and younger producers are getting. The guy that makes our theme songs in TNA is a guy by the name of Dale Oliver. He's produced pretty much everyone's theme songs. Now the guy that made the 'Bromans' theme is actually his son who is like eleven or twelve. His son has been messing around with Ableton and Logic. I was telling Dale at our christmas party "If he's that talented at twelve, it's scary to think how good he'll be when twenty." It's crazy just how much younger and younger people get who are producing and how talented they already are at such young ages.

Lets talk about your own entrance theme, it's not the same one as the Bro-mans right?

I wanted a theme that when you heard the opening you'd know it was me. So I heard this song by Ludacris called Grizzly and basically told Dale to make it sound like that. He did it justice. If you compare the two songs side by side you can definitely hear the influence. What I think is cool is that we recently added my reggaeton air horn to the theme song. We might change it eventually as I learn more and more about producing. I'd like to eventually produce my own entrance theme.

Well that leads me to my next question about producing material to coincide with your Zema Ion character.

I've set some goals for 2014, and one of them is to step up my producing game. I think one of my first projects is going to be creating my own entrance theme.

Do you feel like a wrestling promoter can understand the intricacies of a subculture like dance music?

I don't think they are aware of how big it's really gotten in the states and all over the world. I told them a year ago that I had started DJing and I was learning how to produce and they thought it was cool. I don't think they realized just how big the dance music scene was getting at the time. I actually got lucky. I fell into this role. The Bro-mans won the tag team titles at our pay-per-view 'Bound For Glory' back in October. They



had a celebration on our show Impact Wrestling a week later and in their celebration they had a DJ in the ring with them. Just some random guy; I'm not sure if he's a real DJ or not. After the segment some of the writers noted that they really liked the idea of the Bro-mans with a DJ, although the guy they used didn't really have the look of a DJ. Robbie E [of the Bro-mans], who's a friend of mine suggested "Why don't we use Zema Ion? He's a real DJ".

They kinda just gave me a shot with it. The cool thing is they didn't really give me any direction creatively, they just said "You are the DJ of the Bro-mans, make it work.". I'm a kid who's really into dance music culture, so to pretty much give me free reign on how this character and this thing was going to work was a blessing.

I told them I wasn't going to be a turntablist, not that kind of a DJ. I was going to be an electronic DJ. I even showed them pictures of Echostage. I wanted the lighting to be the same as the lighting we have at Echostage in Washington DC. I explained to them that I need my own DJ booth, and I told them as well that I wanted to use an air horn. I don't think they understood the air horn... Like I see kids that I'm friends with, and their tweets that say certain things like "I'm so sick of DJ's blasting that annoying reggaeton air-horn.". it clicked as soon as I started the DJ thing; "I gotta have that air-horn!"

That's an immediate annoying DJ cliché!

Well then I took it a step further. I'm just going to exploit every single obnoxious thing you

associate with superstar DJ's. The most obvious thing is that I'm not actually DJing on our show; All I'm doing is pressing a button. That's the biggest critique of the EDM world and the DJ's in that world. It's that they are button pushers! I'm DJ but all you see me do is push one button that triggers an air-horn effect. I'll even get tweets from fans that say "You're not even a DJ you're just pressing a button!" and I'm like "Exactly!". That's the 'heat' [crowd reaction]. If I'm doing awesome mixing and record scratching then you wouldn't hate my character.

I've even said things in promos where they've asked me the top 5 things in order to be a superstar DJ in the EDM world. Unfortunately they didn't air it.

In it I listed things like: You need to play the hits. We only play songs off the Beatport top 100. I said, second of all, you've got to roll with girls. They need green hair, neon clothes, and severe daddy issues. I had a bottle of water in my hand and I said "If you're gonna "roll" with DJ Zema, you've gotta have a bottle of water. You've gotta stay hydrated". I think that may have been why they never aired it.

I hate level 5 bottle tossers in the crowd!

Yeah man. And especially a bottle of water. That's like 4 bucks!

As you said before if something is really popular in the mainstream world then TNA will pick up on it. Recently TNA ended a story-line involving a group of bikers called Aces and 8's. This was right at the height of Sons of Anarchy's popularity. Also the Bro-mans original gimmick was in regards to Jersey Shore hitting the mainstream.

It's a matter of time, but you've got to have the right guy too. if they didn't have Robbie E on the roster, I don't think the Jersey shore thing could have been pulled off. It's not something you can do with just anybody. It has to be someone that understands that world and that stereotype you are trying to play. If they asked me tomorrow to be a country music singer I'd fail miserably because I have no idea how to do that. It works out though, because I am a rave kid. It just so happens that I am part of that culture, and it just so happens that EDM has exploded in the United States.

Lets talk about your eventual integration into the DJ world itself.

I grew up in West Virginia which is the complete opposite of EDM culture. It's country music and it's back woods. I emailed a DJ and asked how I could become a DJ at 13 years old. I'm sure back then he told me "Get a Technics 1200, get a Vestax mixer..." and I said "Okay looks like I'm never gonna be a DJ, because I can't afford any of that". So I just kinda forgot about this dream. And obviously in West Virginia Nobody was listening to electronica, so I eventually just listened to hip-hop. That was more of the in thing when I was in high-school. I got into some rock music too. I was into hip-hop until I heard the band "Him" and it shattered my whole world. I really got into gothic rock and EBM music. It was about 2011 a friend of mine from college dropped out of college and moved to New York City to become a DJ, which I thought was insane at the time. I remember hanging out with him in his humble beginnings while he was learning how to DJ. At this point I was so obsessed with making it a professional wrestler. I just looked at my dreams of being a DJ as something I'd just never have the time to accomplish.

I was watching this friend of mine learning how to DJ, dropping out of college, and move to New York City to learn how to DJ. I thought "That's insane!". It was only a matter of time until I saw pictures of him DJing in New York City. He is DJ Subset. He started to make a name for himself in the bass music world. He DJ's a party called Bassment Saturdays at Webster Hall. At that point I had already signed on to my contract at TNA, so I was on tour. I had just moved to Washington DC and when I wasn't on the road I was bored, just sitting at home with a ton of free time. I would sit their going on Facebook looking at all the photos of Subset at Bassment Saturday's and I thought "This looks like the most fun I've ever seen.". It just started clicking. I had a lot of free time, I have some money, and I can actually afford DJ equipment. I thought maybe it was time to give DJing a shot like I always wanted to. I asked him some information, and he gave me some tips. He had went to Dubspot which was a music production school in New York City.

I thought I could teach myself, or go learn from some world class DJ's and have a real step ahead of other bedroom producers and people that are teaching themselves how to DJ. It's much the same way that if you were to go to a wrestling school and learn from Bret Hart for example; by the time that you are done wrestling school, you are going to be much further ahead than somebody who was taught by random indy wrestler number 47 that nobody has ever heard of. Bret hart has been all over the world. He's a world class athlete. So I kinda looked at it the same way. I could teach myself how to DJ, and I could teach myself Ableton using Youtube tutorials, or I could do what my friend did and find a music school that can teach me these things and learn from DJ's that do it for a living, and producers that a critically acclaimed. That's what I did!

As if it were almost meant to be, it turned out there was one literally ten minutes from my apartment. The School was called the Beat Refinery. It was a great experience. I learn from DJ i-Dee, who's a former DMC world champion, DJ Ragz who was a top ten finalist in the DMC online competition in 2013, and DJ Trayze who taught me production. Those three guys deserve all the credit in the world.

As you were mentioning before; In the wrestling world, having a mentor has just as much value as it does in the DJ world. In TNA you have 'agents' from what I understand, Guys who are helping back stage like Tommy Dreamer or Al Snow. Then I look at people in the DJ world such as Martin Garrix or Hardwell who have gotten the rub from guys like Tiesto. How important is this dynamic between both of these worlds?

It's so important man! I think a problem in professional wrestling is that if you aren't in a TNA or WWE ring there aren't a lot of mentors. I'm very blessed I can be in a place where I can pick brains and sit under the learning tree of world class wrestlers. I'm even more blessed I can do that with DJing and producing as well. It's huge! Like i said, it gives you this vast amount of knowledge. It may have taken some of those guys years and years to acquire the knowledge that they have, but the fact that they

are so willing and enthusiastic about passing on knowledge that took them years to understand is a blessing.

I remember DJ ID taught me a baby scratch, I picked it up in about 20 or 30 minutes. I pretty much understood it. He told me "It's kinda bittersweet. It took me 2 to 3 years to get that.". I think that if they see you have potential, in both wrestling and DJing, that's when they really will share their knowledge. It's someone helping Martin Garrix out because he could be a major player, because they want the culture to move forward and continue. They don't want to see it die.

It's the same way in wrestling. People helped me out. I don't even ask. Kurt Angle once watched one of my promo's on television and when I got to the back he started giving me advice on how to improve my promo's. He said "I'm telling you this because I think you have the potential to be a big star some day.". I know I've been saying blessing a lot, but I notice when they go out of their way to give advice. I'm not speaking just about wrestling I'm speaking about both worlds because it's interchangeable. I think if anyone in your industry sees potential in you then they will go out of their way to help you out because they are passionate about it. They want to see it grow move forward. The best way to do that is to help out the younger talent.

What genres of dance music are you currently including in your live sets?

You know what, right now a lot of house music. As far as this resurgence of dance music goes, I started out listening to mostly electro-house stuff. I actually saw Sander Van Doorn at Echostage's opening night. That was when I was like; "This is what I want to do!". I had already been learning DJing for months as well as producing, but I wasn't really sure of the direction I wanted to go in. But I guess I'd say my real introduction back into dance music was electro-house and trance.

I've started to find electro-house a little predictable at times. There's some producers obviously like Ftampa that I find really incredible and impressive, and I love every single release

they have. I guess maybe it's the structure of songs; I find them to be a little repetitive. I've been way more into classic house now though, like Amtrack, one of my favorite producers at the moment. being in Chicago, being surrounded by people that are into Chicago house, like Green Velvet. A goal of mine this year is to produce my own house records.

Well you are now in a city with a lot of house and techno lineage.

Oh I know, Chicago house music! The perfect place for me to be. It's just the start of making a name for myself.

What would Zema Ion himself listen to?

Zema Ion is a little douchey. I could see Zema Ion being into some bro-step.

Moving to Chicago last year, Michael was fully committing, knowing it was a place to learn how to hone his craft and only excel in the midst of one of the most exciting peaks in dance music history. Not just a television personality attempting to cash in on a trend, he has been passionate about dance music and music in general for his entire life. Both paying his dues and learn from the best Michael intends to avoid the stigma of cutting culture, to passionately maintain both of his first loves at the exact same time.





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NEON
STEVE

NEON STEVE - SPOTLIGHT

They say nice guys finish last but that certainly isn't the case for one of Western Canada's most talked about DJ/Producers; Neon Steve. This peer-declared nice guy has jumped ahead of the game and is quickly showing why he's held down top spots on Beatport, Juno, Hype Machine and Soundcloud hot charts, taken top spots in DJ Challenges in addition to being voted locally as the best Electronic producer in 2012.

Comfortable rinsing out everything from Future Bass to Drum and Bass, Neon Steve has developed a reputation for playing high energy sets that blend and twist conventional genres. His production ranges in tempos but he's most at home working on bass music full of low end frequencies.

Neon Steve's production and remix work is widely talked about and has seen him working alongside some of the biggest and best known bass artists in EDM. Remix credits include Datsik & Bare, The Beekeepers, Rico Tubbs, Mooqeee, Herbgringer and Excision & Downlink (x2), the latter of which sat at the top of Beatport's Top 10 Dubstep chart for well over a month and was licensed to a Ministry of Sound Compilation. In addition, Neon Steve's remix of Breach's 'Jack' caught the attention of Mad Decent label figure Diplo and was featured on his BBC 1Xtra show.

Besides remixes, Neon Steve's original releases have been charting themselves. Many of his releases on Bombstrikes, including two vinyl releases, topped Juno charts as best sellers and his original track, Got This Feeling taken from his Feeling EP, was featured in MixMag as Tune of the Month.

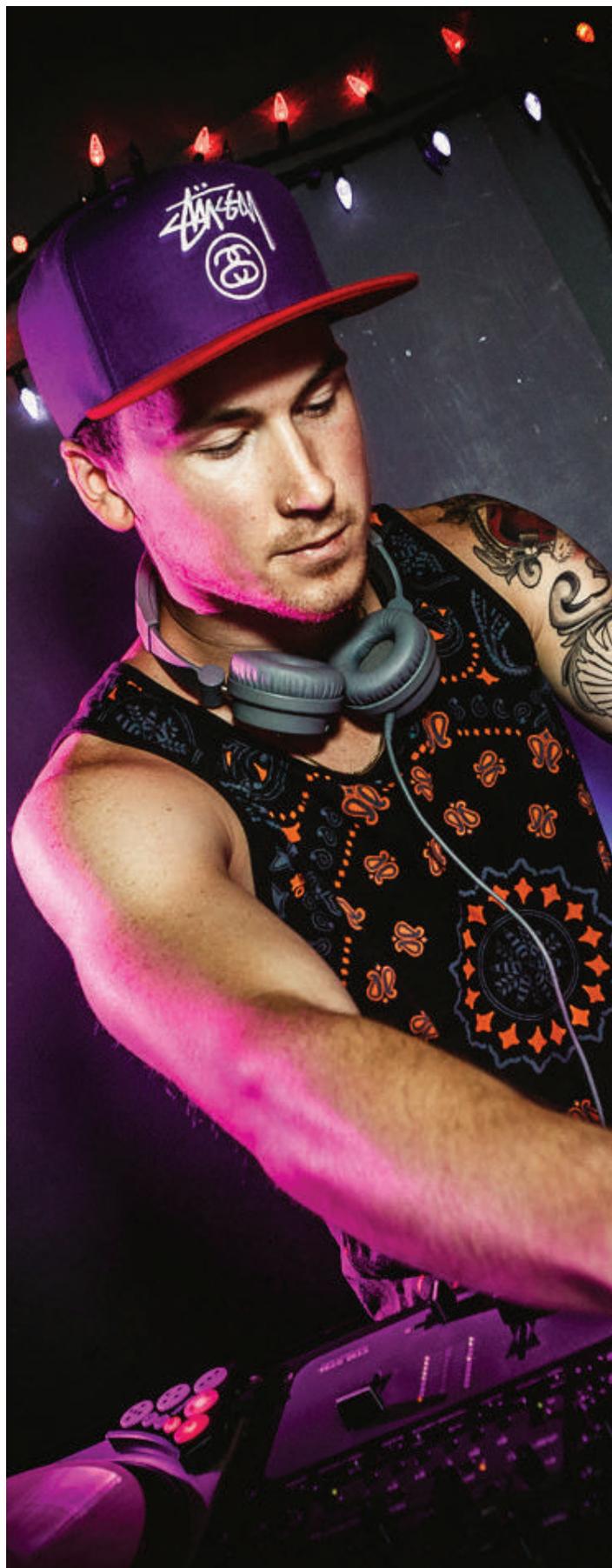
While 2012 saw Neon Steve touring Europe, UK and Canada, 2013 took him down under as he got a chance to rinse out in the outback's of Australia and New Zealand. 2014 will see him continue globetrotting as he looks to touch down in Europe, and USA in addition to a reappearance in Australia. Already well known for his festival sets, including many major Canadian festivals appearances at places like Shambhala (Fractal Forest), Neon Steve continues to show why he's one of Canada's most talked about DJ/Producers.

Never slowing down and always forward thinking, Neon Steve is not an artist you've heard the last of. With 2014 looking to propel him ahead, he is well on his way injecting a bit of brightness amongst some of bass music's brightest stars.

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Victoria native Steve Robertson has a “Neon” Bright future in the world of electronic dance music. Dabbling in various genres such as breaks, dubstep and drum and bass. His good guy attitude and excellent mixing skills make him one DJ/Producer to watch out for this Year. With many dates lined up for 2014 as well as being a favorite at the Nelson BC Shambhala music festival this will be a big year for him. We had to a chance to ask him some questions about Djing/producing, music, and lifestyle.

DJ MAG CANADA: HOW DID YOU COME UP WITH THE NAME “NEON STEVE”?

Robertson: I went through a phase when I was younger where I must have thought I was the Canadian Fresh Prince or something. I was always sporting a ridiculous outfit and the main bit of gear was this neon ski jacket from the 90’s I got from a thrift store. It was horrible. Anyhow, when I got my first gig the promoter asked what my “handle” was and I couldn’t think of one so he said “well how about for now we’ll just put Neon Steve for now?”

That way everyone in town will know who we’re talking about”... Apparently it stuck, although thankfully the jacket did not. I retired it years ago.

DJ MAG CANADA: WHAT KIND OF MUSIC DID YOU LISTEN TO GROWING UP IN VICTORIA B.C?

Robertson: My dad has a classic rock band (Mr Completely .. Check em out!) so he showed me all the good stuff from a young age, and then as I got into high school I started exploring the world of hip hop. It wasn’t until after high school that I saw a turntable for the first time though.

DJ MAG CANADA: WHAT DREW YOU TOWARDS PRODUCING ELECTRONIC MUSIC AND DJING?

Robertson: My best bud talked me into going to a couple raves during grad summer and it sparked my interest, and then I went to Shambhala Music Festival the next summer and that was what really got me.

DJ MAG CANADA: DID THE DJING OR PRODUCING COME FIRST?

Robertson: DJing came first but it wasn’t long after that I got into producing. It was a few years after that that I started taking it more serious though.

DJ MAG CANADA: WHO ARE YOUR BIGGEST INFLUENCES?

Robertson: That’s a tough one... There are so many. On a personal level, I’d say Mat the Alien and The Smalltown DJ’s, I’ve always loved what they do and how they go about doing it. They are super talented and super solid people at the end of the day, which is really inspiring. On a strictly musical level, I’d say Diplo, The Stanton Warriors, and A Skillz all heavily influence my musical style. They all just do their own thing and don’t worry about trends, which in turn kind of makes them trendsetters.

I’m a huge fan of that.

DJ MAG CANADA: YOUR FAVORITE CANADIAN PRODUCER?

Robertson: Grandtheft. He’s actually another big influence for me. He’s been killing it within Canada for years and only just getting the international recognition he deserves now.

DJ MAG CANADA: YOU HAVE A FAIR AMOUNT OF SHOWS

LAST MONTH IN FEBRUARY. ANNOUNCING ANYMORE OR PLANNING ON SPRING/ SUMMER TOUR?

Robertson: Yes, February was a solid month for me. I toured BC and Alberta and also made it down to Costa Rica for the Envision Festival. I’m in Europe for all of March on tour and then a few months off after this before the Canadian Festival circuit starts. After summer it’s off to the States for a few shows and then finishing the year off with another Australian tour.

DJ MAG CANADA: DESCRIBE YOUR FAVORITE SHAMBALA EXPERIENCE?

Robertson: Does every minute of every year there count? haha... If I had to choose it probably would have been this past year during my set in the Fractal Forest. The Vancouver island presence was strong! There must have been hundreds of familiar faces in the crowd and a ton of them rocking really funny signs. At one point I stopped and looked up and got a little teary eyed haha, it was pretty special. (Shouts the the “Steon Neve” and “DJ Panty Whisper” signs)

DJ MAG CANADA: WHATS YOUR CREATIVE PROCESS WHEN YOU PRODUCE OR REMIX A SONG?

Robertson: I’m super random in the studio... Most of the time I start with the drums and a hook, or a sample, but rarely does it come out sounding like my original vision. I try not to force anything anymore either. If it’s not happening that day I’ll just start something completely different and come back to it another time.

DJ MAG CANADA: YOUR FAVORITE CLUB TO PLAY AT IN YOUR HOMETOWN OF

VICTORIA B.C?

Robertson: Club 9one9 when it's sold out, or Hush because it's so vibey and intimate in there.

DJ MAG CANADA: DO YOU FEEL THE ELECTRONIC SCENE IS GROWING IN CANADA?

Robertson: Most definitely.

New festivals are popping up everywhere and electronic music is actually starting to get some radio play in Canada, which is about time! It's been the norm in the UK and Europe for years.

DJ MAG CANADA: FAVORITE BPM TO PLAY?

Robertson: Impossible to choose! Anything from 80-180 is fair game for me.

DJ MAG CANADA: DO YOU PREFER PLAYING IN NIGHTCLUBS OR OUTDOOR VENUES?

Robertson: I think nightclubs for sure, unless it's a solid festival with the right people running the show.

DJ MAG CANADA: ANY PLANS AN AN EP IN 2014?

Robertson: Yes! There's an EP currently in the works with The Smalltown DJ's and I've also started a new series called the "Free'on Steve' series where I plan to give away 14 songs over the course of 2014. So essentially a free album by the end of the year if all goes as planned.

DJ MAG CANADA: HOW HAS BEING BORN ON VANCOUVER ISLAND INFLUENCED YOUR SOUND?

Robertson: The island is seriously peppered with amazing musicians! And as far as electronic goes, everyone is really accepting and forward thinking so it's helped me to become as diverse as I am. Or at least as I like to think I am.

DJ MAG CANADA: WHERE DO YOU THINK THE FUTURE OF BASS MUSIC IS GOING?

Robertson: I try not to think about that, it could completely burn itself out within the year, or it could thrive and take over the world. I guess only time will tell...

DJ MAG CANADA: WHEN YOUR NOT ON THE ROAD OR PRODUCING WHAT OCCUPIES YOUR TIME?

Robertson: I'm a bit of a health freak so most of my spare time is spent preparing or researching health foods or exercising. This job involves a lot of sitting so I try to balance it out as best as possible by being active. The island is peppered with amazing trails and hikes which makes it really easy too!

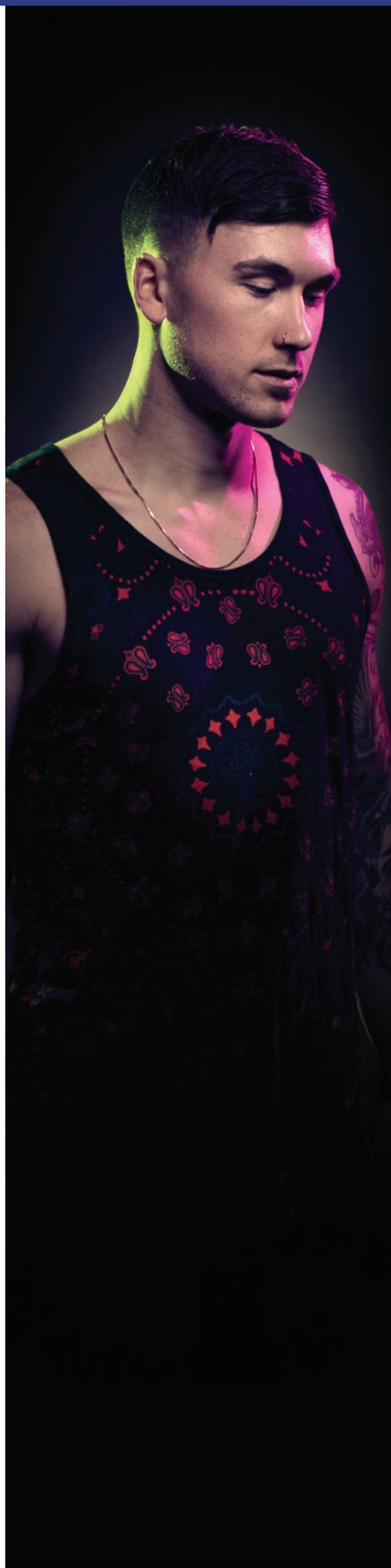
DJ MAG CANADA: WHAT NEON COLOR BEST DESCRIBE YOU AS AN ARTIST?***

Robertson: ha! uh oh... Id have to say green. Not sure why, but it just feels right.

DJ MAG CANADA: ANYTHING ELSE YOU'D LIKE TO ADD?

Robertson: I guess just a thank you to anyone and everyone who has ever supported my music over the years. I wake up everyday feeling blessed to have the opportunity to chase my dreams for a living.

by Rob Craig



DJ INSURANCE: SPIN SAFE

Ontario based brokerage Erb and Erb Insurance Brokers Ltd. offers a national and exclusive DJ Insurance Program, endorsed and recommended by industry leader, the CDJA. We talked with Don Wales, Commercial Insurance Expert (and sometimes DJ), to find out what you need to know about DJ insurance.

DJ MAG.ca: Why do DJs need this coverage? Aren't they covered by the hosting venue?

DW: Absolutely not. A venue's insurance policy will not cover any contracted businesses. DJs, hosts, photographers, professional entertainers and the like all need to carry their own insurance for their business. Another common misconception that DJs have is that their gear would be covered by their personal property insurance. This is almost certainly not the case, the coverage is often limited to claims that happen while the property is at their home, if at all.

DJ MAG.ca: What does the DJ Insurance Program cover?

DW: What doesn't it cover is what you should ask! Your liability, your gear at your place of business, your gear in transit to gigs, and your gear at the gig itself. Included in your liability coverage is personal injury, libel, and slander coverage. There's a ton of extras too!

DJ MAG.ca: Do you have an example of a DJ insurance claim that you've dealt with?

DW: A client of mine had \$8000 worth of gear stolen from his trailer, which was parked in his driveway on a Friday night. He called me Saturday morning when he realised what had happened, and filed a police report. Because this client had a list of equipment on his policy, his \$8000 loss was covered, and paid out under his "Miscellaneous Property Floater" coverage. A simple phone call to me, his police report information, and a week later he had his claim cheque in hand for \$7950. This loss cost him a total of \$50 for his deductible. What's even better is if he had any gigs booked during the week of his claim settlement, his policy would have provided the rental gear necessary to complete his work, up to \$1000.

DJ MAG.ca: How much does DJ Insurance cost?

DW: It's hard to give you a set price, because the price varies with the size of your business among other factors. To give you an estimate, if you're a member of the CDJA you'll get access to exclusive rates, and policies start at \$105 per year (and go up from there). If you're riding solo, and not a member of the CDJA, a basic policy starts at \$750 per year.

DJ MAG.ca: How do DJs find out more information about this program?

DW: This program is exclusively offered through myself at Erb and Erb Insurance Brokers Ltd. Our office is located out of Kitchener, Ontario, however I write these policies across Canada. It's as easy as calling me, or sending me an email.



DON WALES, DJ INSURANCE EXPERT

Don has worked in the insurance industry for over 14 years, and has spent 15 years in the event industry as a DJ for weddings, clubs, and special events. His DJ Insurance Program is endorsed and recommended by the Canadian Disc Jockey Association. His client service is unmatched and his experience in the DJ & event industry makes him second to none. Call or email Don today to discuss his exclusive DJ Insurance Package!

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LUIGI ROCCA SHE feat. IAMAlina
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TITUS1 - CALGARY, ALBERTA - SPOTLIGHT

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Tito Rodriguez or better known as TITUS1 is an artist that has a deep love for music. His hard hitting tracks and DJ style make him a Canadian producer to watch out for in the future. Having been producing and Djing for just over ten years, he's had a chance to open up for some of the biggest names in electronic music. You can find him in Calgary frequenting the Roadhouse or the Marquee nightclubs. We had to a chance to find out a little more about him, his roots, and love for music.

YOUR ORIGINALLY FROM SANTIAGO CHILE, WHEN DID YOU IMMIGRATE TO CALGARY AB CANADA?

I initially came to Regina and then to Vancouver, officially in Calgary around 2002 or so, after graduating from BCIT and getting a job offer in Calgary. But definitely love this city. Wouldn't call any other place home.

YOU GREW UP LOVING 80'S ELECTRONIC MUSIC SUCH AS DEPECHE MODE AND NEW ORDER, HOW DOES THIS LOVE INFLUENCE YOUR SOUND TODAY?

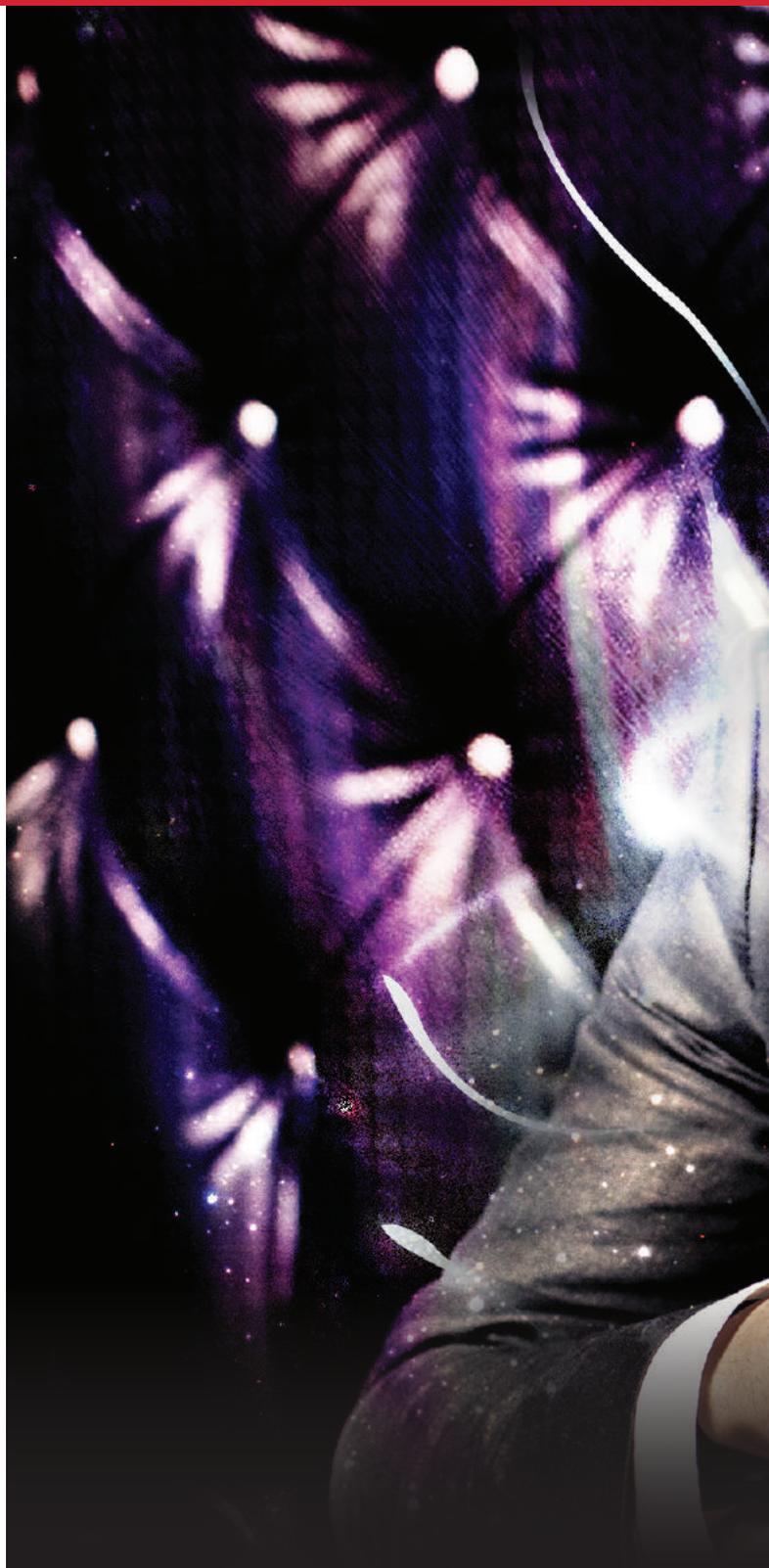
I still love them without a doubt and residual groups out there influenced by them to in the present day. Definitely influences the way I choose my sounds and design them, definitely the melodic choices I make when producing my tunes.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR HARD HITTING TRACK ICARUS, WHAT WAS THE CREATIVE PROCESS BEHIND THIS TRACK.

Hahah, At the time I was listening to a lot of bingo players, and some old school stuff like Todd Terry and some old Laidback Luke, got the influence of the swing from them to build the groove a bit choppy and the melodic break definitely from one of those long nights at the computer, and a lot of tea. There were actually 4 other versions of this tune, before finally liking the one I did to release.

WHO ARE YOUR BIGGEST INFLUENCES TODAY?

I definitely have growing influences from all over the industry for sure, and the art form from a divergent group of artists but today, I would say I've been listening to a lot of old school Kevin Souderson, older Steve



Angello, Axwell, and without a doubt guys like Nari & school stuff; Habstrakt, Disclosure, and Tchami.

YOUR FAVORITE CANADIAN PRODUCER?

I would have to say Deadmau5's marketing, and production. Lazy Rich or Felix Cartel.

WHO ARE YOUR FAVORITE UNDERGROUND CALGARY?

Hmmm, my fav producers from Calgary are def Mark In Taktics, all definitely guys to watch out for in the future.



Milani and some of the newer

on wise, would have to be either

AND PRODUCERS/DJS IN

instinct, DJ Villa, Travis Lydiatt,

DO YOU PLAN ON RELEASING A FULL LENGTH EP ANYTIME SOON?

Yes working on a big one this year, with collabs with JD Davis (from David Guetta's World is Mine), house legend Crystal Waters, and a few other big vocalists and other producers. Its going to showcase a variation of styles from Big Room to Deep House and such.

TELL US ABOUT PLAYING YOUR FIRST RAVE STYLE EVENT "CHILDREN OF ENERGY"

Hahaha. hilarious party for sure. First off, it took place in a barn just outside of white rock, but man it was a crazy time for sure. My close friends organized it and booked me aside from a few others to play at it. at the time i was playing hard house, and a bit of speed garage. about 200 or so people inside of a musky old barn that help 80 max. I

was nervous but felt I did an alright job. but sometimes the gigs with character are the most memorable ones, especially with your best friends at your side.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR FAVORITE FESTIVAL TO PLAY THUS FAR?

Hands down - San Francisco Love Parade in 2008. and second, would have to have been Apex Project in Chiliwack a few years back.

DO YOU PREFER PLAYING IN NIGHT CLUBS OR FESTIVAL VENUES?

Night clubs for the intimacy most of the time. Festivals are cool because of the talent pool you get to meet in the shorter amount of time.

WHAT STYLE OF ELECTRONIC MUSIC DO YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF?

Anything big, chunky and bouncy, and has catchy breaks with or without vocals.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE TRACK AT THE MOMENT?

I definitely have one in every genre. But overall, definitely been listen on repeat, Shadowchild's Friday.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE NON EDM TRACK AT THE MOMENT?

Lorde's Tennis Court, or anything by Marina and the Diamonds.

DO YOU PREFER VINYL TO CDJS?

I used to be a huge purist back in the day and prolonged going on CDS. But honestly I think whatever gives you more time to be more creative when mixing and mashing things up live is definitely what its about. The whole argument on fidelity is kinda funny, like arguing VHS

and DVDS. Sure one has more character, but quality, definitely not, haha.

HOW DO YOU FEEL THE ELECTRONIC MUSIC SCENE IN CALGARY HAS GROWN SINCE YOU ARRIVED?

In a huge way, we've lost a few elements for sure, but I mean that always comes with grow, and the mainstream coinciding its strides with our local growth has been an interesting thing to watch. outside of that, even the internets affect on how educated some of the local kids are and the audience has made it more interesting and fun being a DJ.

WHO IS ONE ARTIST THAT YOU WOULD LOVE TO TEAM UP WITH AND CREATE A SONG WITH?

Dream collab would be with mostly vocalists like Dave Gahan, Matthew Koma, or Steve Edwards.

HOW HAVE YOU SEEN THE ELECTRONIC INDUSTRY CHANGE IN CALGARY SINCE YOU MADE IT YOUR SECOND HOME?

The amount of demand for it in the mainstream clubs, and the adoption of it in a general public has definitely pushed circuit DJs to educate themselves further or push the envelope in being creative with mashups.

WHAT'S DOES THE FUTURE HAVE IN STORE FOR TITUS1?

Just more noise, and more time to grow as an artist, this year I will try to take more risks for more growth for sure! And represent Calgary as best as I can! :)

By Rob Craig



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JON STEBBE - SPOTLIGHT - WINNIPEG

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JNL (Jon'Nathon Lawrence Stebbe) started DJing in 1997 and took his first dj booking from Mike Myers who at that time was booking nights at a local club in downtown Winnipeg called the Horseshoe Cabaret. JNL's ability to network opened doors to other events and eventually after some time found himself producing music . JNL's passion for music quickly developed and found Canadian Icon Richie Hawtin to be very inspiring & helped fuel the need to produce tracks and by 2002 he was signed to Balanced Records & started playing original material out at events around the city. With well over a decade of production and DJing Jon aka JNL has made it very clear that he's in for the long haul and shows no signs of slowing down as we head into 2014 with more production/Live PA, DJing and all kinds of film work.

JON YOU'RE A DJ AND MUSIC PRODUCER, IN 2002 YOU RELEASED YOUR FIRST TRACK "SEXY MUSIQUE" UNDER THE WINNIPEG LABEL BALANCED RECORDS. WHAT WAS THE JUMP FROM DJ'ING TO STUDIO PRODUCTION LIKE FOR YOU AND WHAT WAS IT THAT GOT YOU INTERESTED IN PRODUCING?

Ya, I don't know if you could tell right away that Hawtin was a huge influence for me, but let's not forget Daft Punk here. Homework was huge for me, but truth be told, the minute I heard Thomas Bangalters' remix of Vertigo, I was SOLD on making this music. There's something so balsy and irreverent about riding a hypnotic loop for a whole track. I think that's party why I put my name as JNL_CInemafunk a lot. I have embarrassing memories of myself using that funny loop feature on my mom's CD player to find ½ bar loops on her albums and daydreaming of scenes playing out in my head. From then on, I knew I had to break into DJ'ing so I could learn everything there was to know about the music in order to produce it myself.

IN 2005 YOU STARTED DOING LIVE P.A. SHOWS AS A SOLO ARTIST "JNL" AND AS "GET FAMOUS!" WITH YOUR CO PRODUCER AARON IVES, TELL ME MORE ABOUT THE TWO AND PERFORMING TOGETHER. HOW DO YOU TWO PLAY OFF EACH OTHER DURING A LIVE P.A. AND THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO ACTS JNL VS. GET FAMOUS!?

Ah yes. Get Famous!. To shed some light, that's an ongoing collaboration with one of my best friends. I rotate between working on Get Famous! projects with him, and then my own solo (JNL) stuff.

Aaron is an amazingly talented musician, who can also seriously rip it up on guitar. I think I have a lot of old rock influences hiding in me 'cause I can't help myself to stop and smirk when a guitarist [plays] a wicked solo. When we started doing live shows we would play a straight hour or more like a DJ would, weaving in and out of our tracks and never stopping. He'd be singing and playing all his parts live while I was triggering everything else. We finally made the switch to playing more like a traditional band now. I'm away from the computer, playing the keytar live and doing some vocoder and extra bits while Aaron does his thing. Presentation is key. We didn't feel like people understood what was happening on stage and we didn't want to look like "a DJ and a guitarist" anymore.

YOU HAVE PLAYED WINNIPEG SHOWS FOR YEARS NOW, WHAT HAVE BEEN SOME OF THE CITY'S BEST NIGHTS FOR YOU TO PLAY AND WHY?

I don't play out locally as much as I maybe should lately, and I'm totally guilty of looking back at those "underground" years more fondly than some of the current nights. Even about 3-4 years ago, we had a thriving new version of the scene here. A shout out here has to go to Mike B for the effort he put in to this city. And of course, getting to travel and meet people that are fanatically into your stuff is obviously the winner here, pants down.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE MORE DJING OR PLAYING YOUR OWN MATERIAL LIVE, WHAT WOULD YOU SAY ARE THE HIGHLIGHTS OF BOTH FOR YOU?

I honestly don't know which I prefer. I love that I can make new tracks in the moment, or play on-the-fly-edits of my own material or even someone else's. But, there's still something so seductive about reaching for a random song and having some of that uncertainty when you're just DJ'ing. Plus, showing up with USB stick is nice and quick. I'm DJ'ing more and more again and find it soul-serving. But I definitely hate being called a DJ. Everyone's a DJ now. I started all this so I could MAKE music.

TELL US YOUR THOUGHTS ON ANALOG VS DIGITAL , DO YOU THINK ONE THING IS BETTER THAN THE OTHER?

Aside from some of the select pieces of hardware I have and will never part with, I'm not an audio snob. I like grit, grime, warmth and chaos, but honestly, do our listeners? Digital is simply more convenient. I just want to get \$h*t done and made. It's like the Film vs Digital film debate. I use both. Use whatever you want. Just put some effort into it and make it count.

WHAT RELEASES ARE YOU WORKING ON RIGHT NOW, AND DO YOU HAVE ANY OTHER PROJECTS IN THE WORKS?

I have an embarrassingly large backlog right now. A promise was made to my fans that an official JNL album would be released, and that's what's about to happen in the next wee little bit. Also, Aaron and I made the same promise for Get Famous! material. We actually sat down and forced ourselves to come up with 5 new tracks in about a month, and they're some of the best we've ever done. We're finishing up the vocals on it soon and we'll get that out there. Aside from that, I'm doing JNL stuff with some amazing vocalists locally, one in the UK, and I'm producing all the audio/mixing for another feature film. There's a lot more I could list, but these are the ones I'm most pumped about. 2014 is going to be the busiest year so far.

YOU HAVE BEEN PLAYING THE MANITOBA ELECTRONIC MUSIC EXHIBITION FOR A FEW YEARS NOW , HOW HAS THAT EXPERIENCE BEEN FOR YOU , WHAT ARE SOME HIGHLIGHTS PLAYING SUCH A HUGE EVENT IN WINNIPEG?

Ya, I've played the cube a few times during the afternoon. I love playing outdoors when people are hot, sweaty and minimally dressed. I missed last years' festival though. I had an unforgettable show in L.A. with "Cherokee". Another shout out goes to the guys from "Ride The Universe" here, I literally met them for the first time the day after, and they nursed me out of the worst 24 hour hangover. I owe them all a trip to Winnipeg.



ADAM HANNIBAL / DJ KASM

WINNIPEG, MB

Winnipeg has been a ever evolving city and over the years the city has seen its fair share of talent come and go but a few have stuck around to keep things moving forward. Adam Hannibal has been a key individual in the city's electronic music scene for almost two decades.

Adam started DJing in '95 and took his first booking for a new years eve event at a local Osborne Village club called Die Machine and quickly established himself as a chill, trip hop and ambient dub DJ. He eventually incorporated drum n bass and would be a fixture at parties thrown by Symptom Tech, Frostbite and other production groups. In 1999, he started a radio show with Rob Coles called Quadrafunk at

CKUW just prior to the radio station hitting the FM band. Now in its 15th year, Quadrafunk is the longest running DJ mixed show in Winnipeg and has featured a legacy of many great hosts along with the way. Adam was also working with promoting a club show with RCola called Air Massive at the Ramada Hotel.

In 2001, he helped co-found Balanced Records, a Winnipeg based electronic music label. Once Adam started traveling to other countries such as France, USA, Germany, Amsterdam, Japan and Denmark absorbing the international culture, the growth of the label started to follow. Balanced hosted prominent showcases abroad as well as Juno events across Canada. All the while, the label maintained a connection to the city's finest talent signing artists and getting releases out to the world.

ADAM, YOU'RE ONE OF THE ORIGINAL CLASSICS STILL DOING YOUR THING AND CONTRIBUTING TO THE GROWTH AND STRUCTURE OF THE ELECTRONIC MUSIC CULTURE OF WINNIPEG, TELL ME WHAT THAT WAS LIKE IN THE MID 90'S AND THE CHANGES YOU HAVE SEEN OVER THE YEARS.

Well the scene has come a long way over the past 20 years. It was definitely more marginalized and underground back then. Most of the parties were in warehouses and studio spaces exclusively, very few events took place in clubs until the late 90s. Hand to hand flyers and info lines were the main sources of info to find out where parties were at. We also had a healthy crop of record stores – Wax Museum, Nyce, House of Coldcuts, Lo Fi Grit, Alchemy,



Into the Music and others that helped feed the local electronic music scene. I can't emphasize enough how important they were to promoting shows and music back then. It's also worth mentioning that Impulse and Ballistic were the real innovators in the late 80s that opened my ears up to the first stages of electronic music. In the mid 90s, it was pretty much a given that you could find most DJs in Winnipeg crossing through the shops on days that orders came in salivating at the newest arrivals. Parties were promoted through the shops, radio shows and club nights, much more word of mouth and organically than they are now.

In some ways, the scene was tighter and closer as you'd have crews working together and cross promoting a lot. I remember Cloud 9 (Ramada) had hip hop on Wednesdays, Drum n Bass on Thursdays and House on Saturdays at Lustre, but there was definite crossover at most nights. We've come full circle now where that's happening again but for awhile it seemed like the scene really splintered based on genres. We're headed in a healthy direction now with a lot of solid venues, promoters and emerging producers.

TELL ME ABOUT BALANCED RECORDS? YOU STARTED THE LABEL IN 2001 WITH ANOTHER LOCAL DJ LUIS CARDONA AKA DUENDE 6/SOLIDAZE AS WELL AS CHRIS ROBINSON (BILLY ROCKWELL). YOUR FIRST RELEASE WAS NORTHERN FACTION IN 2001. EVENTUALLY YOU STARTED SIGNING PEOPLE OUTSIDE OF WINNIPEG TO THE LABEL AND HAVE RELEASES WITH NORDIC TRAX'S LUKE MCKEEHAN



FROM VANCOUVER, GAVING FROOME OUT OF VANCOUVER , JOE SILVA WINNIPEG AND JON LEMMON CALIFORNIA, WHO AM ELSE AM I MISSING !! HOW WAS THAT EXPERIENCE?

Those artists were some of the first internationally acclaimed producers we worked with. Luke licensed one of Solidaze's tracks on a downtempo album and we ended up doing the same with Gavin for Northern Faction 3. Since then, we've linked with many dub/reggae/bass producers like Dubmatix, Richie Phoe, Process Rebel, 7ft Sound System, Ammoye, Citizen Sound, Subatomic Soundsystem, Big Toe's Hi Fi, Earlyworm and many others. Seed Organization is now front and centre with the label and has formed a sublabel called Green House, which focuses on future reggae and rootstep styles.

We've also embraced the creative

genius from Rise Ashen, someone we helped bring here in 2004 after stumbling on his releases at CKUW. He's definitely one of our staple artists and has released the most tracks on our label from his 8 albums and many remixes. He really captures the spectrum of sounds we try to represent mixing world, urban and electronic across the board. He's also helped link us to some other sharp producers like Stephane Lefrancois (London), Miguel Graca (Montreal) and Trevor Walker (Ottawa).

CAN YOU TELL ME MORE ABOUT SOME KEY POINTS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF BALANCED RECORDS YOU'RE PROUD OF ?

Sure, things really came together for us when we started securing solid distribution. We've been with Groove since 2005 ever since I met with them at Midem (France) and

they've helped carry our releases across NA and Europe. We kind of operated differently than a lot of labels as we started off as CD and digital until around 2008 when we started releasing vinyl as well.

On a national level, we've been able to host and perform at a number of Juno showcases in Vancouver (2009), Ottawa (2012) and Winnipeg (2005/2014). In 2011 we put together a showcase for NXNE in Toronto when it hit us that we had more artists based in Toronto than Winnipeg. It was great to get everyone together on one bill as many of them hadn't played together before. Internationally, we co-hosted a showcase with Ninja Tune and other labels in France that featured Solidaze when his release with Sarah Michaelson had just come out. We also hit up Berlin to showcase DJ Brace's Juno winnieg album Nostomania as part of the Popkomm conference.

We've also had some success along the years with licensing many of our tracks to film/TV for shows like Prison Break, Alias, Seed, Less Than Kind, LA Complex, etc. which I think more than anything speaks to the shift in mainstream circles to including electronic sounds more in soundtracks.

YOU'VE TRAVELED TO CHICAGO AND ALL OVER EUROPE, HOW DOES YOUR TRAVEL TIE INTO YOU AS A DJ AND PRODUCER AND LABEL MANAGER?

It's funny but I generally separate the two a bit when I travel to conferences. I usually focus first on promoting our releases to a greater network and look for artists and labels we can collaborate with. Some of the conferences are just rammed with solid shows and

delegates that my mission is clear and I just hyperfocus on getting the music in people's hands. Since we've touched on so many styles over the years, I try to be selective in the type of music I pass on and match it to the person I'm meeting with. I've managed to play at some of our showcases in France and Greece, but that was more of an after thought than the main goal.

YOU'RE ALSO ONE OF THE ARTISTIC DIRECTORS FOR THE MANITOBA ELECTRONIC MUSIC EXHIBITION (MEME). TELL ME MORE ABOUT THAT ROLE AND HOW YOU HAVE MANAGED TO TIE EVERYTHING TOGETHER WITH BALANCED AND THE JUNO'S?

Yeah it's been great to see MEME grow over the last 5 years and I've been really excited to be a part of it. Nathan Zahn (festival director) asked me to join early on to help program some of the acts and with some of the organizational side of things. The festival has grown into a life of its own between the quality international names and world class venues in Winnipeg like the Cube, WAG, Manitoba Museum and Pantages. It's also helped to be a platform to promote some of our artists on Balanced and as the label's shifted to doing less parties and more releases, MEME has been my main focus for events.

I'd played at a number of shows that Nathan's crew Symptom Tech put on over the years and in 2005 we booked Nathan to play at our Juno showcase. This was before the awards had an electronic category but I think it was out of a recognition that we had our pulse on a scene in Winnipeg that was worth showcasing. It's great to see 9 years later that there's an

electronic category and that one of the nominees, Noah Pred, played the first MEME.

WHO ARE SOME OF YOUR FAVORITE MUSICAL INFLUENCES?

I'm always chasing what seems to be the most future oriented tracks of the day. Right now DJ Rum and most of the releases on 2nd Drop are really grabbing me. They cross between dub techno, bass music and garage. I'm also a big into the 'ancestral soul' sound of Boddhi Satva and producers like Osunlade, who straddle deep ancestral afro rhythms with clean techy production. Dub and reggae are styles that I never tire of either and that's one area that Canadian producers have really stepped up. I'm proud that Balanced has worked with many of these innovators in our releases with Dubmatix, Earlyw~rm and Seed Organization's Green House tracks.

TELL ME MORE ABOUT YOUR NEW PROJECT WITH THE UKRAINIAN FOLK GROUP PARIS TO KYIV?

That's one of the projects I'm most excited about releasing. It's been in the works since 2009 when I met with the group's founder Alexis Kochan at MIDEM in France. Paris to Kyiv have a rich history in the Ukrainian and world music scene so we're really bridging two worlds on the project. I passed on the stems from their Fragmenti release to some of our artists and the result continues to impress me and Alexis. There's remixes from Joe Silva, Miguel Graca, J57, Rise Ashen, Solidaze, Ken Gregory, Cayetano, A.P. and myself. Watch this space over the next few months as it's close to finally launching!

By Rick Logic



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Toronto’s dance music scene is populated by an incredibly lengthy list of techno, minimal and experimental artists; Joe Ghost turns the tables on a cluttered dance community by producing material you’d find straight off a Dutch electro-house record. It’s no wonder he’s rubbed shoulders with the likes of Hardwell and Tiesto all whilst releasing some huge singles to boot. Recently Joe has found solace in ‘Crank’, released on Musical Freedom Records. You might be familiar with last years stand out release ‘Are You Ready’ which received extensive play time by Hardwell after dropping on Revealed Recordings. While maintaining an LA residency and playing some of North America’s largest music festivals including BPM and Toltec, Joe consistently headlines more intimate settings in some of Toronto’s premier nightclubs including Maison Mercer, The Guvernment and Uniun. Joe’s most defining sensibility is his strive for perfectionism and professionalism, which can be heard in each one of his release, and every moment of his live performances.

FIRST THINGS FIRST, HOW WAS BPM FESTIVAL

I had an amazing time at the BPM Festival! It was an honour to be a part of such an amazing line-up of talented DJs. It’s a festival that I have always admired, and to be chosen as one of the acts this year really meant a lot to me!

WHAT ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE PLAYING BRRRRR WINTER MUSIC FESTIVAL?

Brrrr music festival is such a unique concept. It is truly a celebration of being Canadian! Playing for a sea of parkas and toques was hysterical! Luckily the weather was in our favor. The light snowfall paired with the production and lights created an amazing atmosphere. Most importantly, the crowd was nuts! I played a slot of my new tracks and they were ready for them!

WHAT DID YOU DO TO KEEP WARM IN THE COLD OUTDOORS AS OPPOSED TO BEING IN A TOASTY NIGHTCLUB SUCH AS UNIUN OR MAISON MERCER?

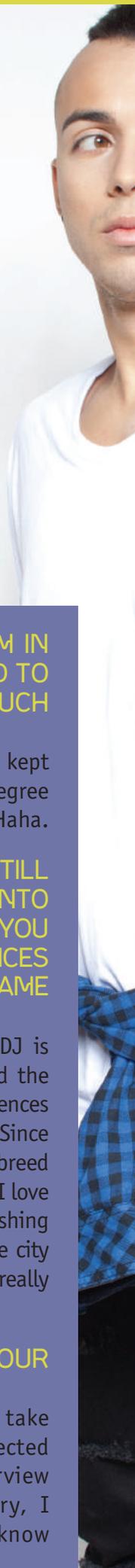
Honestly the energy from the crowd kept everything warm! We were partying in -5 degree weather , but it felt like a summer festival!! Haha.

AS AN INTERNATIONAL ACT YOU STILL MAINTAIN RESIDENCIES IN TORONTO AND THE IMMEDIATE AREA. HOW DO YOU JUGGLE THIS AND YOUR PERFORMANCES OUTSIDE OF THE COUNTRY AT THE SAME TIME?

One of the greatest things about being a DJ is having the ability to play for crowds around the world, and experiencing first hand the differences and similarities in a country’s musical culture. Since Toronto is so culturally diverse, I feel that we breed some of the most versatile DJs in the world. I love playing in Toronto. It’s home! It’s always refreshing to come back and play different shows in the city after playing a bunch of international ones. It really keeps me on my toes as a performer and DJ.

DO YOU PRIDE YOURSELF ON YOUR CANADIAN REPRESENTATION?

Being Canadian is something I will never take for granted. Canadians are so well respected around the world. Whether I am in an interview or meeting someone in another country, I never miss the opportunity to let them know





where I am proudly from!

WILL THERE BE A POINT IN TIME WHERE YOU MOVE ON FROM TORONTO AND VENTURE TO LA, OR MAYBE EUROPE TO DEVELOP YOUR CRAFT?

I currently have a monthly residency in L.A at Sound Nightclub, so I often stay for many days each time I go play there. A lot of DJs and EDM acts are currently residing in L.A so it's an inspiring place to collaborate and work with many other artists. I can definitely see myself setting up another base in L.A in the near future.

CAN YOU DESCRIBE YOUR EXPERIENCES AT SOUND NIGHTCLUB L.A.? I'D LIKE TO HEAR ABOUT SOME OF THE INSPIRING RESULTS OF AN ATMOSPHERE SUCH AS THAT.

L.A is such an inspiring place to be. It's a city full of talented people who want to excel in what they are doing; that is why I feel like so many EDM artist have chosen to make L.A their home.

It was definitely an honour to be given a residency at Sound Nightclub especially since Rolling Stone Magazine recently named it one of the top five clubs in the world!

The atmosphere in the venue is centered around the DJ and designed for big production events. Every time I play there it is always an amazing experience because I feel like the crowd allows me to take them

wherever I want to, and it is one united vibe from the beginning of my set to the end.

ONE OF THE MUSICAL SENSIBILITIES YOU HAVE IN COMMON WITH HARDWELL IS YOUR PROACTIVITY WITH MASHUPS AND BOOTLEGS. CAN WE EXPECT MANY MORE OF THESE IN THE NEW YEAR?

I really pride myself on my live sets. I love to keep them fresh and energetic by creating my own mashups and bootlegs. These help me constantly surprise my audience.

I also love to connect with my fans because without their support, I wouldn't have been able to get to where I am today, and won't be able to get where I want to be in the future. So to show some love, I like to give away some free gifts like mashups and bootlegs to express how truly thankful I am!

THAT BRINGS ME TO MY NEXT POINT, TIESTO PLAYING 'CRANK' ON HIS CURRENT TOUR SCHEDULE. HOW DOES IT FEEL HAVING ARGUABLY ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT FIGURES IN DANCE MUSIC ADDING THE NEW SINGLE TO HIS CURRENT SET LIST?

Tiesto has always been my idol, from the moment I first wanted to be a DJ and still to this day. He is someone I look up to and aspire to be. To have him personally support my music and what I am doing is a feeling that cannot be put into words.

THE LAST THING I WANTED TO TOUCH ON IS YOUR PODCAST, IT'S BEEN RUNNING FOR WELL OVER A YEAR NOW AND HAS CONSISTENTLY BEEN A 30 MINUTE PODCAST. DO YOU SEE IT DEVELOPING INTO SOMETHING LONGER OR IS THIS THE BEST FORMAT TO FIT ALL THE BEST HOUSE MUSIC IN ONE SHOW EACH MONTH?

The podcast has been really successful for me. I have had the honour of being featured on the iTunes what's hot/featured section 9 times in the past year, which is something I really owe to my fans and supporters! I like keeping them at 30 minutes because it's just enough to leave you wanting more! I have thought about maybe starting to do bi-weekly podcasts, but my main focus right now is production and always fine-tuning my live sets to make them bigger and better.

Written by Kurtis Hooper

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PLAY DE RECORD: RALLYING TORONTO'S DANCE MUSIC COMMUNITY

By Kurtis Hooper

Amidst the souvenir shops, chain restaurants, and tourist crowds of Toronto's Yonge street is one of the most important, if not most important institutions of Canadian DJ lineage. Located one block from Ryerson University, Play De Record opened its doors in 1990 and has been both crucial and integral in not only dance music, but the music community in general throughout the Greater Toronto Area. In its early days the vinyl hotspots front doors served as a location to pick up knives, cigarettes, and magazines, but now a quick look to the right of the doors is shelving covered with merchandise featuring a certain mouse themed producer who lives several blocks away. Walking into the hallowed isles one can feel the history in the walls dotted with records and audio gear from the past sharing shelves with the likes of Disclosure, Calvin Harris and other prominent characters of the mainstream dance music boom.

Not only catering to music fans who purchase vinyl, the store served as the heart of the DJ community in the early 90's. Eugene can be credited as releasing Deadmau5's first record along with being a focal hub for other Canadian icons including K-os, and DJ Starting From Scratch.

Recently Play De Record has launched a new project; Play De Academy. The aforementioned is not only a DJing and music production school, but a feature that allows the

long standing location to give back to the community. DJ Mag Canada spoke with Eugene Tam and Jason Palma of Play De Record to trace the origins of the site and hear about the new innovative project teaching aspiring electronic artists how to succeed.

LET'S TALK A BIT ABOUT THIS LOCATION FIRST AND FOREMOST. WHEN I THINK OF TORONTO RECORDS NOW DAYS I THINK OF PLACES ON QUEEN STREET OR NEAR COLLEGE AND BATHURST. IN YOUR CASE YOU ARE RIGHT IN THE HEART OF THE CITY AT YONGE & DUNDAS SQUARE.

Eugene: Well, a long time ago, maybe the 70's and 80's all the record stores were here on Yonge Street. I remember coming here in 1981 to study here. There were about ten of them. But they are all gone now.

Jason: When I first started coming down here to shop in the early 90's, especially for DJ's, this was the stretch. Yonge Street had 5 or 6 shops.

WELL THAT BRINGS ME TO MY NEXT QUESTION. THERE'S A BIG EMPTY LOT

NEXT DOOR WHERE SAM THE RECORD MAN USED TO BE. WHAT HAS THIS BEEN ATTRIBUTED TO?

Jason: I mean obviously the record store scene has changed immensely over the past ten years with the advent of the digital age. That's the main reason why a lot of the bigger stores have fallen off. You still have the HMV superstore and Sun Rise Records, but the average person now is downloading their music.

HOW HAS THE BUSINESS MODEL OF THE STORE HAD TO CHANGE TO ACCOUNT FOR THIS?

Jason: The store used to be almost 100 percent vinyl. Over the years we started carrying DJ gear and CD's rather than just vinyl.

Eugene: A long time ago we used to have all the DJ's in the community come here on a thursday to come and shop. Everyone would connect with each other, talk about things.

Jason: There was a real community atmosphere.

Eugene: As the times went on with the digital age, less and less DJ's were coming in because everyone was downloading. Now we are trying to reconnect with our community





again. We are trying to recreate everything the way it used to be.

Jason: We always loved the community aspect of the shop. DJ's would come here and shop. A hip-hop DJ would come here and learn about house, a house DJ would come here and learn about trance, and a trance DJ would come here and learn about soul because all the working DJ's in the city would converge on a thursday. It would open a lot of minds.

WHAT IS IT THAT YOU APPRECIATE MOST ABOUT THAT COMMUNITY ASPECT BEHIND DJING?

Jason: I think DJ's are a rare breed. I was definitely a DJ before working here. There's just like minded people, when you get together DJ's can see the passion for the music. When you have a room full of music heads it's a pretty interesting vibe. It's like lighting in the air.

THE STORE CARRIES A MULTITUDE OF GENRE'S. I IMAGINE BEING PIGEON HOLED WITH ONE GENRE IS WHAT HAPPENED WITH MANY PAST RECORD STORES.

Jason: I mean you would carry it very well. We might not be the authority of every genre that we carry. But if you have interest in a genre, why not carry it? If people ask for certain music we want to cater to them.

Eugene: We used to get guys who were good at specific DJing. A drum

and bass DJ, so he could serve that kind of customer. A soul/jazz guy who would know that.

Jason: In those days it was a real rush to get advanced promos of things. To get a white label of some new record out of New York or UK was a huge deal. You'd have 50 guys lining up for that white label on a thursday.

Eugene: We would bring the records out there and people would be attacking you like sharks!

Jason: I was here on thursdays



where there were literal fights in the store.

WHEN WAS IT THAT THE PHYSICAL PURCHASE OF RECORDS SEEMED TO BE GOING AWAY?

Eugene: Napster! It started out with Napster

Jason: For me it was when I first started seeing CD decks.

SO WHEN YOU ACTUALLY SEE THE TURNTABLISTS SUPPORTING THESE OTHER PLATFORMS, YOU NOTE THAT SIGN.

Jason: It was definitely Serato that was what completely changed the game.

I WAS READING A JAZZY JEFF QUOTE THE OTHER DAY

WHERE HE DESCRIBED HOW THE ACT OF DJING IS DONE AND OVER WITH AND ONCE THIS GENERATION OF DJ'S PASSES THEN THE ART OF DJING WILL BE COMPLETELY GONE FROM THE FACE OF THE EARTH.

Jason: I look at it like photography in many ways. I mean now you whip out your phone and can get a really good high resolution picture. Photographers had to work to get those kind of pictures. That craft and art; people don't look at it the same way they used to, much like DJing. I mean I'm happy that there's an affordable way for them to get their feet in the door.

Eugene: Both with DJing and producing!

SO WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO THRIVE IN THIS CHANGE?

Eugene: Well a lot of people are asking for controllers now. Now the DJ's have to mix AND produce. Some people don't know how to do all that stuff, so we want to provide that service for them. We just listen to our customers. A lot of people want to get into DJing or want to make music, but they don't know how to do it. We decided we'd introduce them to the school because a lot of them buy stuff, bring it back because it's not working, because they don't know how to use it! So the next evolution is school.

SO WHAT IS THE FORMATTING OF THE PLAY DE ACADEMY?

Jason: Basically for each course that we are teaching, there's a basic,



intermediate, and advanced level. We are at a stage where we are still growing, so we can cater to each individual persons knowledge. It's a lot of one on one right now. We offer 1 hour sessions and we offer full 15 week courses.

WHAT DO YOU WANT A STUDENT OF YOUR SCHOOL TO GAIN FROM POINT A TO POINT B?

Jason: The thing about gear is that you can have a million ideas in your head of what you want to do. If you own a machine, and you have an idea, its just like if you have a trumpet. If you aren't trained to use that trumpet properly, but you have a note in your head, it's never going to come across through the instrument. We want people to

look at their program, machine, or software as the means to an end. We want them to take that idea in their head and EASILY finish it and come up with a finished product.

Eugene: We have an 8 year old autistic kid here. The parents are so happy for this kid. He's using the Traktor when he walks in here. He's so passionate. It helps him and makes him feel happy.

Jason: It really calms him down.

Eugene: That is what inspires me too! When I first started this record store I just wanted to get people into music out here. I wanted to be the first one that had the records and break stars!

Jason: I used to come down to the

record store before I worked here, and Eugene was the man behind a lot of these hits.

WHAT IS THE GUIDELINE THAT PLAY DE RECORD GOES BY TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN THIS DAY AND AGE.

Eugene: Listen to the customer! From day one. Whatever they want, just give it to them.

Jason: I've heard of stores that are kind of elitist. We do like to carry really cool and interesting music that we love. But like Eugene is saying, you can't judge anyone for the music they listen to. I really get upset that people get laughed at for what music they listen to. Whatever you like, we'll carry it for you.



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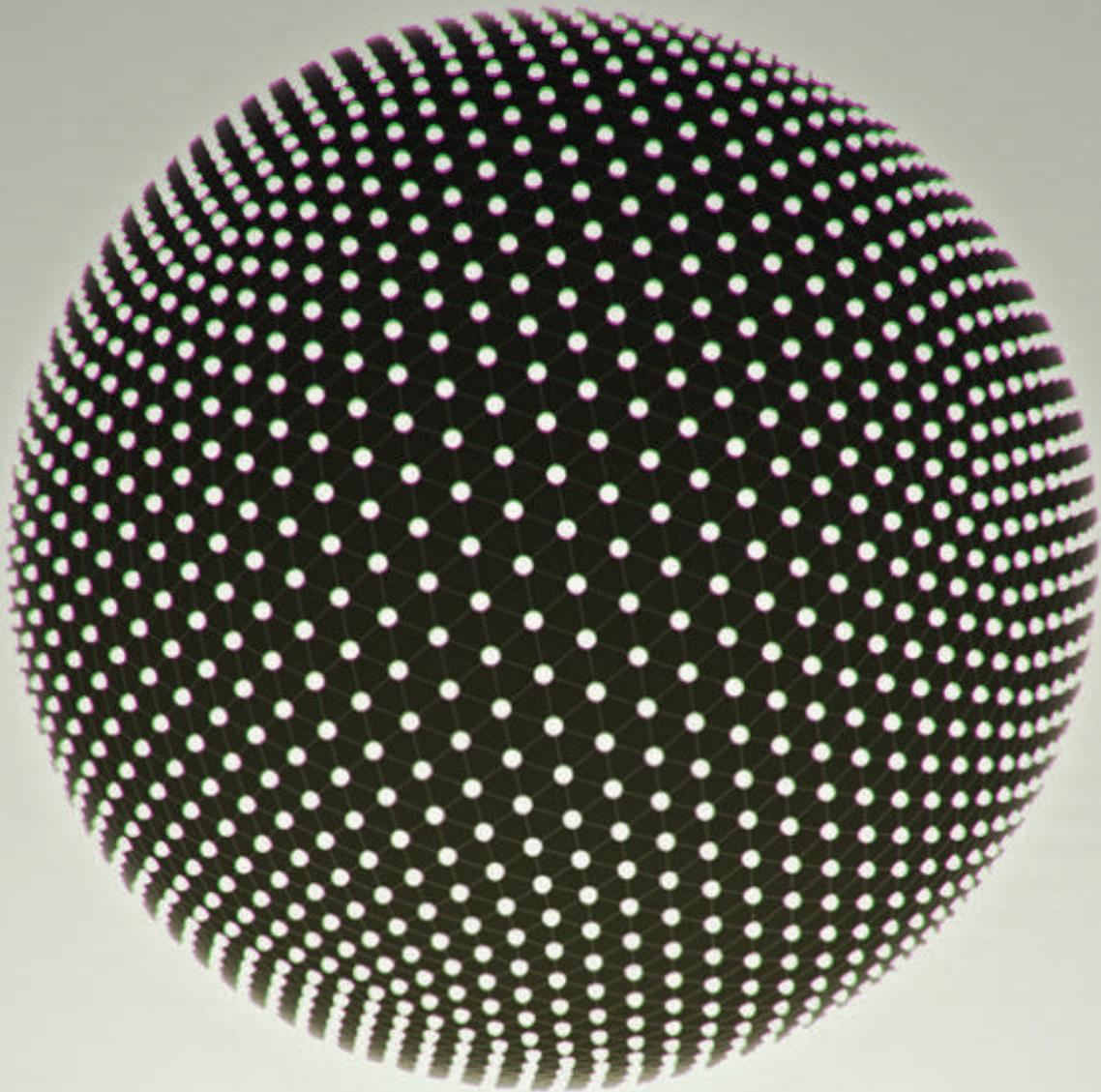
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JEREMY VANCAULART: STRUGGLE, HEALING AND TRIUMPH

By Rachael D'Amore

"I don't produce bangers, nor do I try," says Jeremy, reiterating a tweet he once posted.

"Actually, a restaurant responded to that tweet and asked 'well, what about with mash?'" he laughs. "I assured them I make bangers when mashed is involved."

Canadian producer Jeremy Vancaulart has had a knack for music since childhood. He has since put his toy drum set to rest and established himself as a prominent figure in Toronto's dance music scene.

But much like his attitude towards dance music 'bangers' – Jeremy's story is different.

At 21-years-old, his life took a dramatic turn. After a young man on route to meet a girl he loved boarded the wrong bus in Toronto, he ended up in the kind hospitality of Jeremy and his friends.

"He was originally from the East coast, but decided to stick around with us – he thought we were nice people and vice versa. After a year in Mississauga he decided it was time to go back home. So he made plans to hang out with us one last time before moving."

That night, news broke that a murder had happened in town. The victim was identified as Jeremy's friend.

"It completely shattered the community," he says. "He

was supposed to go home the next day, that's the worst part."

Struck with grief and tragedy, it was music that brought him a sense of relief. At the time, he was producing industrial music – a combination of electronic and rock (think, Nine Inch Nails) – which proved to be the perfect outlet to express his anger. He began selling a small six track compilation in a local shop and to his surprise, it quickly spread throughout his community.

"I started to realize that what I was doing was literally controlling people's emotion with music. I think everybody was feeling the same way and I was helping them cope the same way I was. It struck me then, that music is more than just something cool. It's deep. It can change lives."

Through his shows in Toronto, Jeremy soon discovered the city's rave scene and arguably it's most passionate sub-genre of dance music – trance. The positivity and emotion that trance is devoted to stole his heart and has since been his focus as an artist.

Even with a diploma in audio-engineering, he quit his job as a manager at an AV company to pursue music full-time. "I hated going to work every day," he says. "I had to look at my life and ask why I was even here." With that notion, Jeremy founded his indie label Black Sunset Music in 2011.





"I started the label so I could release and be in control of my own music and help other people in the same position to share their music with others," says Jeremy.

Black Sunset's roster includes Toronto's Dan Chase, Assaf and Russian producer Mixail – whose track Plazma (produced exclusively on Black Sunset) was featured in Armin Van Buuren's A State of Trance. But Jeremy's quick to clarify that gaining recognition in the industry isn't as easy as it may seem, especially as a young label.

"Being a Canadian producer, a Canadian label, if you're not Mau5trap – it's tough," he says. "Toronto really supports dance music, but a lot of that support is for the international artists. So being a musician in Toronto or Ontario, finding a [trance] label in the area has been impossible until us."

Based in Toronto, Black Sunset is out to offer an alternative to the norm – instead of going to European labels, you can stick to your own city. "We find it incredibly helpful to build relationships with artists when it's quick, direct and fluid. It would never be like that anywhere else," he says.

So it only makes sense that the future looks bright for Black Sunset and for Jeremy. Between the success of

"Cry Wolf" by Cold Rush and Tiff Lacey (which has an oncoming remix by Jeremy), the release of his newest track "Panic" and a remix of "Space Between Us" done by Assaf and Canadian vocalist Laura Aqui – there's much to anticipate from both the producer and the label.

"But like any artist, I've progressed," he says. "I've forgiven the situation that got me here. My mission now is to help promote this music. Doesn't matter how I do it, doesn't matter how big I get, doesn't matter where I sit – as long as I'm helping promote this music, I'll be happy."

Even while juggling the positions of label founder, owner, manager, and producer – his passion for music is unchanging.

His advice to those enduring a personal loss: "Use music for what it's meant to be used for. You don't want an emotion controlling you, you want to be able to control your emotions. Music allows you to emote."

His other piece of advice: "If you go to Miami Music Week, don't rent one room for eight guys. Trust me, it was bad."

Dually noted, Jeremy.



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SKREAM + BREACH - SPOTLIGHT

By: Eve B. St-Cyr

« Honest! My music is honest, I play from the heart, » says Oliver Jones, aka SKREAM, when pressed to describe his music. « And mine would be emotional, because I play from the heart too, » chimes in Ben Westbeeche, aka BREACH, flashing a playful smile to his turntables comrade.

Since its debut in 2007, Igloofest has become a bit of a Mecca for the techno-hungry crowds, anxious to shed off their winter blues and catch a bit of the limelight. Over the years the event has attracted its fair share of international talent, of which the UK DJs and Producers Skream and Breach are not the least. Closing the first weekend instalment of the festival this year, DJ Mag Canada sat down with the pair to discuss their musical ambitions and the winter wonderland that can be Montreal when Mother Nature shows some clemency.

One of dubstep's most famous producers, Jones has been at the forefront of the genre's progress in clubs and music festivals the world over. A veteran on the EDM scene, Jones started dabbling in production at the tender age of 15, and has accumulated an impressive portfolio, both as a solo artist and as part of the Magnetic Man trio, with fellow Djs and producers Benga and Artwork. From smash hits like his 2010 remix of La Roux's "In for the Kill" to his collaborations with renowned artists like Kelis, Miles Kane and Chromeo, Jones displays a keen interest in crossing musical boundaries, and always pushes the tempo one

step further; from house to techno to disco beats, Skream strives to continually reinvent himself through his music.

With formal classical training as a cellist, pianist and vocalist, Westbeeche also expertly navigates through the musical spectrum of genres, and time and time again has proven his well-rounded talent both as a producer and performer. Westbeeche, who fell in love with dance music at an early age, continues to regale crowds by displaying a connoisseur's touch of soul, hip-hop, jazz and house music. He released his first single "Jack" last year, under the pseudonym Breach, which made it to the top 10 on the UK Singles Chart – a dream come true for most musicians.

Asked about their inspiration, Jones spontaneously answers: "The roots of your passion, I guess." It is a natural response, from a man who seems to have developed a rather organic approach to making music. "The creative process," argues Jones, "is the reason that you are what you are. It's not that you have a defined creative process per se, you just do what you do; and perhaps that is a process in itself, but you just don't look at it as a thing." Always authentic, Jones adds, somewhat offhandedly: "It's not really something you can define, it's why people are people." Hinting to a more essentialist way of understanding music: one that is honest, and emanates from the heart, subjected to the tyranny of its whims.



"You can't quantify that into a sentence," adds Westbeeche, "you can't be like: Oh! Yeah! I go to the studio, and then I put a kick drum down, and then Oh! I hear a melody... Oh my god! We've got a hit!" It's not like that."

For Westbeeche, inspiration stems from a feeling of nostalgia, a throwback to the olden days when he first heard and sold bootleg tapes from the underground rave scene in the UK. "The feeling I got, hearing that first tune, that's where I get my inspiration from. I want to feel that feeling every time I make a tune, that it takes me back to that place."

"It's that point where you are on the other side of going to someone, someone you look up to, praise them, and when you feel it back..." says Jones, completing Westbeeche's thought. The pair has been in the industry long enough by now that they've long-started rubbing shoulders with their idols of yesteryears. "Growing up, as kids, we used to listen to rave music and idolize these producers and you know, you get to a point where you actually start to meet them...and then your music goes on to do the same for a new generation," says Breech, "It's a pretty weird feeling. And I guess, one that you only get if you're in the studio, because you, fundamentally as a producer, are making music for yourself.... if it transfers to a crowd of ravers, then, you know, you got lucky."

Skream reminds his friend that many people do walk into a recording studio and produce hits in a more straightforward fashion these days. "But you're going to become generic like that," argues Westbeeche, who

says he can overhear a conversation on a train ride home, and glean a word from a sentence caught out of the ether, and that will invoke some sort of feeling. "Maybe then you go into the studio," says Westbeeche, "and you pick a sound that connects with that feeling, and it imbues the whole record, and all the while you are thinking: "Yeah! We are going down this route now." It's that emotion that comes through in the music and that allows people in the audience to empathize. Emotional people, as artists, that's what drives it, our emotional passions..." says Westbeeche, settling the matter.

As a closing remark, I asked the two Brits about their opinions on igloos and the festival. There was some general excitement about the ice slides, and vague discussion about whether or not your one's backside might get soaked on the way down, our Djs having packed only their Levis 511s jeans as outerwear, reproaching me my ski attire. "We are in our skinny jeans, looking like Eastern hipsters, and you're in your waterproofs. We're going to look like idiots on that thing," says Westbeeche, an obvious look of concern etched across his face. "Igloos are genius," adds Jones, ecstatic, and ensues a whole line of enquiry: "How to they make igloos? What's the theory behind it? Yeah! How do they make igloos? Is it ice bricks? How does it stay warm in there? Is it the air?" And seemingly nearing the close of the investigation, I get a soft tap from the publicist, who says my time is up. I guess the answers will have to wait till next year.



SKREAM + BREACH - SPOTLIGHT By: Eve B. St-Cyr

« Intègre! Ma musique est intègre, puisque j'en joue avec le cœur, » me lance Oliver Jones, alias SKREAM, alors que je lui demande de me décrire ses morceaux. « Et la mienne serait émotive, puisque moi aussi je joue avec le cœur, » renchérit Ben Westbeech, alias BREACH, un sourire espiègle adressé vers son compère de platines.

Depuis ses débuts en 2007, Igloofest est devenu un peu la Mecque des amateurs assoiffés de techno, cherchant à se défaire de leur blues hivernal et profiter des shows de lumières le temps d'un spectacle. Avec les années, le festival a accueilli bon nombre d'artistes internationaux dont les Djs et producteurs Skream et Breach ne sont pas les moindres. Clôturent la première édition du festival cette année, DJ Mag Canada a saisi l'occasion de discuter avec la paire de leurs ambitions musicales et de l'état féérique hivernal que peut avoir Montréal lorsque dame nature se montre plutôt clémente.

Un des producteurs de dubstep les plus reconnus, Jones fait figure de

proue de la scène électro Britannique depuis ses débuts, voyageant sans cesse d'un festival à l'autre en passant par des discothèques de par le monde entier. Un vétéran de la musique électronique, Jones a fait ses débuts dès l'âge de 15 ans; accumulant un répertoire impressionnant, tant à titre d'artiste solo qu'en tant que membre du trio Magnetic Man, en compagnie de ses collègues Benga et Artwork. Du haut des palmarès avec son remix de La Roux « In for the Kill », et à titre de collaborateur avec des artistes de renom tels que Kelis, Miles Kane et Chromeo, Jones démontre un intérêt marqué pour une variété de genres musicaux. De la house, en passant par le techno et le disco, Skream s'efforce à se réinventer régulièrement à travers sa musique.

Doté d'une formation classique comme pianiste, celliste et vocaliste, Westbeech navigue de manière chevronnée le spectre musical, et a su prouver à maintes reprises qu'il possède une fine oreille, tant au niveau de la production que de la création.

Westbeech, qui tomba follement amoureux de la musique dance très jeune, persiste prendre un malin plaisir à régaler les foules, manœuvrant soul, hip-hop, jazz et musique house avec un doigté d'expert. Son premier simple « Jack » sous le pseudonyme Breach, sorti l'an dernier, est vite grimpé au top 10 des chartes britanniques – un rêve pour la plupart des musiciens.

Interrogé à propos de leurs inspirations, Jones réplique spontanément : « Ce sont les bases de nos passions, je suppose. » Une réponse qui lui vient tout à fait naturellement, de la part d'un homme qui semble avoir développé une approche généralement organique de produire de la musique. « Le processus créatif, » dit-il, « au fond, c'est la raison que l'on est qui l'on est. Ce n'est pas qu'il y ait un processus créatif proprement défini, c'est simplement ce que l'on en fait; et peut-être est-ce un processus en soi, mais on ne le considère pas comme quelque chose de tangible. » Toujours authentique, Jones ajoute, désinvolte : « Ce n'est pas quelque chose qui se définit, mais

c'est ce qui rend les gens uniques, par définition. » Une interprétation fondamentalement essentialiste, où l'on croit à sa sincérité, et à une absolue tyrannie du cœur, dont la raison ne saurait se mêler.

« Ce n'est pas vraiment le genre de chose que l'on peut résumer en une phrase, » ajoute Westbeeche, « ce n'est pas comme si l'on pouvait dire : "ah! Ouais! Je suis arrivé au studio, et puis j'ai lancé la grosse caisse, et j'ai ajouté une mélodie... et puis voilà! C'est un triomphe!" Ça ne se passe pas tout à fait comme ça. »

Pour Westbeeche, l'inspiration vient d'un sentiment de nostalgie, un genre de retour en arrière aux bons vieux jours lorsqu'il passait ses weekends à trafiquer des mix sur cassettes de contrebande pour les revendre sur la scène rave underground Britannique. « Le sentiment que j'avais, en entendant ces premières chansons, c'est de la que je puise mon inspiration. À chaque fois que je produis une pièce, c'est ce souvenir que j'essaie de convier aux gens. »

« C'est le moment où tu vis la contrepartie d'aller voir un artiste, que tu admires, et de voir que c'est réciproque... » lance Jones, complétant l'explication de Westbeeche. Les deux producteurs ont depuis longtemps atteint le stade de côtoyer leurs idoles d'antan. « En grandissant, étant gamins, on écoutait de la musique rave. On vénérât ces producteurs, tu comprends, et il arrive un jour où tu te mets à les rencontrer... et où ta musique inspire, à son tour, une nouvelle génération, » dit Breech, « C'est assez insolite, parce foncièrement, quand tu entres au studio comme musicien, c'est pour faire de la musique que pour toi-même... si ça réussit à avoir de l'effet sur une bande de raveurs, alors tu sais que t'as eu de la chance. »

C'est à ce moment que Skream conteste doucement, rappelant à son ami qu'il y a une panoplie d'artistes qui composent

de façon quasi automatique; une séance d'enregistrement expéditive et prédisposée, et que c'est plutôt courant de nos jours. « Mais c'est ainsi que l'on devient générique, » riposte Westbeeche, qui affirme qu'il peut tendre l'oreille vers une conversation anodine, happée au hasard dans le train sur le chemin du retour vers la maison, et n'en tirer qu'un seul mot, qu'une seule idée, dominant toutes ces bribes de conversations, et ce mot lui invoquera une idée ou un sentiment quelconque. « Peut-être alors est-ce que tu vas enregistrer, » explique Westbeeche, « et tu trouves un son qui se rattache à ce sentiment, et ça façonne l'album au complet. Et tout ce temps, tu penses : "Ouais! On suit ce chemin maintenant." C'est cette émotion qui passe à travers la musique, et qui permet aux gens d'avoir de l'empathie. Des gens émotifs, en tant qu'artistes, c'est ce qui fait avancer le tout, nos passions sensibles... » soutient Westbeeche, cédant le sujet.

Comme dernière question, je me risque à interroger les deux Britanniques au sujet du festival en général, et quant à leurs prises de position concernant les igloos. S'amorce une

courte délibération sur la possibilité de descendre la glissade de glace sans se mouiller le derrière; nos Djs n'ayant prévu comme vêtements pour la soirée que leurs Levis 511, me reprochant vivement mes pantalons de ski. « Nous, on est là, avec nos skinny jeans, et nos allures de hipsters d'Europe de l'Est, on va avoir l'air de deux imbéciles sur ce truc, » me dit Westbeeche, un air soucieux s'esquissant soudain sur son front. « Les igloos, c'est du génie! » ajoute Jones, clairement satisfait de son verdict. S'en suit une pléiade de questions : « Comment est ce qu'on construit des igloos? Sur quelle théorie se base-t-on? Ouais! Comment fait-on un igloo? Et les blocs... en glace...? Comment est ce qu'on se garde au chaud là-dedans? C'est l'air qui se réchauffe? » Et l'inquisition tirant vraisemblablement à sa fin, on me tape tout doucement sur l'épaule, c'est la relationniste de presse qui m'indique que mon heure est venue. Il faudra donc attendre à l'an prochain pour les réponses et la suite de l'épisode...





CARL MÜREN, A PILLAR OF QUEBEC'S NIGHTLIFE

"I think DJ is the best job, but the challenge is to get in as there's so much competition", says Carl Müren in a cheerful tone.

To get in, Carl Müren knew how to do so as the extrovert artist (who always gets a kick from entertaining and making people laugh) occupies a prime position within the Quebec's nightlife scene.

Well aware of his success and confident, he explains: "I'm the resident au Vieux Shack de St-Jérôme since 1998 and I'm also director of marketing and promotion for the Shack. Since 2006, I've been a resident at Circus Afterhours. In the summer, I'm resident at Beach Club. I am also resident on Thursdays at the Commission des Liqueurs."

An impressive schedule in a

time where the DJ trade is more than saturated! While everyone is trying to be a DJ, Carl Müren knows how to pull the right strings to keep moving forward. On top of his weekly and monthly residencies, Müren has been appearing in several high profile events. Every year, he performs in front of 10 000+ crowds for the renowned CKOI Beach Party at Beach club, and he's been part

of the line-up in the trance room at Black & Blue in 2010, 2012 and 2013. "I have to be honest, the bigger the crowd, the better I am", says the artist.

When asked about his journey and how he made his entry into the field, Müren explains: "I gathered general knowledge about dance music when I was in high school. From then on, I started buying records. Shortly after, I met Danny Berger, owner and back-then dj at the Vieux Shack. He's the one who gave me my break. Precisely, we met at the record shop L'indicatif in Laval. At the time, I started as a lightman and six months later I found myself behind the decks in one of the largest clubs in Quebec."

And his break, Carl Müren was definitely able to make the most of it! After more than 15 years, he's still on duty at Vieux Shack, which isn't a small achievement considering the high turnover rate of this industry. Along the way, he was nominated at Stylus Awards for BEST DANCE DJ IN CANADA in 2011, and he won the awards DJ OF THE YEAR, BEST RESIDENCY, BEST HOUSE DJ and BEST RADIO DJ at the MONTREAL DJ AWARDS in 2009.

But Müren remains humble and pragmatic: "At the time I was happy, I thought it was cool that I cool show these awards to my kids in the future. I was very much aware that these are just popularity contests and that this doesn't mean I'm any better than fellow Djs out there. But it's always reassuring to know that what I do pleases people"

Passionate about music, Carl

Müren keeps a laid-back approach in regards with his career. "The DJ's work is for me, a leisure. Because I love what I do. I appreciate every moment when I'm playing music."

No doubt that Müren's passion is being reflected in his versatility. At Vieux Shack, the DJ plays primarily House, Big Room and Top 40, at Circus he serves a mix of progressive house and progressive trance, while at Black & Blue he's mostly trance.

"I'm lucky to be able to play all music genres because I actually like them all, and I feel at ease in any situation. Although, my first love for music is trance. That's why even during my most commercial sets I'll always throw in one or two tracks with a more trancy sound, to please myself you know."

When I insist to find out the secret behind Carl Müren's success, he confides: "The human side is the most important thing. Because anybody can mix. The way you interact with people, the way you take them in a musical journey actually means a lot. I think I have a unique way of working. I play music that pleases, that makes people react. I like surprising people. I like it when they say "ah I didn't know this music but I like it". And also the fact that I love what I do. I smile during my sets. I like to grab the mic and talk. I work a lot and people appreciate my work.

Sound psychologist, Carl Müren also likes to entertain a more personal relationship with the fans. "I really like interacting on facebook with my fans. I like it

when they talk to me. I really like cracking jokes and laughing. I post remixes on my page so that my fans can listen to them."

It all sounds very idyllic for Carl Müren, so I'm curious to find out if, like any human being, he has his ups and downs. "I never really touched bottom in my career. As I said before, I have the chance to play often and regularly. But as any artist, I have my weekly and self-questioning moments. Happily for me, I have an extraordinary wife who's there to support me day after day. Also, it's hard to stay up to date. To stay in touch with the fans, I have to be on the social networks constantly. I think that's a bit hard. I have to always update my infos on the various social networks, whether it's Facebook, Twitter or Instagram. Otherwise people forget me easily. So we can't take a break from facebook for a little while"

Reassured that he's indeed very human, I can risk asking questions about his family, his spare-time activities... He shares: "I have a wife and two kids. I just had a daughter. I have an extremely understanding wife. And that gives me a lot of freedom in my life. Despite my busy schedule, I always find time for leisure activities. Et when I do, I always include my wife and my kids. I also travel once in a while"

Where will Carl Müren stop? Only the future knows what's in store but we can bet that his meteoric success won't stop anytime soon. "Never stop believing in your dreams" says the artist as his final words.

A portrait of Carl Müren, a man with short, spiky blonde hair and a light beard, looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. He is wearing a dark blue button-down shirt. The background is dark and out of focus.

CARL MÜREN, UN PILLIER DU NIGHTLIFE QUÉBÉCOIS

«DJ, je trouve que c'est le plus beau métier, mais la difficulté c'est de pouvoir rentrer dedans, car il y a beaucoup de compétition» me lance Carl Müren d'un ton enjoué.

Rentrer dedans, Carl Müren a su comment faire puisque l'artiste extraverti, qui prend toujours un malin plaisir à divertir et faire rire les gens, occupe aujourd'hui une place de choix dans le nightlife québécois.

Conscient de son succès et sûr de lui, il m'explique: «Je suis résident au Vieux Shack de St-Jérôme depuis 1998 et

je suis aussi directeur marketing et promotion du Vieux Shack. Depuis 2006, je suis résident au Circus Afterhours. L'été, je suis résident au Beach Club de Pointe Calumet. Je suis également résident les jeudis à la Commission des Liqueurs.»

Un agenda des plus impressionnant à une époque où le métier de DJ est plus que saturé! Alors que tout le monde s'improvise DJ, Carl Müren sait comment tirer son épingle du jeu. En plus de ses résidences hebdomadaires et mensuelles, Müren multiplie également les apparences dans des événements de haut calibre. À chaque année, il

performe devant des foules de 10 000 personnes et plus dans le cadre des Beach Party CKOI au Beach Club, et il a fait partie du line-up de la salle trance du prestigieux Black and Blue en 2010, 2012 et 2013. «Je dois être honnête, plus il y a des gens qui me regardent, meilleur je suis», affirme l'artiste.

Questionné à savoir comment il a fait son entrée dans le métier, Müren m'explique: «J'ai fait mes connaissances populaires avec la musique dance quand j'étais au secondaire. À partir de là, j'ai commencé à acheter des disques. Ensuite, j'ai rencontré Danny Berger propriétaire et DJ à l'époque du Vieux Shack. Et c'est lui qui m'a donné ma chance. Nous nous sommes rencontrés plus précisément à la boutique de disque L'indicatif à Laval. À l'époque, j'ai commencé comme éclairagiste et six mois plus tard, je me retrouvais aux commandes d'un des plus gros clubs au Québec.»

Et sa chance, Carl Müren a su la saisir! Après plus de 15 ans, il est toujours en poste au Vieux Shack, ce qui n'est pas peu dire dans un milieu où le succès d'un artiste est souvent éphémère. En cours de route, il fut nommé au Stylus Awards pour BEST DANCE DJ IN CANADA en 2011, tandis qu'il a remporté les prix DJ OF THE YEAR, BEST RESIDENCY, BEST HOUSE DJ et BEST RADIO DJ au MONTREAL DJ AWARDS de 2009.

Mais Müren demeure malgré tout humble et pragmatique: «Sur le coup j'étais bien content, je trouvais ça cool de pouvoir montrer ça à mes enfants plus tard. J'étais très conscient à chaque fois que c'était seulement des concours de popularité et que ça ne voulait pas dire que j'étais meilleur que mes pairs. Mais c'était toujours rassurant de savoir que ce que je fais, fait plaisir aux gens.»

Un véritable passionné de la musique, Carl Müren garde une approche légère par rapport à sa carrière. «Le travail de DJ est, pour moi, un loisir. Car j'aime ce que je fais. J'apprécie chaque moment quand je joue de la musique.»

Nul doute que la passion de Müren se reflète dans la polyvalence qu'il fait preuve. Au Vieux Shack, le DJ joue principalement du House, Big Room et Top 40, au Circus il nous sert un mélange de progressive house et progressive trance, tandis qu'au Black and Blue, il joue majoritairement du trance.

«Je suis chanceux de pouvoir jouer tous les genres de musique parce que justement j'aime tout et je me sens à l'aise dans n'importe quelle situation. Par contre mon premier amour est la musique trance. C'est pourquoi que même dans mes soirées plus commerciales, je vais en glisser une ou deux qui ont une sonorité plus trance, question de me faire plaisir.»

Lorsque j'insiste pour connaître le secret du succès de Carl Müren, il me confie: «La chose la plus importante,

c'est le côté humain. Car n'importe qui est capable de mixer. Ta façon d'interagir avec les gens, ta façon de les transporter dans un voyage musical compte beaucoup. Je pense que j'ai une manière de travailler qui est unique. Je joue de la musique qui plaît, qui fait réagir les gens. J'aime surprendre les clients. J'aime qu'ils disent: « Ah, je ne connaissais pas cette musique, mais j'aime ça ». Et il y a le fait aussi que j'aime ce que je fais. Je souris en travaillant. J'adore prendre le micro et jaser. Je travaille beaucoup et les gens apprécient mon travail.»

Fin psychologue, Carl Müren aime beaucoup entretenir un rapport plus personnel avec les gens. «J'aime beaucoup jaser sur Facebook avec mes fans. J'aime ça qu'ils me parlent. Je suis quelqu'un qui aime beaucoup rire. Je publie des remix sur ma page Facebook pour que mes fans puissent les écouter gratuitement.»

Tout semble bien idyllique pour Carl Müren, alors je le questionne un peu plus à savoir si comme tout être humain, il connaît des hauts et des bas. «Je n'ai jamais vraiment touché le fond dans ma carrière. Comme je l'ai dit plus haut, j'ai la chance de pouvoir jouer souvent et régulièrement. Mais comme tout bon artiste, j'ai mes remises en question hebdomadaires. Heureusement pour moi, j'ai une femme extraordinaire qui est là pour me supporter jour après jour. Aussi, c'est d'être toujours à jour. Pour garder le contact avec ses fans, il faut constamment être sur les médias sociaux. Et je trouve ça un peu dur. Il faut toujours que j'actualise les informations qui me concernent sur les médias sociaux: que ce soit sur Facebook, Twitter ou Instagram. Sinon les gens peuvent m'oublier facilement. Donc on ne peut pas se permettre de prendre congé de Facebook pendant un moment.» Rassuré de constater qu'il est bel et bien humain, je me risque alors à lui demander de me parler de sa famille, et de ses loisirs. Il me confie: «J'ai une femme et deux enfants. Je viens d'avoir une fille. J'ai une femme extrêmement compréhensible. Et ça me permet de faire tout ce que je veux faire dans la vie. Malgré mon emploi du temps chargé, je trouve toujours du temps pour les loisirs. Et quand je fais mes loisirs, j'inclus toujours ma femme et mes enfants. Je voyage aussi de temps en temps.»

Où s'arrêtera Carl Müren? Seul l'avenir pourra nous le dire, mais nous pouvons parier que le succès fulgurant de l'artiste ne s'arrêtera pas si tôt. «Ne jamais arrêter de croire en ses rêves» lance joyeusement l'artiste en concluant l'entretien.

Collaboration spéciale: Ansou Kinty



MATTY BOH DARTMOUTH NOVA SCOTIA - SPOTLIGHT

SOUND CLOUD www.soundcloud.com/matty-boh
FACEBOOK www.facebook.com/officialMattyBoh
TWITTER @MattyBoh

Matty Boh's sound can't be captured by a set genre. His influences began with hip hop and he's mutated into an electro/trap rock star. Commonly found in his signature cut off jean jacket behind the tables exciting a wide variety of audiences. On any given night you will see AC/DC head bangers side by side trap fans in a complete dance floor frenzy.

His diversity and an open ear for all styles of Electronic music has allowed him to share the stage with acts like Zeds Dead all the way over to Montreal's Progressive House Legends Sultan and Ned Shepard. He's released multiple singles but it is his Galaxy EP that he's most excited for in 2014. This month's spotlight profiles the future of Atlantic Canadian music production to learn more about the Traptronic Beast from the Darkside.

HOW DID ELECTRONIC MUSIC CAPTURE YOUR EAR LIVING IN DARTMOUTH NOVA SCOTIA?

I would say it caught my interest when I was old enough to hit night clubs. I've always loved the sound of music over a really good sound system, and I remember hearing a lot of crazy dance remixes that held such crazy energy. I would always incorporate an electronic feel in the Rap instrumentals I was producing. So as electronic music grew in Halifax, it just felt right to move with it.

YOU WORK EXTREMELY CLOSE WITH POPULAR HIP HOP ARTISTS INCLUDING ECMA WINNER CAM SMITH AND NOMINEE JAY MAYNE, HOW HAVE THEY INFLUENCED YOUR STYLE IN THE ELECTRONIC REALM?

I wouldn't really say they influence my music as much as they motivate my music. They are two really hard working dudes, that stay hungry. I believe as an artist, it's important to surround yourself with like-minded people that have the same goals, and can dish out real criticism that is genuine. Just seeing their focus and what they have achieved in the last year has inspired me to be in the studio more.

BACK IN THE DAY DJS RECEIVED A LOT OF FAME AND RECOGNITION IN ATLANTIC CANADA WITHOUT BEING PRODUCERS. WHAT'S YOUR OPINION ON THE IMPORTANCE OF CREATING YOUR OWN PRODUCTION IN THE NEW GENERATION OF ELECTRONIC MUSIC?

I think in electronic music, the production side can really show your brand and give you a chance to build your name as an artist. Production has become such an available thing that it's harder to find a DJ that DOESN'T produce. So it can be very important if you want to keep building your brand in the Electronic scene.

WHY DOES THERE SEEM TO BE A LACK OF RESPECT FOR THE NEW GENERATION OF ELECTRONIC ARTISTS IN THE ATLANTIC REGION? HAS IT BEEN TOUGH TO EARN RESPECT WITH THE VETERANS OF THE SCENE IN HALIFAX?

There has been a burst of DJ's that have come to the Halifax scene, since the electronic music uproar. But it doesn't necessarily have to do with EDM as much as the usage of MIDI controllers, I know that can rub some DJ's the wrong way.

I really respect what Hip-Hop/Electronic veterans have done for our scene, and I make sure I show that. I think showing appreciation is the best way to earn stripes and respect.

LET US INTO THE CREATIVE MIND OF MATTY BOH AND GIVE US THE BREAKDOWN OF THE FIRST TIME YOU KNEW YOU PRODUCED A TUNE THAT WAS GOING TO CAPTURE A LOT OF ATTENTION.

That's an awesome feeling, knowing you have something people will dance and vibe to. I remember it was the middle of the summer, on a really humid night when I produced one of the first songs I released. I love producing tracks at night, and the feel of this night really influenced the sound of it.

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE LOOK LIKE FOR MATTY BOH?

A lot of work! I plan to release an EP this year titled "Galaxy" that will be an electronic album with a ton of other genre influences. I also will be at Canadian Music Week in May with a ton of Halifax Artists. I'm super excited for my team of friends and artists, also my city in general, Halifax is thriving right now and I can't wait to see what the future holds for it!

MARITIMER POP QUIZ: DONAIRS, FISH & CHIPS OR BROTHERS PEPPERONI?

Donair's are clutch. that is all.

By Billy Comer

KILLERS

When you absolutely, positively must decimate the dancefloor, these are the tunes you need...



Black Loops
'Simplon EP'

Gruuv
soundcloud.com/gruuv

WITH the house/garage sound getting hammered to high heaven, making it sound fresh ain't easy. Although Berlin duo Black Loops have managed it on the 'Simplon EP' for Audiojack's Gruuv. The title track is crisp house on a percolating bed of sub-bass, while 'Cabron' is a curvaceous groover with organ keys and enormous industrial pipes, and Sidney Charles' remix has a rave-y New Jersey vibe. 'Up On You', however, is the one. Its murky 'Spin Spin Sugar (Armand Van Helden Remix)' synths and evil growls are what any self-respecting MC would call a "cheeky bubbler".



Maxi Mill
'Lost and Found/Speed Balance Weight'

Voyage Direct (Rush Hour)
rushhourmusic.com

HARD to believe Amsterdam's Maxi Mill is a new talent. Having debuted on Tom Trago's Voyage Direct in 2011, his latest could just as much come from the venerable hands of one of Chicago's finest. The deep analogue funk of 'Lost and Found' is like a tastefully decorated mansion — roomy, luxurious and decked with antiques. 'Speed Balance Weight', on the other hand, is more uncouth. Rupturing house with a vintage electro sensibility, it's a choon even Model 500 would be proud of.



Blatta & Inesha
'Low Will Tear Us Apart'

Blood Music
soundcloud.com/blatta-inesha

THIS Sicilian duo used to make breakbeat and electro but judging by this intimidatingly ferocious sound, they've developed an obsession with obsidian bass tones. Don't be fooled by the drifts of Detroit pads of the intro — when it drops, it's all about the guttural cone-crushing jungle bass and 4/4s. Watch pandemonium ensue...



Patrick Topping
'Get Beastly EP'

Hot Creations
hotcreations.com

CUTTING his teeth as resident at Motion in Newcastle, Patrick Topping has obviously been inspired to even greater heights by his DC10 debut in the summer. With three straight-up dancefloor bombs, 'Get Beastly' rides a garagey arrangement through off-key FX, while 'Strights Up' is leaner and meaner, built from pushy bass and reverbing claps. Best though is the indecently driving 'Stop' with its high-pass cuts, mega drops and bouncy melody.



Rat Life 1
'Pink Blunted (Credit 00 Fk Up)'**

Rat Life Records
soundcloud.com/uncanny-valley-dresden/sets/rat-life-1

AN offshoot of Dresden's Uncanny Valley, Rat Life emerges from its underground lair with an offering as scuzzy as the name suggests. A-side 'Pink Blunted (Credit 00 F**k Up)' is a rousing post-punk stormer built around great pounding drums and a bare-chested explosion of a chorus half-way through. On the flip, 'Disco Train (Dunkeltier Edit)' is a similarly intoxicated voodoo drum funk workout. For fans of Optimo or Comeme, this is the real shit.



Max Graef
'Bummse EP'

The Gym
soundcloud.com/max-graef
THIS young producer is making power moves. As an aperitif for his forthcoming debut album for Tartelet, 'Rivers of the Red Planet', Max serves up this short-but-sweet release for Brandt Brauer Frick's label The Gym. The A-side, made especially for BBF's forthcoming 'DJ Kicks' comp is a dark, smouldering house slow-burner with more than a touch of midnight smoky jazz flavour. Live-sounding hats and '70s film score tinkling piano loops create a Lalo Schifrin vibe, while 'No.5' mixes hip-hop drums and 4/4 kicks.

STONE COLD KILLER — track of the month



The White Lamp
'Ride With You'

Hotflush
hotflushrecordings.com

SOME argue the download generation is taking emphasis away from remix packages and onto individual tracks, but that hasn't perturbed Scuba and Jack Highton from Hotflush from packaging this exceptionally well rounded release. Roping in rejuvenated ex-Underworld veteran Darren Emerson under his The White Lamp guise — his grubby soul collaboration with vocalist Peter Josef that first landed on Futureboogie in 2012 — they've packaged his latest film noir effort with remixes from Mike Dehnert, enigmatic Berlin trio ItaloJohnson as well as an extended re-rub from Emerson himself. Dark, moody and spacious, the original is a lumbering slice of grainy, countrified funk. Falling somewhere between the drowsy drawl of Iggy Pop and David Lynch's odd-ball philosophising, Josef's gloomy tones depict a world of dusty streets and lonely saloon bars, while Emerson's capacious touch makes for an atmospheric bottom-heavy comedown cut.

banger bouncing with viscous texture. Intricately layered with steely snaps, cracking dustbin lids and a thumpin' 4/4, it's expertly topped with spooky synths and eerie vocals from the original. Turning out a devastating slice of minimalism, the ever-excellent Denhert strips things back, enhancing its finer elements. Built out of piercing wooden pops, metallic hi-hats and meaty iron synths, the Fachwerk boss piece-by-piece constructs a coal-black engine of interlocking pistons and undulating arms, while, on his 'Dub Extravaganza', Emerson injects some heavy funk into the heady, progressive sound of his days as a mainstay jock for Global Underground during the '00s. Dispatching four very different — but equally playable — bombshells, download this package (or purchase the vinyl) on sight.

ItaloJohnson's remix, a vinyl exclusive, is a corrosive soundsystem

**AFTER
DARK**
ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

PRESENTS

EAST COAST LIFESTYLE

ONE YEAR ANNIVERSARY

with

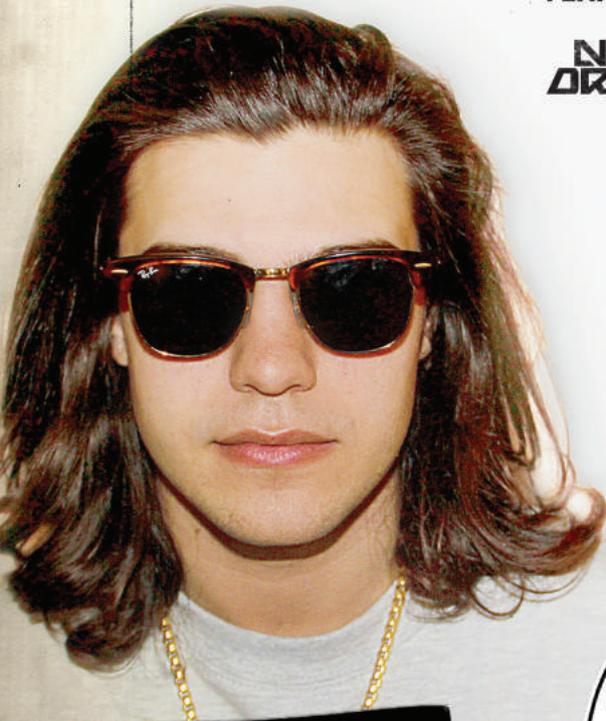
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D V B B S

FEATURING THE AFTRDRK COLLECTIVE



AND SPECIAL GUEST

**MATTY
BOH**



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TICKETPRO.CA



MARCH 20
FORUM MULTIPURPOSE CENTER
8PM-12AM

QUICKIES



MONEY SHOT!

DJ Rasoul
**True Science/
 Rights Of Passage**
 Robsoul

9.0

If there's a producer that deserves thorough revisitation, it's Bay Area don Rasoul. For a decade, he did no wrong for the likes of Panhandle and Grayhound and thanks to Phil Weeks' Robsoul imprint, we have two of his finest re-released. 'True Science' is incessant, a trippy masterpiece which drops deep jazz at the halfway point. 'Rights Of Passage', as SWAT with Kwai Le Chief and Nikola Baytala, is dark and delicious, tribal house of the highest order.

Dan Beaumont
The Trip EP
 Classic

9.0

No one can touch Classic when it's on form, and with this EP from Dalston Superstore and Dance Tunnel man Dan Beaumont, all concerned are indeed entirely untouchable. 'Trippy Pumper' is pulsating, party madness. Any dancefloor that it cannot reduce to vibrating lunacy is worthy of neither your time or effort. 'Dan's Jam' is brooding, tracky disco, eight minutes of sparse, heads-down mania that succeeds despite having no discernible bassline. 'This Feeling' drops a little acid into proceedings. Most welcome it is too, as is Justin Robertson's Deadstock 33s mix.

Andre Lodemann
Coming Your Way EP
 DFTD

8.0

Buzzin' Fly and Freerange alumnus Lodemann drops two skilfully constructed tracks for

Sa'D Ali and other Parliament cohorts including Chuck 'Da Fonk' Fishman, G Koop and Soul Clap chum Chas Bronz. So FSQ is Funk Style Quality, and 'Zulu Congo Call' is a low-slung funk jam par excellence.

Pleasure Planet

Animals
 Throne Of Blood

8.0

Pleasure Planet is Andrew Potter of Populette notoriety and Brian Hersey, turning out a girthsome-yet-understated three-tracker for the peerless Throne Of Blood. In fact, the day this Brooklyn imprint sets a foot wrong, it may usher in the end of days. It's certainly not today, anyways, as this vintage house moodiness is sterling. 'Animals' even features the spectacular Kim Ann Foxman on vocals, so what could possibly be not to like? '6AMATM' chugs in beautifully, while 'Black Shades For White Nights' mooches about as if it owns the place.

The Organ Grinder & Le Horn

Eurotrash EP
 4lux

8.0

Probably techno, really, but it's all house music in the end. Anyway, who knew Cardiff could produce such towering funk? Chayne Ramos, under his alias The Organ Grinder (that makes you the monkey, sadly), teams with 'debutant' Le Horn. The results are abrasive and brilliant. The Hague's Alden Tyrell & Gerd take no prisoners with their mix, and neither does Italian stallion Nicholas. But the original version is no slouch either. They're spoiling us, frankly. Lap it up.

Zoo Look

Together Like This
 Abstract Culture

8.5

Abstract Culture so far has a 100% record. OK, so they've only one release, but they've really smashed it out of the park. Bournemouth's Zoo Look are blessed with populating this inaugural EP, 'Together Like This', a swing-laden groove flecked with acid. The art of the warm-up DJ is often lost these days, but this is the kind of track to be dropped when the gear needs to shift up. The 'Purple Velvet Mix' humps too. 'The Duchess' is a brilliantly fucked up breakbeat houser, the likes of which we don't see enough. Bravo.

Defected's diffusion imprint DFTD. Lovely things they are. 'Coming Your Way' finds the East Berlin-born producer building and layering like a master craftsman, creating classy understatement where others would perhaps just go all out with its bassy synths. On the flip, 'Feeling Good' oozes class too, with its gentle pianos, vocals swirling, samples appearing and then disappearing in the deep. There's a lot to love here.

Black Loops

Simplon EP
 Gruuv

8.5

Audiojack's Gruuv label is ludicrously reliable as far as stone-cold party music is concerned, and this filthy business from Black Loops is unstoppable. Take your pick; 'Simplon' has the rolling, chugging thing down pat. Actually, so does 'Cabron', along with the big room atmosphere. 'Up On You' has a devastating bassline and some swaggering garage attitude. But the Sidney Charles mix of 'Simplon', using the 909 drum palette to devastating effect will slap a big, possibly daft smile across that face of yours.

FSQ

Zulu Congo Call
 Soul Clap Records

8.0

FS who, we hear you cry? Well, that's funny you should ask. With the Soul Clap boys recently having hooked up with George Clinton for some future project action, this is a spin-off of this great meeting of minds comprising Clinton's nephew

Kresy

Ode To New York EP
 Freerange

8.0

Asturias man Kresy makes his debut on Freerange with a stunning three-tracker, following his debut on John Talabot's Hivern Discs. It's all good, but 'Sweet Dangerous MCs' is blinding.

Maher Daniel & John Chamis
Lonely Stars In Open Skies
 All Day I Dream

8.0

Dreamy business from Maher Daniel and John Chamis. Subtle but still anthemic, all interlaced pads and gentle arps weaving together something genuinely lovely.

Redway

We Turn/Fishtank
 Madtech

7.5

In 'We Turn', Robbie Redway turns out something truly special for Kerri Chandler's Madtech. An eerie and wonderful anthem produced by the blazing hot Citizen. Purchase forthwith.

Swords & Sorcery
Rushing/Alchemy
 Swords & Sorcery

7.5

Quality two-tracker from London pair Swords & Sorcery. 'Rushing' grabs the sample from Bump's '90s classic 'I'm Rushin'', while 'Alchemy' brings some wild and untamed bass.



RADIO SLAVE REKIDS

- NINA KRAVIZ** 'Desire' *Rekids*
 "Hypnotic deep techno from my favourite Ruskie."
- BUTCH & RICARDO VILLALOBOS** 'Up' *Sei Es Drums*
 "One long drop and the best breakdown you'll ever have."
- VADIM SVOBODA** 'Patterns LP' *The Double R*
 "Seriously advanced electronics coming soon and my tip for 2014."
- RADIO SLAVE** 'The Clone Wars' *Rekids*
 "You copy me, I copy U."
- TRUNCATE** 'Control' *Truncate 10*
 "More of the same and I'll always want more."
- RADIO SLAVE** 'Repeat Myself (Rodhad Remix)' *Work Them Records*
 "The red head delivers with a super-deep Berghain workout."
- SEVEN DAVIS JR** 'One' *Must Have Records*
 "What a great record to hear at the start of the year. It gives me hope for 2014."
- MR G** 'G Strings' *Rekids*
 "Artist of the year, a great friend and if house is a nation I want Mr G for president."
- UNKNOWN** 'Summer Swing (J Dubs Edit)' *White*
 "The man from Stablo keeps rolling out the jams. Let's hope this one hits the streets."
- FLOORPLAN** 'Phobia' *# Plant*
 "Never grows old."

JONATHAN BURNIP jonathanburnip@gmail.com

QUICKIES

Cratebug

Cratebug Edits
Bug Records

7.5

The Cratebug edits team tackle new and updated treatments of perennial disco classics such as Martin Circus' 'Disco Circus' and Macho's 'I'm A Man'.

Various

Kitsuné December Package

Kitsuné

8.0

House of French disco and electro release a beginning-of-year primer featuring new music from Pyramid, Horixon feat Robert Owens and Techniques. The superb Kiwi remix of the Robert Owens vocal 'Lifeline' is the EP's highlight.

Echoes

Fight The Feeling (Remixes)
Wall of Sound

10

Brilliant label debut from London-based synth-pop duo, Echoes, gets remixed and remodelled by Capracara, James Trystan, Boderline Jack and WLD.

Pleasure Planet

Animals
Throne of Blood

8.5

Chirpy disco/deep house three-tracker from new label signing, Pleasure Planet. Title track features a vocal delivery from the one-and-only Kim Ann Foxman.

Blamma! Blamma! feat Kristina Train

Zsa Zsa (Remixes)

Eskimo Recordings

8.0

Heralds of the modern disco scene come out of a quiet period with a remix package from duo, Blamma! Blamma! — inviting the likes of Andy Cato, Psychemagik, Kiani vs Red D and Eelke Kleijn to do their bidding. Groove Armada's Andy Cato serves up a Balearic ace alongside a slow electro manoeuvre from the Psychemagik boys. Two rousing deep house remixes from Kiani vs Red D and Eelke Kleijn round off this tidy return.

Christian S

Pitch Rider

Comeme

9.0

Christian S's curdled house classic 'Jagos', from 2010, made a recent appearance in Ben UFO's Essential Mix, giving this very underrated artist some deserved exposure. So prepare yourselves for some more of that brilliant pitch-bent, proto-house madness on this first solo release from the Cologne-based DJ/producer. The lead title tune twists broken hi-hat passes through stammering drum programming and foggy DX stabs. Frenetic percussive touches punch through the likes of 'Drifting' and 'Die Durch Die Nase Lachen' and the thoroughly oddball 'Rhumba' takes you to a dizzying finale. Comeme entering a new year and showing that they have no end of new tricks up their sleeves.

Factory Floor

Turn It Up (Remixes)

DFA

8.5

Laurel Halo trumped most last year with the brilliant, long-playing 'Chance Of Rain' on Hyperdub; now she applies some of her maverick talent to Factory Floor's latest single. Remodelling the primitive pulse of the band's arcane drum machines, Halo's version reaches a giddy climax with nebulous synths and smudged dub tones. In contrast, Detroit techno hero, Carl Craig, reduces the groove to a darkened, hypnotic club tool.

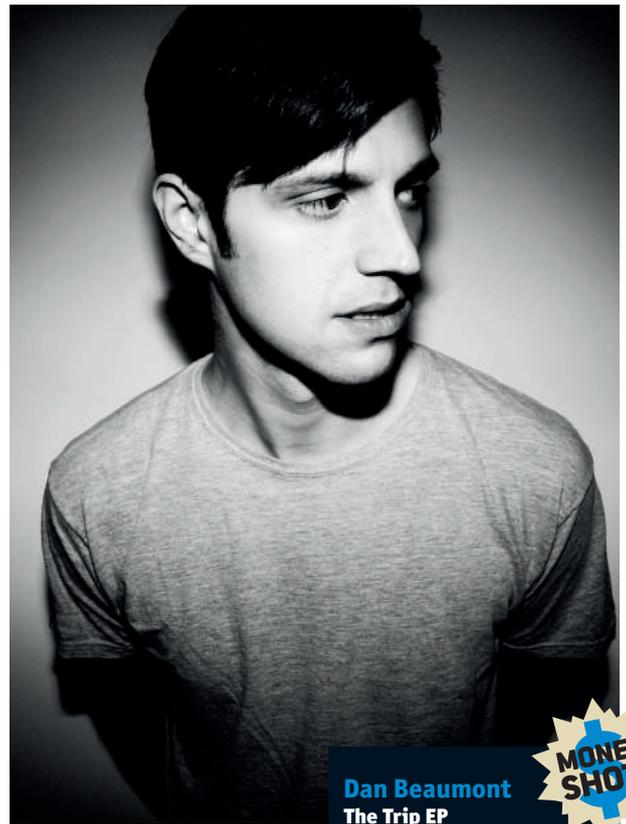
Fini Tribe

DeTestimony (Remixes)

FFFt

8.5

25 years on, Fini Tribe's metal dance/Balearic anthem comes around again, with support from new remixes by Optimo, Justin Robertson, A Finiflex Production and Robot84. Glaswegian production duo Optimo twist a



Dan Beaumont

The Trip EP

Classic

10

British house music stalwart, Classic, is back with its doors wide open for business again with this strobing disco homage to NYC house music. 'Dan's Jam' and 'This Feeling' lament one of the Big Apple's greatest clubs, Sound Factory, with dark, wild-pitch touches, nodding to Farley & Heller's Roach Motel. Clearly titled, 'Trippy Pumper' lets loose a fierce bass arpeggio to get a Balearic overhaul from Justin Robertson's Deadstock 33s and a brilliant, techy dub version from Caravan label boss, October.

controlled chaos of Rebolledo's wild, wiggled-out giddy dub version of the title tune that steals the show.

Various

I-Robots pres The Balance EP

Opilec Music

7.5

Picked up midway through 2013 for Chez Damier's Balance label, this four-track EP gets issued again on Opilec with extras. Alongside the spikey punk-funk of I-Robots' 'Streets Of Dongguan', Jordan Fields' 707-propelled proto-house tune and Federico Gandin's take on the old school Motor City sound, sits a new version of Klein & MBO's 'Last Call', remixed by the I-Robots.

steely, industrial version with clattering effects and fuzzing leads. Operating under his Deadstock 33s guise, Justin Robertson produces a Balearic house fix, while Finiflex and Robot84 temper the mood with their slo-mo mixes.

La Mverte

Through The Circles EP

Her Majesty's Ship

8.0

Making a debut on Astro Lab previously, La Mverte embarks upon a solo journey on Her Majesty's Ship with four tracks inspired by Italo-disco, minimal-synth and coldwave. Immediate highlight is the mid-tempo, industrial-tinged title track that nods to Dopplereffekt's classic 'Infophysix', but there are other great moments to subvert your dancefloor with — the flickering acid-disco of 'Crash Course', both in original and Acid Washed remix versions.

Munk & Rebolledo

Surf Smurf

Gomma

9.0

Pachanga Boy, Rebolledo, takes a break from writing with Superpitcher for a whimsical collaboration with Munk. As the title hints, expect a tongue-in-cheek combination of disorienting surf rock and weighty disco rhythm, steeped in a showering of sleaze. A touch of acid-disco creeps in with the lively bonus track, 'Got It Baby', but it's the



ZAF BBE

1. **STEPHEN ENCINAS** 'Disco Illusion' *Invisible City Editions*
"Despite being the first person in the country to own this record on an original 12", in 2012, this is still my favourite track of the year."
2. **VARIOUS** 'Philly Re-Grooved: the Tom Moulton Philly Groove Vinyl Boxset' *Harmless Records*
"Too many killer cuts on here to ignore... a different cut becomes my favourite after every listen."
3. **CANDIDO** 'Thousand Finger Man/Dancin' & Prancin' *Sunshine Sound*
"Unreleased versions of these two classics, previously only available on acetate, Disco Patrick kindly shared these with the world, essential!"
4. **JOVONN** 'Body 'N' Deep EP' *Dogmatik Records*
"House music just like I like it... from the veteran... remember buying his first-ever record!"
5. **VARIOUS** 'Under the Influence Volume Three: A Collection of Rare Soul & Disco' *Z Records*
"Compiled by my mate James Glass, there are some tracks on this that I do not own!"
6. **SOUL RENEGADES** 'Now You're Gonna Save Me' *Restless Soul*
"Finally on vinyl, been dancing to this for a very long time, banger! Phlash in full effect!"
7. **VARIOUS** 'African Shakedown' *African Shakedown Records*
"Absurd Afro tracks from the '90s... rocked many a party this year with this."
8. **LEON LOWMAN** 'Liquid Diamonds' *Rush Hour*
"Taken from two different original LPs, this superb record proves there is enough killer music still to be unearthed."
9. **WILLIAM ONYEABOR** 'Who Is William Onyeabor?' *Luaka Bop*
"Outstanding compilation of all his best cuts... amazing triple vinyl!"
10. **DEGO** 'Find A Way' *2000 Black*
"Slaughtered this tune in many dances since its release... genius!"



R-A-G

Life
Lux Rec

9.0

The R-A-G techno super-group — Aroy Dee, G Strings and Ma Spaventi — deliver a low-slung killer for Lux. Less pre-occupied with the musical finesse of their releases for Dee's label, 'Life' opens with the build-up drums and acid climaxes of 'Disorder'. Spaventi lends his unique touch to 'Repression', bringing the menacing bass to the fore, while 'OD' stands out thanks to the tape hiss and its murderous bassline, which gradually recoils like a panther stalking its prey.

Asok

Poltergeist
MOS Deep

7.5

MOS owner Aroy Dee has a knack of finding producers who share his musical vision, and 'Poltergeist' is no exception. The work of a Liverpool producer, tracks like 'Project Poltergeist' and 'Smash Dimensions' feature the interplay between grainy basslines and spacey chords that has become the label's common sound. Thankfully though, Dee is not looking for copycat artists and 'Walker' sees Asok deliver a more abstract, wozy take on the sound, while similarly, 'Captain Blood' focuses on Suburban Knight-style bass menace rather than airy melodies.

Ellis de Havilland

Born Out Of Cheapness & Frustration

Bunker 4000

8.0

In the strange world of the Hague's Bunker, it's always hard to separate truth from fiction. In this instance let's assume that the late US producer Ellis de Havilland did actually exist and that he made the lo-fi, murky grooves that inhabit 'Cheapness'.

Sounding like they were recorded in the basement of a crack house on Chicago's south side, each track verges on the puerile, but de Havilland manages to infuse his grimy acid adventures with just enough Steve Poindexter-style funk to make them palatable.

John Daly

Solar Sailing

One Track

8.0

John Daly's latest release for One Track showcases the Irish producer's ability to merge musical elements with DJ-friendly arrangements. The 'Full Tide' version of 'Sailing' is informed by Detroit techno as dreamy, wozy chords unfold over a raw, humming bass and tingly percussive slivers. The 'Deep' version brings the chords to the fore, placed over doubled-up claps, while the 'Rhythm Section' version focuses on dense percussion and rolling conga drums. Fans of vintage Kevin Saunderson should seek out 'Sailing'.

Magic Mountain High

Tiny Breadcrumbs

Off Minor

8.0

Move D's ongoing collaboration with Juju & Jordash yields more out-there grooves. Like previous MMH material, this release is the result of improvised jamming, and all of the tracks have a spontaneous, raw feeling. 'Avalanche' features the sound of the wind screeching through a forest over a primitive drum beat, while 'Don't Cry For Me Argentina (No Compromise Mix)' sees ghostly Moog lines run over a stripped-back rhythm. The most impressive track to come from the trio's live jams is 'Riptide', where spaced-out acid lines arc and ride over a trippy, modulated rhythm.

Qoso

Jura
In Paradisum

7.5

The work of a new French producer, 'Jura' takes up the baton where Truss

left off. The title track is a tough, functional number, powered by heavy claps and thundering kicks, but it's only a prelude for 'Laphroaig'. Harder, faster and heavier, waves of discordant acid wash over distorted drums, like a gabba version of Richie Hawtin's F.U.S.E project. 'Ardmore' is even more intense and consists mainly of what sounds like a malfunctioning jackhammer scraping against a steel wall.

Yan Cook

Morse EP

Ann Aimee

7.0

Like Marcellus, Cook is part of a new wave of European producers — can he distinguish himself from the established set of techno artists? In truth, 'Lighthouse' and 'Nylon' are well-executed but hardly revelatory, revolving around tough, dubby beats, doubled-up claps and mysterious, droning textures. However, when Cook departs from the script, he really impresses. In particular, 'Morse' shifts from stepping rhythms to a pulsing, buzz-saw bass, while 'Suspense' features the kind of jarring riffs and wild siren wails that makes it sound like vintage Joey Beltram, updated for 2014.

Young Male

I Lost My E

Work Them Records

7.5

There's been a lot of talk about Young Male and the White Material label — but is the hype justified? On the evidence of 'I Lost My E', it's clear that Young Male is highly capable of making high-quality club tracks with some unusual signatures; the driving 'Finesse' goes out of time as it closes, and 'Depraved Thoughts In Depraved Times' boasts the kind of eerie soundscapes that Silent Servant might conjure up. Whether or not Young Male and his associates deserve the attention they receive is questionable.

Prostitutes

Truncheon Cadence Part One

Mira

8.0

It's true that some of the most innovative recent electronic music has come from outsiders and James Donadio doesn't fit the typical techno bill. Previously a noise rocker, his loose and fast approach to arranging is refreshing. On one hand there's the dense drums of 'Unanswered', while by contrast 'Led Up Garden Paths' is a frazzled, droning affair and 'This Whole Affair's So Fucking Unfair' is a gnarly, broken beat workout, its punishing drums and nausea-inducing subs introducing a level of unease rarely experienced in techno.

QUICKIES

Ajukaja & Andrevski

Rare Birds

Levels

7.0

The title track starts off with a reduced rhythm but gradually the duo introduce gentle keys and chords. 'Expensive Shit' is dubbier and more teased-out, but overall 'Birds' offers minimal house imagined through a hazy, dreamy filter.

Various

Genesis Tracks

Sistrum

8.0

Patrice Scott's Sistrum ventures down a darker, more tracky route than usual with Johannes Volk's 'Steam' and the gurgling 303s of 'Future Acid Test' from the mysterious Shariff Anderson. However, fans of Scott's deep sound need not fear as his 'Quasar' track as Modular One is up there with Sistrum's finest.

Vril

Vortekz

Delsin

7.0

Vril can usually be found releasing for Giegling, but despite finding a new home on Delsin, it's business as usual. 'Vortekz' is powered by splintered beats and buzzing percussion, while more impressively, 'Y7-10' boasts the severe unpredictability of a Surgeon track.

Miltiades

Stmete EP

Echovolt

8.0

It's deep, reflective techno on offer this time from the consistent Echovolt label. Ignore the Reflektor's pacy rework of the title track and head instead for the sun-kissed, sublime grooves of 'WA4.Sun' and 'Da3w.U'.



TR-ONE APARTMENT

- 01. RECLOSE** 'It's Too Late EP' *Delusions of Grandeur*
"Reclose on form... as ever..."
- 02. LEROSA** 'Woman Flew Home EP' *Photic Fields*
"Big brother Leo, Dublin's favourite Italian, delivers a killer EP. Kind of how we imagine Guinness-flavoured pizza tastes."
- 03. ECHO 106** 'Choco and Cherry' *Mathematics US*
"A fantastic slept-on LP of electro goodness. One of our favourite records of the year."
- 04. CHRIS TURNER** 'Fly Love (Andres Remix)' *Rebirth*
"Classic Andres shuffle and funk."
- 05. NEW JACKSON** 'Of A Thousand Leaves' *Major Problems*
"A 10-minute musical journey that builds and builds... wait for those strings. This track caused eruptions in our sets together earlier in the year."
- 06. SEVEN DAVIS JNR.** 'One' *Must Have Records*
"This shit swings hard."
- 07. COLM K** 'Love EP' *Bastard Jazz*
"Quite simply the record of 2013. Take note."
- 08. AUTOMATIC TASTY** 'The Joys Of Departure EP' *Photic Fields*
"Ludicrously deep music, probably about fields. Not much out there as beautiful as this."
- 09. SUBMERSIBLE MACHINES** 'Isobaths' *Lunar Disko*
"Lunar continue to show why they're one of the best labels in the country."
- 10. BENEDEK** 'Untitled' *PPU*
"Debut release from Benedek, and one of the strongest records yet on the unrelenting PPU."

DAVID MCCARTHY electrodjmag@davidmccarthy.com

QUICKIES

h2so4

She Weirds Me Out
self released

6.0

Interesting noises on a Kraftwerkian groove, with the result sounding a little like a dancified Spiritualized. Comes with a dub that some more inventive DJs could put to good use.

M.U.I.R. feat
K-Hunt**Reflections**
Deaf By Records

6.0

Featuring K-Hunt on a strong vocal performance, 'Reflections' is the debut from M.U.I.R. on his own label. It's a late-nighter rather than a party-starter, but nice and atmospheric.

Napalm &
D-Phrag**Eclipse (Spatial Awareness Remix)**

Stripped Recordings

7.0

Spatial Awareness follows his own recent debut single with another classy remix outing, this time bringing a bubbling acid feel to his stripped-back legacy beats.

Wiggle Ratio

Kick Out The Bins

MP3

7.0

Who knows what the MC5 would have made of this squelchpunk Prodigy-esque cover that has its tongue firmly in-cheek? Weirdly, a little dancefloor humour can often work wonders.

Birdee

Just Call Me

Vicious Bitch

8.0

Birdee has had quite a bit of exposure for his previous releases on Southern Fried, with Radio 1 airplay and support from the likes of Laidback Luke and Crookers. 'Just Call Me' is an accomplished bit of what is probably called 'electro house' by Beatport, but in fact, the subtle blend of dirty basslines and funky grooves goes beyond that limiting term. It's the funk that is brought to the fore in Fare Soldi's remix, which really kicks things into overdrive.

Danton Eprom

Biscotto & Chimpanzee

Infine

7.0

Featuring a duet with Kitsuné's Birkii, this is a little genre-defying gem that isn't dancefloor material in its original form, but certainly should be on radiowaves all over the place. It's the kind of smart and well-executed stuff that should be the 'pop' face of dance music. Fairmont (of Border Community and My Favorite Robot production fame) brings an almost Death In Vegas feel to proceedings with his remix, which is a very good thing indeed.

Giorgio Moroder vs
I-Robots**Utopia (The I-Robots Reconstructions)**

Deeplay Digital

7.0

Giorgio Moroder had quite a year, with the Daft Punk link-up and finally finding himself behind some DJ decks in his seventies. Here's something from THE '70s, worked up by Opilec Music boss I-Robots. The track was originally included in a partially mixed album in 1977 and here are newly extended versions. '1977 Reconstruction' is simply the original extended to almost seven minutes; the '2014 Tape Reconstruction' brings things up-to-date with beefier production.

Lewis Bergen

The Jetyr EP

joyGAIN

7.0

A result of a collaboration between Brit Lewis Bergen and North American electronic producer Taperecorder, the tracks came about by the now-common international file-sharing creative process. 'Hoi Polloi' comes in two flavours, the first Lewis' own version, a really nice atmospheric outing that balances ambient noises with a hefty 'oomph' really well. The other tracks point to a good working relationship between



DPPLNGRS

Azure Protocol

Arcade Pony Records

9.0

DPPLNGRS change gear and label with this, their fourth release on Arcade Pony. Now that every chancer from hardstyle cheese merchants to inspirationless 'house legends' have laid claim to EDM and laid bare its heavy metal level of subtlety, 'ecelebro' is the buzzword for 2014. And what better example of a new vision could you have than the subtle blend of garage, techno and electro that is 'Azure Protocol' and 'Billion Dollar Brain'?

the pair and are definitely worth checking out.

Paul Blandford

Darkforme EP

Death Proof Recordings

7.0

'Minimal' doesn't really have small enough connotations to accurately describe the insistently sparse attack of 'Haunch'. The hypnotic bassline merges with the drum track to form a kind of soft wall of sound that grows harder the more it continues to play. Paul Blandford is the co-owner of the label and this is his first release under his own name, with his own sound. The result is some delicious dubby darkness.

Takeydo & Nick Wolanski

Renegade Master

NumberOneBeats

5.0

Wildchild's 'Renegade Master' was a Top 20 hit in the late '90s and at the time was something of a genre-crossing ear-opener. Fatboy Slim did a great remix in his own inimitable style too, and even today both versions still stand as great dancefloor tracks. Nick Wolanski & Takeydo really bring nothing new to the party, and in fact leave quite a few good bits behind. Points awarded are for reminding me of the previous versions.

TR20

Road Sines

KYUBU

8.0

A brand-new record label, KYUBU kicks off with this smart blend of tribal electro-tech that definitely qualifies for the 'electro' tag.

Joshua Tobin and Jack Rutherford make up the duo and this is their own label, which aims to feature output from likeminds alongside their own material. Barry Jamieson has touched up tracks by everyone from Sasha to Madonna, New Order and Depeche Mode, and his stripped-back, more traditional dark house version is a perfect flipside.

Years & Years

Real EP

Kitsuné

3.0

When I used to see the Kitsuné mark on a release it was a reason to check it out with a high level of anticipation, but for quite a while now, their output seems to have lost focus. 'Real' sounds like some bad Brit-school attempt at the kind of pop-dance crossover drivel that takes up the majority of Radio 1 airtime. Part Coldplay, part The Voice, it isn't one to be remembered as a landmark release for the label.



LARRY TEE ULTRA MUSIC

- 1. RAINER** 'Satin (Absolute Remix)' *Kissability*
"This vocal beauty shimmers with the touch of new London star-of-the-moment producer ABSOLUTE! A treat!"
- 2. SHOOK** 'Demon' *Help Yourself*
"Gritty and demonic-sounding indeed. This one grinds the floor hard in an off-kilter way."
- 3. GREEN VELVET** 'Bigger Than Prince (Hot Since 82 Remix)' *Circus*
"Green Velvet. Enuff said. Catchiest vocal of the year."
- 04. LIGHTYEAR** 'Pumpt' *Twin Turbo*
"A techno-electro bitch that drives and throbs in all the right ways."
- 05. SUPER ELECTRIC PARTY MACHINE** 'Icons' *Carnage*
"Noisy car crash and the names of everyone from Obama to Kurt Cobain makes this a disturbing must-heat!"
- 06. CLAIRE** 'Games (Rey & Kjavik Remix)' *Capital*
"A sublime groove that gently takes over the floor. Boops and bleeps you into Nirvana."
- 07. SOUND OF STEREO** 'Funk' *Dim Mak*
"Dirty, ripping, nasty, growling monster! It's pure fun and trashy as hell. Oh well."
- 08. LOGO** 'Fabrice' *Kitsuné*
"When the deep vocals interrupt the song with 'RELAX' near the end, it makes you know the drugs have kicked in."
- 09. LES TRONCHIENNES** 'Hab'En' *Mahtrasher*
"Driving track from one of the underrated producers of the moment. Effective and so so satisfying."
- 10. MKRNI** 'Humedad (DJs Parejas Remix)' *Different*
"Funky, fun little indie dance track with cute Euro-trash girl vocals. Light but lovely!"

QUICKIES



Hidden Element & Liquid Break feat Kiyomi

I See The Light
Burelom

9.0

If there's one part of the universe that understands drum & bass like its British creators and guardians, it's Russia. From St Petersburg comes a new label. Their first release certainly sets an unorthodox, exceptionally high precedent. Tumbling breaks pay homage to the Amen-dominated days, while a poltergeist-frosted vocal soars angelically over the rough and rugged backdrop. This stunning track is a soul searcher and will cause as much devastation to the dancefloor as it will enlightenment through your headphones.

Drumsound & Bassline Smith

Nicaragua
Technique Recordings

8.5

While waiting for their telegram Drumsound & Bassline Smith celebrate their turn of the century by releasing Tech 100, 'Nicaragua'. Plucking elements from their experience of the scene since the '90s, the track is a mix of underground and mainstream, which blends nicely to create a metaphor to symbolise their own personal journey to today's position in the scene. The entire EP needs to be listened to, but finale track 'Neighbourhood' is something quite special.

Frankee

Harlequin VIP
Ram

8.5

What a 12 months Ram have had. Another year passes, packed full of successes, and to celebrate this they have released their 2013 annual, which of course includes everyone's favourite colourful character Frankee and the exclusive VIP of his track 'Harlequin'. As we've come to expect from the boy wonder, we have a mix of infectiously catchy drum patterns and a dark pounding bassline, with seemingly effortless excellence.

June Miller

Empathy
Ram

8.0

Few artists have such an explosive effect on the scene so quickly, but since signing to the mighty Ram little over a year ago, Anglo/Dutch outfit June Miller have gained complete recognition, bringing us to the second offering from the label in this month's reviews. This stunning vocal track has thundered in the sets of boss Andy C since the summer, and is finally out for release. Big bass, monstrous drops and perfect production.

Loadstar

Eat My Tears (Rene LeVice Remix)
Ram

9.0

Following suit, every good debut album deserves a remix album, and Loadstar's 'Future Perfect (Remix)' delivers some tasty cuts. Label mate Rene LeVice lights the long wick of

'Eat My Tears' and sets the track on fire. This screeching monster of a tune burns the imagery of a shower of rockets loudly illuminating the backdrop of a black night sky. Behind the overwhelming screams roars a beastly pulsating throb of continuous sound, leaving only a subtle tinge of the track it once was.

Mediks

By A Thread (Hybrid Minds Remix)
AudioPorn Records

8.5

Like a satisfying soup on an icy winter's day, this is a drop of heart-warming liquid that will surely thaw even lovers of the darkest, coldest drum & bass. Calming, sweet and emotional vocals stitch the track together with gently plucked strings providing the core melody. Crashing cymbals and a graceful drum pattern implement the percussion. Both Mediks and Hybrid Minds are turning the heads of the scene's most influential tastemakers, so this is not an EP to be missed.

Mindstate

Vibes
Liondub International

8.0

The jump-up crew love a rough and dirty feel, something to summon the skank and warrant a war face. With its drilling sub, ragga vox and utter bombardment of dub sirens, 'Vibes' certainly delivers the goods. Dark in atmosphere, this track will have no issues tearing down the dirtiest dances; however, its drum pattern, paired with the dub elements, take this track to the more accessible level of ravers outside of the jump-up arena.

NFM & HLZ

Rota
Horizons

8.5

With previous releases on Headz, Playaz and Shogun to name the bare minimum, NFM & HLZ really need no introduction. Horizons are now the latest label to be added to that list. The sound of 'Rota' is classic and clean and precise to the point of medical obsession, with an air of malice which ominously lingers like a reaper over a bed, before snatching its prey, dropping into the descending helter-skelter of bass.

D-Region & Code feat Adria Kain

Fly Away
Emotif

7.0

Despite the predictability of this track, from the lyrical content to the choice of pads and patterns, this little dancefloor number isn't too terrible. It serves its purpose well and unashamedly, and although not generally to the taste of the more seasonal club attendee, it should satisfy the palate of the fresher meat.

Eddit

Sound Killer
SHG:LTD

9.0

It prowls powerfully before quickly pouncing with an

almighty drop, signaled by the deep-voiced warning of the 'Sound Killer'. This hugely layered track draws influences from seemingly every possible direction. Dub-style vox, wailing monks, crashing thunderous drums, techy metallic samples, you name it, it's here.

Matt & Kendo

Booster
Dubbed

5.5

Fresher floorfiller bass, best used for a string of clubs named after a pair of big jungle cats or huge aquatic regions. In saying that, the bassline is thumping, but the synths used are just too hands-in-the-air.



DRUMSOUND & BASSLINE SMITH TECHNIQUE

- DRUMSOUND & BASSLINE SMITH** 'Nicaragua' *Technique*
"The first track taken from our 'TECH100 EP'. The narrator's epic introduction heightens the excitement here and all builds for a blazing drop."
- FRICITION & METRIK** 'Legacy' *Hospital*
"Lush nostalgic chords set the tone perfectly, then escalate into a euphoric roller."
- LYNX** 'Take Back The Night' *Ram*
"His debut single on Ram does not disappoint. Funky intro, topped with a beautiful vocal, leads to a naughty "trademark Lynx" drop... big tune!"
- DRUMSOUND & BASSLINE SMITH** 'Breakin' Badboy' *Technique*
"Another 'TECH100' track. The intense build-up always seems to capture the imagination here. Just how Heisenberg likes it."
- HAZARD** 'Mark Q' *Playaz*
"Been around for a little while now, but it's another killer from the man like Hazard. As expected, pure vibes and essential selection."
- TAXMAN FEAT DIANE CHARLEMAGNE** 'Rebirth' *Playaz*
"Sampler taken from his forthcoming album 'No More Anthems'. Taxman showing another side artistically here, and boy is he on top form. Stunning vocals from Diane Charlemagne too."
- DRUMSOUND & BASSLINE SMITH** 'Can You Feel It VIP' *Technique*
"We've reworked one of our classics, given it some 2014 love and the response has been incredible."
- DIMENSION** 'Crowd Reaction' *Cyantific*
"A young producer who's been simmering for some time now, and 2014 could just be his year."
- DRUMSOUND & BASSLINE SMITH** 'Serious Business' *Technique*
"It's a back to your roots, jungle homage here. This is not for the faint-hearted."
- THE PROTOTYPES** 'Pale Blue Dot' *Viper*
"Arguably the hottest producers in drum & bass right now."



RadioKillaz
**All Massive/
Don't Wanna 9-5**
Rkz Recordings

9.0

Those dastardly RadioKillaz start 'All Massive' with some skanking breakbeat riddims, echo, delay and natty ragga vox. A deep burrowing bassline soon joins the fray before fizzy electro synths glide into the first drop. Scything tear-out bass and blistering beats then transport the dubwise sensibility into a full-on hardcore assault that can't fail to nice up any dance. 'Don't Wanna 9-5' on the flip has a Rasta vox expunging the joys of unconventional working over flicked drumstep beats, with mournful horns adding to the outlaw feel. Wicked and bad.

Madd-Inc vs Sax3

The Dubkinetik EP feat Papa Levi & Daddy Colonel
Sub Slayers

9.0

Hardcore legend Lennie De Ice and Kool FM's Madd-Inc come together with a couple of vintage ragga chatterers — Papa Levi and Daddy Colonel — for a dubwise juddering growly bashy original that contains all the elements to make it ripe for some Sub Slayers mainstays to overhaul. Liondub turns it 175bpm jump-up jungle, while King Yoof takes it into the realms of 140bpm future jungle with his trademark steely beats and reggae stylings. Leading d&b figure DJ Rap, no less, turns in a slightly out-of-sorts electro-dubstep revamp, and Madd-Inc himself ruffs it up into deebie too. Killah!

Rebel Sketchy

So It Goes feat Bukue One & Agne Motie
Ground Level

7.5

Rebel Sketchy has been feeding breakbeat tracks into the scene for a good few years now, yet with his 'Goodbye Gravity' album he's cast

his net a bit wider. 'So It Goes' calls on Californian rapper Bukue One to rhyme over a bass music bed, with vocalist Agne Motie purring sweet sonnets in-between. It's quite commercial, radio-friendly and poppy, yet will still pick up early doors club play. The Bert On Beats remix tickles with a tropical underbelly, while Kwerk turns it into more of a straight-up electroid breakbeat banger.

Lucas

In the Dark EP
Top Drawer Digital

7.5

The title track on the Top Drawer Digital label bossman Lucas's new EP is dark dynamic neurofunk, kinda like a Photek album track battling it out in a cave with cartoon demons. 'Sweeney Todd' features a sinister spoken word vocal sample, which could actually be a demon barber whispering in your ear as you sit in an electric chair that vibrates to a vintage Depth Charge piece. Finally, 'Scared' is gnarly breakbeat that could function equally at a late-night free party or in some of the more grimey clubs.

Freestylers feat Laura Steel

Falling
Rub-A-Duck

8.5

An artcore tropical breakbeat intro to 'Falling' is soon augmented by some lush Laura Steel vox, and then the gently menacing wobbly bassline enters the fray — lurking like a Predator behind a tree. This original is very simply constructed — but sometimes simplicity is just what the doctor ordered. The Stanton Warriors carve out cavemen beats for the intro of their overhaul, giving the vocal space to breathe before dropping down into a rolling, trap-inspired disco-funk cut that features 'Good Vibrations' yelps and pared-down block-banging. Wickaman supplies the d&b version.

Dutty Moonshine

Rachestra Vol 2
Rocstar

8.0

Feelgood party ghetto-funk cut 'No Doubt' featuring Jimi Needles kicks off this collaborative EP from the Dutty duo of Michael Rack and Alex Furley. It's followed by 'Real Thing' featuring Captain Flatcap, which is bona fide electro swing with flutes and everything — and this page loves a bit of electro swing sometimes. Rocstar bossman Cut La Roc guests on 'Keep the Crowd Hype', a fun-loving breakbeat-funker with a neat b-line and Beiderbecke horns in the background.

Rico Tubbs

The Return
Bass=Win

5.5

This is indeed the return of Rico Tubbs, although put alongside his bass music classic 'Gangsters', it does seem to be going through the motions a tad. The template is the same and the constituent parts — wobbly bass, hype slippery-slidey garage beats, arcade game noises etc — are all present and correct, but it doesn't quite gel.

Schema

Fumin' feat Cheshire Cat
Sub Slayers

9.0

These Jersey boys sure have been quiet for a couple of years, but return here with a rolling minimalist steppa that calls on legendary rapper Cheshire Cat (Leftfield) to deliver some on-point irie conscious rhymes. The stripped-down nature of the original is quite a surprise, but the remixes up the ante in various ways. Sub Slayers mainstay Toronto Is Broken turns it freewheelin' drum & bass, while Gella excels with a burbling bashy bagatelle drumstep piece. Jinx In Dub starts in dub before building it into a raw polyrhythmic junglist slab, and Atomic Drop turn it anthemic dubstep.

NAPT & Roska

Roar/Mr Oscar
Foot's Gold

9.0

So this is what Roska has been up to, collabing with the NAPT boys Tomek and Ash — with pretty wicked results, too. 'Roar' intros with a pretty neat build-up, pivoted around sparse rolling beats and a pressure-cooker siren wail. After the first drop, the hype bashy beats and "Hup" yelps are joined by cowbell — gotta have more cowbell! — and then clanging old hardcore keys. Impossible to genre categorise, 'Roar' would make Katy Perry shrivel up behind a bush. 'Mr Oscar' is a pared-down percussive feast, part-funky bashy bass and part-clanging deep tech house.

QUICKIES

Fisso & Spark feat BBK

Earthquake (Drumattic Twins Remix)
Ground Level

7.5

The Drumattics take the straight-up, noisy, wobbly breakbeat original and turn it into an electronic disco-funk piece that's got way more funk.

Krafty Kuts

Could You Be Krafty
free download

7.5

A Krafty bootleg of the Robert Nesta Marley singalong classic, with added beefed-up beats and an MC filling in a few gaps in-between. Krafty always makes an unexpected bootleg work.

FreQ Nasty feat Spoonface

Why? (Mr Bill Remix)
High Chai

7.5

The FreQ lets Mr Bill loose on his drum & trap-step original, leading to a jerky glitch-garage reworking that somebody like Si Begg might have come up with.

B-Side feat Kimberley Kennedy

Dope Rider (General Narco Remix)
Ghetto Funk

8.5

The ghetto funk original is spiced up by General Narco, who orders plenty of hyper-kinetic beats and sends a bad-ass b-line out to battle with the feelgood vocals of Kimberley Kennedy. This General is set to be a major force in beats, bass and breaks.



ED209 SUB SLAYERS

- ED209** 'Electric Friends (Remix)' *Sub Slayers*
"Very proud to have this on Sub Slayers, Jane Fraser and Class A on vocals."
- PYRAMID** 'Leads To Nothing' *Funkatech*
"Typical huge Pyramid production, sounds huge in a club."
- SCHEMA FEAT CHESHIRE CAT** 'Fumin' *Sub Slayers*
"Really feeling this, big Cheshire Cat fan and Schema have taken good care of him."
- JACKAL** 'Shake Down (Je Boogie Edit)' *IBWT free download*
"Squeaky little number."
- MADD-INC FEAT SAX3** 'Dubkinetik' *Sub Slayers*
"Great jiggy reggae vibes to get the gyal dem movin'."
- SLYDE FEAT MAKIIN** 'I Cant Help It (Deekline & Laidback Remix)' *Rat Records*
"Solid Deekline track, love the space in this one and the top line is a killer."
- VINYL JUNKIE & SANXION** 'Wages of Sin' *Sub Slayers*
"Dutty — simples."
- DJ FIX** 'Dollar Bills' *Illeven Eleven*
"Kinda Miami vibe on this one but super solid, very warm and pleasing."
- BREAKING NEWS FEAT ALASKA MC** 'Freeze (Se7en Deadly Breaks Remix)' *IBWT*
"Always gotta rep the Se7en Deadly Breaks, going from strength to strength."
- SCRUFFIZER** 'Kick It' *Black Butter*
"Both mixes of this are sick, little slice of Black Butter goodness."

QUICKIES



MONEY SHOT!

Crackazat
Candle Coast EP
Local Talk

8.0

Sure, there are points on his 'Candle Coast EP' where Ben Jacobs sounds like a lot of other producers making happy, overtly musical 4/4, but then there's also 'Dancrodile' — a guitar-flecked marimba-driven funkster of a production that's a proven grey-London-morning-pick-me-up. It's the glaring hit in the middle of a solid three-tracker that just builds and builds melodically to the point where you can actually taste the serotonin seeping into your central nervous system.

JETS feat Jamie Lidell
Midas Touch

Leisure System

7.5

Thankfully, Machinedrum and Jimmy Edgar (known collaboratively as JETS) manage to properly harness the strength of Jamie Lidell's vocal line without ever eclipsing it on this vinyl-only drop. The original track — one that previously opened Machinedrum's Essential Mix — 'Midas Touch' is fraught with a sense of space and driven by a simple boogie, but Machinedrum's version is a little more crammed with shocks of colour, his wedges of synth sitting clipped between the vocal.

Mumdance
Springtime EP

Unknown to the Unknown

8.0

Turns out, there's even more of a sweetboy side to Jack Adams' work as Mumdance than his penchant for shoegaze and structural grime

would have you believe. These two cuts for the UTTU label rely on very different things — 'Springtime' leans heavily on layered warbling, low bit-rate, almost skweee synthesisers, whilst 'It's Peak' makes overwhelming use of stabs and a big pounding kick drum — delivering a hard-edged variation on anything you might've been expecting.

Buz Ludzha
Love Repetitive Rhythmics
All City

8.0

Recording here as Buz Ludzha, The Cyclist's debut drop for the All City label dishes out two slices of the type of scuzzed-up, rippling techno we've come to expect after his album dalliance on Leaving Records. A little more linear than that material, 'Rave With Love' and 'Basslines For Death' are hard-hitting, functional tools. Their character lies primarily in combustion, creating two shots of exemplary, crunchy, gritty house music.

Ratcatcher
Somehow/Motion
Peach

6.0

There's definitely a time and a place for lusciously produced, polite house music but oddly enough, sometimes the people you expect to do something impressive with the form just seem to conform instead. There's nothing drastically wrong with ex-C.R.S.T member Ratcatcher's two original offerings here, it's just they're so vividly overshadowed by the drum work and melody of Leon Vynehall and Benjamin Damage's remixes that it's hard to really embrace them properly.

Lockah
If Loving U Is Wrong, I Don't Want To Be Wrong

Donky Pitch

7.0

In a weird way 'If Loving U Is Wrong...' is exactly the type of thing you'd expect from an artist who's gearing up for an album release: it ably shows a diversity from his previous material, whilst cementing a very certain production sheen that he's made his own. 'Ayyo Tricknology' is again wantonly different, even from the A-side, asking a few not-so-subtle questions of the direction of that forthcoming long-player.

Mr Mitch
The Room Where I Belong
Gobstopper

8.5

For all this talk of the renaissance of alien instrumental grime that's being flung around at the minute, there's not been a statement that's really encapsulated it as perfectly as Mr Mitch does here on his latest four-tracker. Like Logos, he's got a very unique command of space, like Murlo he's got the earworm melodies, but then Mitch has also got these moving pieces like his digital funeral march, 'The Lion, the Bitch & the Bordeaux'.

Timbah
Flow Poke
Bad Taste

7.0

Nottingham resident Timbah's newest EP 'Flow Poke' is a little bit naïve, but it's that very wide-eyed experimentalism that marks him out as one to watch. There's a lot going on across the tracks, with Timbah attacking numerous abrasive beat styles with vigour, but Murlo's remix feels like it's a country mile ahead of the original material, with the London producer's unique command of rhythmic switch-ups and melody proving to be consistently impressive.

Clap! Clap!
Tambacounda EP
Black Acre

7.0

The Black Acre label's genre footprint seems to keep smushing itself out sideways — which is never a bad thing — and Clap! Clap!'s debut EP for the imprint is the perfect case in point. One part tribal drums, one part jazz deviation and the other part modern, taut electronic production, there are moments, like on 'Tamacounda's White Magic', where Digi G'Alessio does all of them at once and it's astounding and abrasive — all at once.

DJ Vague
Porsche Trax
Templar Sound

8.0

Some people seem able to make any rushed session sound like one of the most vital things ever and that fast and loose approach pays dividends for Helix, as his three-track 12" for Templar Sound as DJ Vague showcases.

Alis
Things Next Door
Astro:dynamics

7.0

Three slices of slightly empirical drone and one super delay-laden drum track make up Alis' long-awaited debut on the gloriously formed Astro:dynamics label, 'Things Next Door'. Shabby and brittle to a fault, it's eerily reassuring.

Stenny
Eternal Restriction
Ilian Tape

7.0

More hammer and tong monochrome techno from the Ilian Tape camp is always welcome, and these three original tracks from Stenny are no exception, with the snatched snare drums of 'Boulders' the highlight.

Leyland Kirby
Breaks My Heart Each Time
Apollo

7.5

As a patchwork of internally contemplative electronica, Leyland Kirby's work excels with tracks called things like 'Diminishing Emotion' and 'Breaks My Heart Each Time', built expertly out of a delightfully corroded sound palette; but as a listen, it's nothing if not fractured.



MR MITCH GOBSTOPPER

- DARKO** 'Skelly VIP' *Last Codes*
"I don't think I've played this without wheeling it."
- MR. MITCH** 'The Lion, the Bitch & the Bordeaux' *Gobstopper*
"Probably my favourite track from my new EP, I zone out to it."
- FINN** 'Keep Calling' *Local Action*
"THE best grime R&B edit of the last few years for me."
- STRICT FACE** 'Fountains' *Gobstopper*
"Close your eyes when you listen to this and you'll swear you're floating."
- MR. MITCH** 'Bowser's Snout' *Gobstopper*
"Sounds weighty on a system whenever I play it out."
- MATTWIZARD** 'Mathematical' *Gobstopper*
"Mattwizard with some great jazz/funk vibes at 140bpm."
- DARKO** 'Mako March' *Gobstopper*
"This song is so epic, you can't go wrong with some Final Fantasy vibes."
- JT THE GOON** 'Twin Warriors (Murlo Remix)' *Oil Gang*
"Flutes galore. Madness."
- RABIT** 'Climax Of The Wolf Spider (Moleskin Edit)' *Dub*
"Somehow this Usher edit works so well, out to Moleskin for putting it together."
- MUMDANCE FEAT NOVELIST** 'Take Time' *Rinse*
"One of the best vocals I've heard in a while, grime in its purest form."

QUICKIES

Gantz

Spry Sinister
Deep Medi

7.5

Madly syncopated dubstep from the Turkish producer will boggle and delight in equal measures. Great to hear some experimentation in these quarters!

Versa

Esoteric
Shanti Tone

8.0

Taking time out from making angular electronica cum techno garage hybrids du jour, Versa starts a new label for his love of dub. Everything irie! Check.

Mr Mitch

The Room Where I Belong EP
Gobstopper Records

8.0

Easily one of grime's most exciting producers, pushing the boundaries with style and confidence. Sick EP.

Ed West

Telephone Riddim
Reggae Roast

7.0

Modern dancehall riddim with a hint of roots running throughout. Check the FleCK remix for a jungle-inspired version at 140bpm.



MONEY SHOT!

Clap! Clap!

Tambacounda EP
Black Acre

9.0

Kicking off the new year in style, Black Acre offers up Clap! Clap! with a four-track EP of poly-rhythms and Afro-centric missiles. Opening track, 'Elon Mentana' is a tempo-shifting, mind-boggling tune, while 'Tambacounda's White Magic' starts off slow but detonates midway through with a collective assault of infectious Afro rhythms and huge bass weight. 'Kalauma' rounds things off with a nod to footwork. Essential music.

alongside Logos just lately have our attention piqued. Whilst you'll recognise the agitated machine swing of 'Its Peak' on the b-side here, with its palette of weird scrapes, dystopian atmospheres and pneumatic drums, you'll be most surprised by the melodious charms of 'Springtime', a mellifluously hazy tribute to the welcomed warmer months and, perhaps, a hint at a new sound for the producer?

Cooly G

Hold Me
Hyperdub

6.5

A dancefloor directed three-tracker here from one of South London's finest beatmakers, with a track featuring the effervescent Scratch DVA called 'Oi Dirty', a rolling bass-heavy number with flighty percussion and grime inflections. Title track 'Hold Me' features Cooly's own vocals with a simple lyrical refrain, but fast-forward to 'Molly', which builds nicely with decayed chords and tech flourishes.

Buz Ludzha

Love Repetitive Rhythmics
All City

7.5

The ever-consistent beat cornucopia that is Dublin-based All City, occasional home to Daedalus, Machinedrum and Onra, drop their first release for 2014 with a new non de plume for Ireland's The Cyclist. Think Mylo but on a very very good day, and you'll get the feeling: the warm fuzzy glow of '80s house, disco and electro all wrapped up in a sleazy

soul-glo box. It's all cloaked in distortion and static, adding a distinctive, faded charm.

AWE

Crystals
Terrorhythm

5.5

Big, synth-led number here from 19-year-old producer AWE who hails from LA and cites '80s movies, Hud Mo and Joker as influences. Yup, it's all in there on 'Crystals' and therefore has a rather infectious nostalgia screaming out of it. And whilst it's a bit too saccharine for my taste, it's nothing compared to the Djemba Djemba 'Nightcore Remix', complete with weird chipmunk Japanese vocals and hyperactive drum & bass. Odd.

Metrist

Doorman in Formant
Fifth Wall

8.0

This is still only the second release by the 19-year-old Cambridge producer, who is knocking out sounds and shapes of startling maturity. Ostensibly techno in sound, but clearly soaked in bass culture, his tunes have been supported by underground types Ancient Methods and Shifted. The four tracks you'll find on the vinyl release are Sellotaped together with a grubby industrial stickiness that immediately appeals to an introspective headphone experience, but would sound particularly effective bleeding out of a Berlin warehouse at 9am Monday morning. Explore.

EshOne

Petroglyphs
Artikal Music

7.0

Tight four-tracker of meditational dubstep business from J:Kenzo's flagship label. Discovered whilst on tour in the US last year, EshOne hails from New Mexico and is a proponent of deep, tribal halfstep with an organic feel. Check the future dub of 'Number Nine' for Augustus Pablo 2014, the stuttering gait of 'Petroglyphs', descending bass beast of 'Hot Sauce' and syncopated wash of 'Watchful Eye'.



MELLA DEE *SCCUCCI MANUCCI*

- MUMDANCE & LOGOS** 'Legion' *Tectonic*
"Seriously heavy stomper, not for the faint-hearted this one."
- SQUAREHEAD** '4 Tune' *Tump*
"Squarehead always comes correct, brooding Steel City sounds."
- VOLTA CAB** 'Fantazia' *Hypercolour*
"Trip back to being a kid, buying old rave tapes, really nice stuff."
- DIZZEE RASCAL** 'Strings Hoe (Wen Refix)' *Keysound*
"Probably the best refix possible of a grime tune, nice curveball for sets too."
- MAK & PASTEMAN** 'Dither V.I.P.' *Dub*
"Tasty V.I.P that brings new life to the original, never fails."
- U KNOW & THE DRILL** 'Stackin' Papers' *Slapfunk Records*
"Seriously mental, bassline meets techno kind of vibe, so good though!"
- MALA** 'Bury Da Bwoy (Mella Dee Edit)' *Dub*
"My own edit of a classic, techno'd out refix for 2014."
- WINSTON HAZEL** 'Break Up (Squarehead's Deadline Dub)' *Shabby Doll*
"Sheff legend meets Sheff up-and-comer, so good, play this every time at the moment."
- MELLA DEE** 'MOAT' *Scucci Manucci*
"Inspired by a certain stage at an overseas festival, full-blown UK techno."
- JOEFARR** 'Pocket Face' *Hypercolour*
"Seriously tuff techno vibes, one for the late night stamina crew."

Deadbeat & Paul St Hilaire

The Infinity Dub Sessions
BLKRTZ

9.0

If, like me, you are a dub fanatic, then this will have you foaming. Those who know Paul St Hilaire aka Tikiman from the legendary Rhythm & Sound recordings will know he's one of the best, most rootical of vocalists in the world today, and over eight superb tracks of Deadbeat's throbbing dub creations waxes lyrical in fine style. Outer-national sounds at their best. Basic Channel-esque dub tech bliss.

Mumdance

Springtime
UTTU

8.0

2013 was Jack Mumdance's year, hands down, with huge releases on Tectonic and Keysound that pummelled the dancefloors across the globe. Tunes

QUICKIES

Jehst
England (Boot Remix)
 YNR

MONEY SHOT!

10

Jehst previews his bound-to-be-stunning remix album with this simply astonishing slab of aggravation courtesy of Zygote and the ever-dependable Boot crew. Heavy-as-fuck beats, mentalist doom in the backdrop, lyrics as harsh and hellacious and utterly compelling as anything J has ever spat. THIS is the sound of the UK in 2014 and don't let anyone tell you any different. From the other side of the tracks, from where we all live, a track massive, mighty and menacing enough to righteously destroy any other music that'd dare to step in its path. Superb, staggering brilliance from everyone involved. Perversely, makes you proud to be British even as it rips the place apart.



Prophets once again shaping up as one of the finest stables of talent the UK has. Go get it.

Sleaze
Headz Will Know
 Greasy Vinyl Records

8.0

Hadn't heard Sleaze before so it was the name of Blah Records producer Reklews who first attracted me to this, and thank God I investigated — sublimely heavy headnodic brilliance with a vocal-less chorus that's pure bass derangement, and some sharp-as-fuck nailing from Sleaze & Res of bandwagon-jumping lazy rappers and the perils of radio-friendly sell-out. Great cuts from DJ Rasp as well — the album 'An Album Called The Sun' comes soon and I'm strapped in ready. Great stuff.

Oddisee feat Diamond District (X.O. + yU + Oddisee)

Bonus Flow
 Mello Music Group

9.0

Y'know how Miles Davis used to lean on his keyboards and make a fantastic racket? That's the needling sound that threads itself like barbed wire through-out this spacious, spooked production from Oddisee and yr damn right he knows EXACTLY what he's doing. Great rhymes from the Diamond District trio make this way more than just a Brucie Bonus, more like a boon from the depths of hell and the heights of heaven. Love the way towards the end it all drops down to pure piano and dread. Love the way it feels like it WILL NOT STOP unhinging you. Super stoopid fresh.

Jamall Bufford (aka Buff1 of Athletic Mic League)

Oh My God, Forever
 Mello Music Group

8.0

Nuts. Entirely crackpot. Applaud it unreservedly. Jamail Bufford raps with a kind of supra-stoned perma-surprise, free-associating all over the shop as the music does the same freewheeling moves underneath him. A sublimely slippery sound from (for me anyhow) unheard new producer Evildoer, constantly under threat of overloading itself into noisy arrhythmia but still staying the right side of abrasiveness, hanging around only long enough to sink under your skin. A 10-minute mix would make you puke your ring but this is unsettling, gaseous madness you should breathe deep.

Roc Marciano feat Boldy James

Trying To Come Up
 Man Bites Dog

9.0

Woah, Roc should produce more if this is the kind of delicious strangeness he comes up with. Nothing in 'Trying To Come Up' flows, rather it's a constant stop/start of jazzy rolls and art-rock intrigue, like something off Eno's golden age period (think 'Another Green World' or 'Before & After Science') stumbled in on by Roc & Boldy, their lines similarly caught frozen between conclusiveness and confusion. Beyond it all the textures are just delicious, warm, fat, addictive, somewhere 'tween late Beefheart and the Meat Puppets. Not gonna light-up the message boards, but compellingly odd.

Bluntskinz
Sweet Ganja
 thebluntskins.bandcamp.com

7.0

Northern lights from Manchester, nice mix of reggae and thinkingly heavy old-skool beats, rampagingly spot-on lyrics lending weight to what we've always known. We don't need to legalise it. In most of the country IT ALREADY IS MANDATORY.

Paranom & Purpose
Microphone Phenomenal
 Ill Adrenaline

7.5

Sweet as fuck — the Tragic Allies hook up on a beautifully measured throb of Rhodes-laden

jazz abstraction from Purpose and the results recall Premo, Diamond D & Pete Rock in all the best ways. Essential.

Rapper Big Pooh
Jambalaya
 Hall Of Justus

7.5

Nice, tight 150 seconds of phatness from 9th Wonder on the mix, RBP customarily flowing freaky, 9th pulling all the right simple tricks at all the right moments. Not groundshaking but strangely addictive.

Gavlyn
Guilty Pleasure
 Broken Complex

8.5

Superb rhymes from a superb new talent from LA, Gavlyn, whose rhymes betray a vulnerability and fluidity all too rare in today's age of over-compensating femme shoutiness — 'Guilty Pleasure' flows like the finest bourbon over your day, loosening those shoulders up, rolling out that stress. Sublime sax crests over perfectly tough beats, the keyboards and bass keeping things in that divine place exactly between the vertical and horizontal. Keep an eye on her, she might just make 2014 her own.

Bill Next & Paro feat Hozay

Weedmasons EP
 splitprophets.bandcamp.com

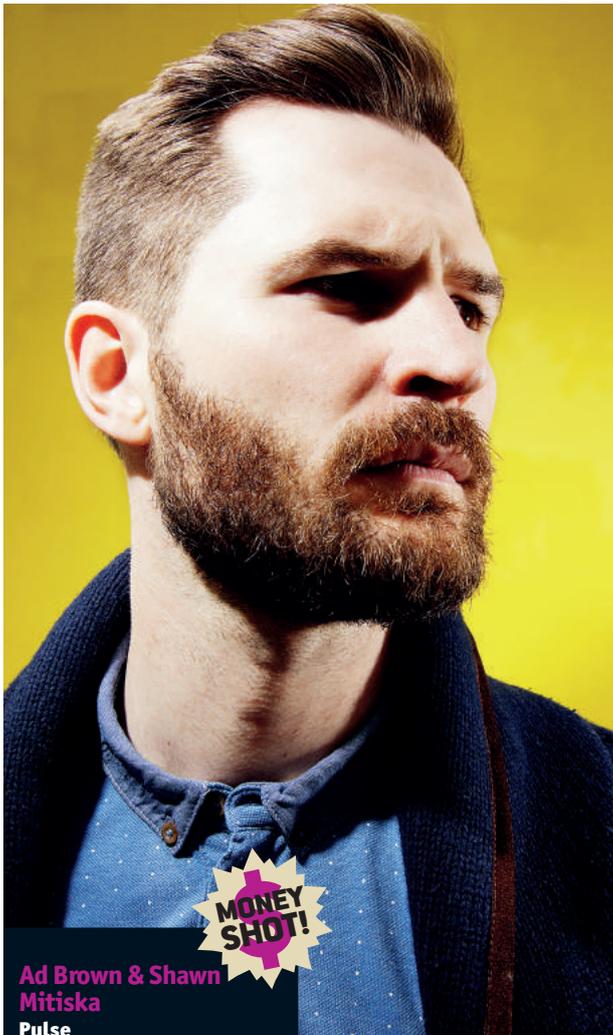
8.0

Badhabitz produces the teaser track 'Villainz' from this superb new EP from Split Prophets acolytes Bill & Paro, and good God it's wonderful — a vibe that's reminiscent of Telemachus/Jehst's 'Sheltering Sky' but even more located away from the desert and in the heat-struck crowded streets, sax and drone-ing harmonium adding to the steady destabilisation of your sense of place and space. Great flows from Bill and Hozay — Split



DOPPELGANGAZ GROGGY PACK ENTERTAINMENT

- AZ** 'I'm Known' *Noo Trybe*
"Street knowledge for that azz."
- MEMPHIS BLEEK** 'Memphis Bleek Is' *Get Low*
"Don't front on the Memphis man!"
- DRAKE** 'The Language' *OVO Sound*
"She just wants to smoke and f**k. Is that a problem?"
- PHILIP GLASS** 'Living Waters' *Nonesuch*
"What a beautiful piece of music. It speaks to the soul."
- BOB MARLEY** 'Crazy Baldhead' *Trojan/Island*
"What else can be said about the GOAT?"
- DOM KENNEDY** 'After School' *OpM*
"Makes us think about the lost soldiers."
- ASAP FERG** 'Let It Go' *RCA*
"Thank you Trap Lord."
- OVERDOZ** 'Lap Dance' *Pola Grounds/RCA*
"We totally agree. She should pay us."
- 2 PAC** 'Can't C Me' *Death Row*
"Pac be having playas feel invincible."
- KOOL & THE GANG** 'Get Down On It' *De Lite Records*
"Too funky to resist!"



MONEY SHOT!

Ad Brown & Shawn Mitiska

Pulse
Black Hole Recordings

8.0

A lesser-seen instrumental from the usually very vocal Ad Brown here, possibly down to Shawn Mitiska's influence. 'Pulse' develops into a cool, chugging, borderline austere prog-trancer that leans heavily and confidently on the panned, phased sweeps of its minimal lead line. If it's all too stripped down for you, Ali Wilson's 'TEKELEC Remix' gives it one hefty shove in the direction of the main room.

Ilan Bluestone

Spheres
Anjunabeats

9.0

Front-end, 'Spheres' chops and flits schizophrenically between goosepimply melodic glimmer and thrusting distorted structures. Inevitably it draws the two together, before blooming into a drop that's alive with gauzy harmonics. Where on the melodic-to-hard scale the leadline will fall is hard to predict, and indeed it keeps you guessing right up to the cusp of the break. It's actually closer to the former than the latter, but with just enough accentuated bleep to give it spike.

Adam Szabo & Johan Vilborg feat Johnny Norberg

Two To One
Enhanced Recordings

7.5

Sat amongst the rest of the early 2014 crop, the first thing you'll notice about Szabo, Vilborg & Norberg's co-op is just how exactly produced it is. With fantastic division between its sonic layers, immaculate sequencing of its parts and a sensational mix-down, it booms like few others. With Norberg's vocal hitting emotive, authentic notes throughout, this will work most floors at most times of the night.

Dave Leyrock
High Stakes

#138

6.5

To the rapidly burgeoning traditional trance tempo label convention comes Infrasonic's contender, #138. Leyrock's intro is competent if largely uneventful. We can forgive him that, as the meat of the track is more impressive. The lead riff's intuitive note arrangement is well developed and with a precisely timed filter release, it lands with quite some impact at the apex of the drop.

Driftmoon

Howl At the Moon
Pure Trance

7.5

Opening the score sheet for Solarstone's new imprint, a now conspicuously on-the-march Driftmoon locks his studio dial to pure trance. To be fair his output is already very much in the vicinity, but on 'Howl At the Moon' those keystone components come evermore accentuated. On his 'Retouch Mix' Solarstone adds his running/pummelling b-line hallmark and further beefs up the payoff. All in all, an impressive opener.

FKN

Triton/Stormtrooper
VANDIT Records

8.0

Frøde Kambo Nilsen doesn't make them very often, but when he does they tend to be well worth checking. With plenty of quick-flip drops and extended prog sequences, 'Triton' is the cooler of the two. It builds the tone at a demonstrably leisurely pace before finally hitting you with a striking lead line in the third act. Far quicker to the punch is 'Stormtrooper', whose tight tech sub riffs quickly peel away to reveal euphoric intent.

Johann Stone

White Walkers
Discover Dark

7.0

Club owners: looking for something to strip the old paint job from your sound emporium? This should do it. Bellicose bass, marching drums, erupting acid (sulphuric, probably) and a scorching tempo — it's all here. Wrapped around a spoken vocal (Game of Thrones, at a guess), this falls somewhere between sinister and outright scary. Somewhere in amongst this is Steve Morley (of early semi-classic 'Reincarnations' fame) on the remix.

M.I.K.E.

The Motive EP
Coldharbour Recordings

7.0

Triple-pack EP from M.I.K.E. on his first outing for Coldharbour. Packing in some great analogue sub-riffs at its front end, 'The Motive' ups the echo on its lead and even gets a bit of electro squelch into the bargain. Carrying a hint of synth '80s Moroder-ism in its break, 'Spacesuit' frays, distorts and FXs its lead line with equal drama. 'Mass Freedom' is the most classically M.I.K.E. of the three, with some cool melodies, no small degree of 303 and a right whacker of a payoff.

QUICKIES

Andrew Rayel

Dark Warrior
Armind

7.0

Check your cerebrum at the door for another whistle-stop tour of the Ministry of Mad Noises. All but useless for the at-home listen, but club-side, ignition is all but guaranteed.

Harmonic Rush

Salvia
Monster Digital

7.0

Into the New Year and the exponential resurgence of Psy/Goa in 2013 shows no signs of abating. 'Salvia' from UAE-based producer Milad Maleki is but one of dozens of this month's crop that draws inspiration from the East.

Johnny Yono

Exodus
Lange Recordings

7.0

One of those tracks that lies in wait, doing not

very much at all, before clocking you over the back of the head with one huge moment. When it comes, it's more than worth the wait.

Phase Difference

Utopia
Saturate Audio

9.0

Saturate Audio doing what Saturate Audio do best. Dark, sinuous, brilliantly contoured, hyper-atmospheric and ever engaging.

Zaxx

Illusion
VANDIT Records

8.0

Sporting a fully cohesive, brilliantly primed set of beats, bass and perc loops, South Africa's Zaxx gathers a storm. Cranking the tension, mid-break it swallows a box of fireworks... with predictable end results.



MYON & SHANE 54 [RIDE] RECORDINGS

- LANA DEL REY** 'Young & Beautiful (Myon & Shane 54 Summer of Love Mix)' Universal
"Our first bootleg that in the end became an official remix. It was a proud moment."
- KERRY LEVA** 'Proud (Juventa Remix)' Enhanced Recordings
"Jordin Post is on fire — his remixes are simply off the hook!"
- COLE PLANTE WITH MYON & SHANE 54 FEAT KOKO LAROO** 'Lie To Me (Juventa Remix)' Hollywood Records
"Our first Billboard top five single. Juventa's remix is a real festival bomb."
- ARTIFICIAL** 'Prototype' Anjunabeats
"Anjunabeats' supergroup consisting of Andrew Bayer and Norin & Rad. You can't go wrong with that."
- TRITONAL** 'Electric Glow' Air Up There
"This one is a great song in a classical songwriting sense. The crowd loves chanting it. So do we."
- DEMI LOVATO** 'Neon Lights (Myon & Shane 54 Summer of Love Mix)' White
"At the end of the day, it's more fun to remix stuff that already sounds good."
- WRECHISKI** 'Séance' [RIDE]
"This guy from Brazil is unbelievable. Taken from our soon-to-come mix compilation."
- LTN & KOKAI** 'Cruisin'' LowRide
"One of Mario's closest friends made a fantastic track that evolved into this house banger with Indonesia's very own LTN."
- ABOVE & BEYOND** 'Marianna Trench' Anjunabeats
"They still can do club bangers. This one is the proof of that."
- SEVEN LIONS WITH MYON & SHANE 54 FEAT TOVE LO** 'Strangers' White
"Without a doubt the biggest track of the year for us, it went so much further than we ever anticipated it."



MONEY SHOT!

Untold
Black Light Spiral
Hemlock Recordings

8.5

Lifted from the sonically challenging surrounds of the 'Black Light Spiral' long-player, 'Drop It On the One' and 'Sing A Love Song' could be the two oddest tracks you might hear over the coming months, that pay homage as much to sound design and Musique Concrete as they do dancehall or the formative jungle and hardcore background of creator Jack Dunning. Playing with loops, dark and erstwhile fx and broken patterns is the raison d'être for Dunning now, and what a delight it is. Kinked and fu**ed all at the same time.

Boot & Tax

Acido
Optimo Trax

8.5

You could argue that the music industry is already overrun with enough record labels. The fact that most of them tend to push nonsense of one kind or another is almost by the by. Who needs yet another label then, you ask? Well... wait just one minute, this particular venture is an offshoot of the ever-trusty label Optimo, dedicated to DJs and dancefloors. Quality is therefore pretty much guaranteed and true to form, release number one is a beacon of quality in the aforementioned sea of shite.

De Lux
Better At Making Time
Scion AV

8.0

This has been out a while, but with all that Christmas/New Year stuff, it got a bit lost in the melee! We thought it would be a shame not to give it a little plug, so here it is: a killer three-track EP from LA duo De Lux, which is laced with infectious and inviting disco-not-disco in the spirit of Talking Heads, Brian Eno and all things DFA. A touch of class.

Sharon Jones
Stranger To Happiness
Daptone

7.5

After the shock of a cancer diagnosis (apparently caught very early according to doctors) revealed at the tail-end of last year, which resulted in cancelled tour dates and a delayed album release, it's perhaps a bit of a surprise to see this single released right now. Yet another anthemic soul belter, this only bodes well for this modern day queen of soul. Prayers to you Miss Jones.

Clap! Clap!
Tambacounda EP
Black Acre Records

8.5

New project from Italian producer Cristiano Crisci, focused on research and sampling tribes, bands and singers originating

from Africa. According to the PR the keywords are "future roots" and "future rhythm". Sounds like a bit of mindless genre-fication to me, but nonetheless, this is an innovative and engaging release full of idiosyncratic samples, time signatures, drum programming and bass-heavy brilliance.

Mothlite
Mathair
Kscope

6.5

The five tracks that make up this EP are said to be inspired by 'Richard Alpert, Louise Bourgeois vestigial ancestry, folding inner space'. Sounds a little contrived to me, not to mention a little pretentious. If you can look past the pomposity however, you'll find an intricate — if not slightly dated — multi-layered collection of tracks that touch on drowsy celestial folk, noodly, pop-inspired breakbeats and Phillip Glass inspired shoe-gazing, piano-driven post-rock.

Strand
Bankstaz' Paradize
Love Monk

7.0

Pretty much half an album's worth of material here from Spaniard Strand, who flits between varying styles on this six-track EP. It's not the most cohesive, but there are some highlight moments that slot between some beat-led filler. In particular the Air-inspired 'Bankstaz' Groove', the slo-mo horns of 'De Sucios Desahucios' and the party 4/4 beats of 'Ain't No Fun, If Bankz Can't Have None'. Well worth having a check to cherry-pick from.

Timbah
Flow Poke
Bad Taste Records

7.5

One of the most innovative users of sounds in his given genre, Timbah certainly isn't shy when it comes to generating an ear-pricking top line with a progressive arrangement. So crossing the divide between some kind of apocalyptic ravecore, filth-ridden bottom-heavy hip-hop, grime and some 8-bit inspired samples, it's a fresh outlook from Timbah who will certainly be asking a lot of your bass-bins. An accomplished EP.

QUICKIES

Silver Man
Analog X
3 Bar Fire

7.0

Downtempo, sample-based cinematica from one time Tru Thoughts signing Silver Man, who offers up a taster from his forthcoming album 'Thieves and Millionaires'.

Farao
Farao EP
Something Nothing Records

8.5

Recorded with the help of Tunng's Mike Lindsay, this beautiful four-track EP from Oslo ex-pat Kari Jahnsen is yet another shining example of Norway's victorious musical diaspora. One to watch without a doubt.

Owiny Sigoma Band
Nyiduonge Drums (Champion Sound)
Brownwood

6.5

A decent low-end take, but nothing quite tops the original and its hypnotic charm, that still has enough bass to get by.

Milk & Biscuits
Milk & Biscuits
Lick Music

7.0

Music funded by a yoghurt company. Background at Fat Cat Records. Sounds like Gruff Rhys, British Sea Power etc... cassette only. If only all indies had this retro foresight!



YOUNG FATHERS *BIG DADA*

01. FRIDGEMASTER 'House of Pride' *showlovepeoplenowkiss*
"It taps into the same dark places we sometimes go."
02. LAST POETS 'The White Man's Got A God Complex' *Celluloid*
"It needed saying then... sometimes you need some extreme art to make a balance."
03. SUUNS 'Edie's Dream' *Secretly Canadian*
"Live, this goes into a tranced outro. We played on the same bill in France for a few gigs and saw the moment in action. The track retains that."
04. ASAP FERG 'Work' *RCA/Palo Grounds*
"Why? Do you really need to ask?! Killer music."
05. DANDY RIOTS 'Boy' *Dandy Riots*
"This is our brother — take notice!"
06. LAW 'Hustle' *showlovepeoplenowkiss*
"Just beautiful, our sister, just saying it."
07. ANDY CAPP 'The Law Pt.1 & Pt.2' *Duke*
"Clattering and rattling like a Kingston tin can."
08. VETKUK VS MAHOOTA 'Stokvela' *Kalnan Jazzee*
"Somehow being full of joy and full of menace, like a gunman urging you to enjoy yourself or else."
09. ROB 'Make It Fast Make It Slow' *Estiebans*
"Because sometimes you need it fast... but sometimes, you need it slow..."
10. ZINJA HLUNGWANI 'My Love Nwa Gezani' *Honest Jon's*
"Why? The video shows a bank manager and his pals having a great time and then you realise it's the bank manager who sings like angel number 9."



MONEY SHOT!

Armin van Buuren

Shivers (Frontliner Remix)
Armada

10

It's always great to see the cross-pollination of styles in dance music, and the current interest in hardstyle remixes from house to hardcore is testament to how influential the hardstyle sound has become. One of the most high-profile examples of this is Armin van Buuren asking Frontliner to remix his classic 'Shivers'. Keeping all the elegant charm of the trance anthem in the break, this remix gives you the hands-in-the-air euphoria, before the brutal hard drop with Frontliner's trademark impeccable production, that will only cut deeper the bigger the soundsystem it is exposed on. A truly awesome clash of styles.

Astrobase

Astrobase

Ideal

8.0

Side project from Ideal frontman Sam Townend and melody genius Technikal, who strips things back from his usual energetic hard trance sound for this project featuring a funky electro bassline, chopped-up hard house vocals and lots of clever twists and fills to keep you on your toes throughout — and, of course, a cheeky main hoover drop.

Danny V & Arhetium_R Oblivion (Tranz-Linquants Remix)

Gearbox Digital

7.5

This label has really been leading the way in UK hard dance sounds, delivering consistent and diverse releases covering the full spectrum of hard dance. This new release

features a remix from south Wales UK hardstyle act Tranz-Linquants, who delivers a very clever mix of euphoric, classic early 2000s European hard trance in the breakdowns and hardstyle in the drops.

Caine

Messenger Of Death

TiLLT Recordings

8.0

With a title like this, it was never going to be a cheery affair! Heading down the raw-style route, this sinister hardstyle release makes great use out of the twisted pitch-gliding pads in the main breakdown and ferocious stab sounds, before building to drop with serious power and nasty raw kicks. Not one for the faint-hearted.

Paul Elstak

Ready To Pump (DJ Paul Early Rave Mix)

Rige

9.0

Featuring on the hardcore legend's latest artist album, 'Ready To Pump' is a nostalgic nod to Paul Elstak's roots, and the early '90s hardcore sound. Bouncy kicks, off-beat percussion and pitched rap vocals bring all the good vibes of the happier Dutch sound of yesteryear, before the drop into classic Fugees track 'Ready Or Not'. This track is an old skool kick-back that doesn't sound out of place in an upfront playlist. Set finisher for me for the foreseeable future.

Public Domain

Operation Blade (xKore Bootleg)

CDR

9.5

One of the UK's hottest exports at the moment, xKore is tearing up dancefloors around the world with his fusion of electro, trap and dubstep — with a harder twist. His latest project is a rework of the seminal millennium rave classic from Public Domain. This track clocks in at a slower tempo than most hard dance music, but with such a brutally pounding kick will more than compliment a hard dance DJ's track collection. Then the curveball trap drop towards the end will destroy whatever is left of the dancefloor. Massive tune for me at the moment.

The Pitcher

Gotta Feel

Fusion Records

8.5

Known for his vocal hardstyle anthems, The Pitcher is back on Fusion delivering another big hitter for the winter months, with an infectious pitched-up vocal and catchy melody in the main break and drop. Adding some euphoric sounds on this very dark raw label but steering clear of being too obvious in the intro and outro sections compliments the breakdown well.

The Prophet

The Bizz

Scantraxx

8.5

The head don of Scantraxx Records and all-round legend The Prophet returns with another strong single on his Scantraxx label, taking the sound of the label away from its usual melodic uplifting hardstyle with some heavier, darker beats. Featuring great use of the chopped-up vocal sample, screechy stabs and seriously pounding kick drums, this is going to pick up a lot of plays.

Toneshifterz

Leap of Faith

We R

8.5

After recently announcing they will be parting ways as two separate acts going forward, this is the first release from Toneshifterz with just Ellie at the controls. Still keeping the trademark high-energy sound, this track has an almost religious, Baptist-style vocal before unleashing a brutal-yet-minimal kick and bass mid intro. The breakdown is all about hands-in-the-air good vibes followed by pitched kicks on the drop. Great release to reassure the fans that the Toneshifterz sound is here to stay.

QUICKIES

Argy

Off The Wall (ACTI Remix)

Subground

8.0

As the Subground sound continues to cross the boundaries between hardstyle and house, this label is very much at the forefront, with Acti delivering a sterling remix of Argy's new single.

Rescue & Keyes

Outta Space

GYM

8.0

Cheeky UK hardcore cover of this Prodigy classic, keeping things very much in line with the powerstomp sound sweeping the UK hardcore scene this year. Doesn't give you any time to catch your breath

and goes in hard from the start.

Deorro

Yee (LNY TNZ Remix)

CDR

8.0

Bouncy jump vibes on this one from one of the acts I'm tipping for big success this year. The classic vocal will get hands up every time.

Malfunction V Beamer

Atlantis

CDR

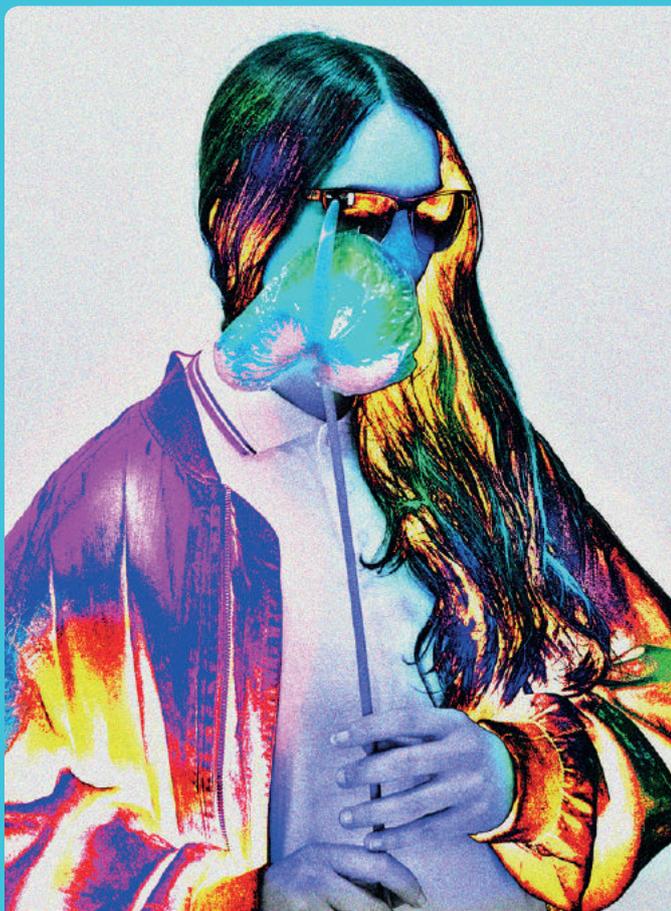
7.0

North Scotland representing on this one. Underground hard dance beats, hardstyle screeches and side-chain kicks and bass, with a nostalgic trance classic on the break.



MAX ENFORCER LOSE CONTROL

- 01. MAX ENFORCER 'Lost In Paradise'** *Lose Control Music*
"My latest release. The amount of support and positive messages around this track is simply amazing."
- 02. HEADHUNTERZ FEAT TATU 'Colors'** *HardwithStyle*
"A guaranteed floor-filler. This melody will be stuck in your head for days once you listen to it."
- 03. NOISECONTROLLERS & WILDSTYLEZ 'Jets, Cats & Breaks'** *Lose Control Music*
"A true display of forward-thinking by these great minds. When I listen to this track I picture myself looking across an apocalyptic planet, equipped with a lightsabre, ready to take on whatever comes my way."
- 04. MAX ENFORCER 'Gold (Qlimax Refix)'** *Gold Records*
"A special remake of my track 'Gold'. New kicks and upgraded synths took the already great drive of this track to the next level."
- 05. COONE & WILDSTYLEZ FEAT CIMO FRANKEL 'This Is Home'** *DIM MAK/DirtyWorks*
"A great collaboration with a great result. Vocalist Cimo Frankel did a great topline here that complements the music."
- 06. TUNEBOY 'Six'** *Titanic*
"Again a great track in the 'XY' style by this Italian maestro. Tuneboy has been a cornerstone for hardstyle since the very beginning."
- 07. D-BLOCK & S-TE-FAN 'Takin' Off'** *Evolution*
"A supercool track that combines a cool melody with a fierce drop. Euphoric and raw-style in one track. I love it!"
- 08. NOISECONTROLLERS & WAVERIDER 'Have You'** *CDR*
"I really love this track. Both artists' styles are heard, making it a great collab. Catchy vocals and edits combined with an uplifting melody, devastating kicks and stabs. Greatness!"
- 09. MAX ENFORCER 'Journey'** *Lose Control Music*
"One of my new tracks. Finishing it as I'm writing this."
- 10. WILDSTYLEZ 'Timeless (Vocal Mix)'** *Q-Dance*
"It's amazing how music can fit together sometimes. Goosebumps."



Planningtorock

All Love Is Legal
Human Level

8.5

Round the bend

FOR a culture rooted so firmly within homosexuality, dance music rarely explicitly touches on its inherent countenance of gender subversion. With the commercialisation and popularisation of the club scene has come play-safe modes of music once designed to blow social boundaries outwards. Today, the increasingly homogenous sounds of house and techno pay service to what's now a blunted tool, a catalyst that in the '70s (New York), '80s (Chicago) and '90s (London) pierced the valves of sexual repression and liberated a drastically marginalised section of society. On her latest full-length opus, Jam Rostron, known to most as DFA-contributor Planningtorock, has sought to readdress this balance. Most gay men and women object to the word queer to denote sexual preference, but it's the most appropriate way to describe Jam and her music. If gender-bending is on the political agenda, the musical *modus operandi* here is one defined by its weirdness.

The album's opener 'Welcome' enters a fantastical world of high-pitched synths, evoking a more traditional idea of the fabulous, closer to Sinatra than Sinitta. 'All Love Is Legal', with its grandiose strings and trap hi-hats, is a rousing anthem about emotional liberation, while 'Human Drama' is a reflective and forlorn house track indicting the unfair and unnecessary negativity attributed to sexual diversity. 'Let's Talk About Gender' is a straight-up disco tune paying homage to the genre that started it all, while 'Misogyny Drop Dead' is an offbeat Dadaist experiment (it even repeatedly samples the word 'Da') that twists and bends synths into disjointed, bug-eyed melodies. Closer 'Patriarchy (Over & Out)', meanwhile, could be Hercules & Love Affair. A brave and pertinent attack on an issue so regularly ignored in dance music today, 'All Love Is Legal' is both wistful and unwavering in its exploration; a challenging, at times chaotic listen that's as enjoyable as it is playfully experimental. **Adam Saville**



6.0

Actress Ghettoville

Werk Discs

Challenging, moi?

Actress (aka Londoner Darren Cunningham) is a true iconoclast, never playing the record industry game. His last two albums for Honest Jon's, 'Splazsh' and 'R.I.P.', were original, very weird outsider techno mini-masterworks. It's clear from listening to his music that it's highly conceptual and dredged up from the murkiest corners of his imagination. But this sequel of sorts to his classic debut 'Hazyville' falls flat by comparison. Gone are the submerged, stretched disco fragments; vanished are the playful electro riffs. In their place are scraping, scuffling found sound samples the like of which would give Yvette Fielding a nightmare. Dreary, moody, industrial ambient for the most part, though 'Corner' stands out for its ultra-slow graveyard shift, a gauzy 4/4 thump with monstrous robotic snarls that go thump in the night. 'Gaze' is a return to his past leftfield house splendour, but overall it's the sound of drowning in a barbiturate soup. **Ben Murphy**



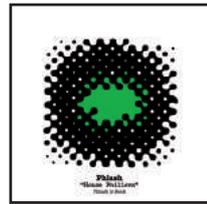
8.5

The Jaydes The Jaydes

Dame Music

Un-Jayded after all these years

Ever ended up collaborating with a mate because you kept sharing so much gear between each other to keep costs down that a natural partnership developed? Not a particularly far-fetched situation to imagine, if you haven't already been through this yourself. What makes The Jaydes' story different is that this accidental alliance is actually quite good. Together, producers Bloody Mary and Attan trawl through house and techno's various offshoots over the decades. From vocal-heavy proto-trance to full-on stabby rave, they use classic hardware immaculately produced and mixed down to infectious pop perfection. It's not serious, nor tries to be weird and challenging; this is well-made, fun dance music made to, you know, have fun and dance to? Put it on and get down, whether you're in a club or in front of your mirror with nothing to be ashamed of. **Zara Wladawsky**



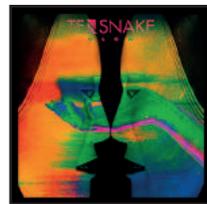
9.0

Phlash House Phillerz

Archive

Phlash woah!

Phil Asher should have a blue plaque on his house for his services to house music, enduring and pretty much flawless as they have been for the past couple of decades. Reinvigorating his Phlash pseudonym for the Italian imprint Archive has proved to be an inspired move, his 'House Phillerz' EPs devastating dancefloors across the planet. Several of those tracks appear here, as he flaunts his mastery with an assured swagger. There is genuinely not a single, solitary duffer here. Not one. It's got range too. 'All I Want' and 'Moodswinging' are sumptuous, Chandler-esque garage, 'Papaya Con Hierbas' a take on Latin-tinged techno, while 'Espacio' is indebted to Italo and boogie. 'That's Right' is dark and tribal, while 'Alone In A Crowded Room' recalls the glory days of Deep Dish. These are just comparisons, though. This inspiring house music is all his very own. **Ben Arnold**



6.0

Tensnake Glow

Virgin

Snake me up before you go-go

Gesaffelstein managed to migrate to Parlophone (Universal) without changing his spots last year. Tensnake, however, has grown a new skin entirely after getting picked up by Virgin (also Universal). By skin, we actually mean a massive techni-coloured dream coat lined with rabbit fur. Those who relished the tropical steel drums of 'Coma Cat' can hear them on 'Love Sublime', featuring a standard Nile Rodgers riff, a track that's almost passable as the Tensnake we love until the tawdry disco diva vocals. 'Feel Of Love', with Jacques Lu Cont, does Robert Palmer with a French touch, while Jamie Lidell does his best Andre 3000 impression. 'Selfish' is diluted 'Need Your Lovin'' with a crap R&B vocal and '58BPM' is also shit, like Imogen Heap attempting witch house. It's not all bad, though. 'No Colour' is like listening to the Drive soundtrack on ketamine, and 'No Relief' is well-made dancefloor house similar to Dusky. **Adam Saville**



7.0

Shit Robot
We Got A Love
 DFA Records
Handy android

Much as his cardboard box helmet resembles a Blue Peter version of Daft Punk's cyborg costumes, so Irish ex-pat Markus Lambkin's second album sounds as the Frenchmen might if they had a fraction of the recording budget and relied on roping in their labelmates for help rather than being able to call Nile Rodgers and Pharrell. Like 2010's 'From The Cradle To The Rave' LP, 'We Got A Love' is heavy on the guest vocals; with LCD Soundsystem's Nancy Whang on the bouncy electro of 'Do That Dance', Luke Jenner from The Rapture doing his best Bee Gees impersonation on 'Feels Real' and Chicago house veteran Lidell Townsfell leading a sort of rave 'Hokey Cokey' on 'Do It (Right)'. Even R2D2 seems to make an appearance singing the bleeps on the retro-house rush of 'Tempest', and in many ways 'We Got A Love' is just as cute. **Paul Clarke**



7.5

PLUGGER
This Is Not A Record (Sunrise Edition)
 PLUGGER
Ripe for plunder

This Italian outfit operate on an intriguing premise. All their music is based on samples — nothing new there, you might say. But the samples they use are from huge artists. Take this latest record, which uses snippets and fragments from massive megastars like the Rolling Stones, Pink Floyd, The Who, Jimi Hendrix, Led Zeppelin and Ennio Morricone, among others. In lesser hands, it could be a godawful mess, but PLUGGER's very clever plunderphonics focus on a different artist each time, constructing sampladelic patchworks that float over (mostly) house and techno beats. 'The Bang Bang Reprise' is a wonderfully eerie, echoey cosmic disco desert excursion, while 'Sweet 666' robs the drum break from Zep's 'When The Levee Breaks' and the drone from 'In The Light' and transfigures them into a dusted dubstep cut. How they'll evade the long arm of the sample law is unclear, but it's a thrilling unexpected ride. **Ben Murphy**



7.0

Terrence Parker
Life On The Back 9
 Planet E
Soulful side of the street

It's easy to forget sometimes that Detroit has a healthy house heritage as well as a shining techno legacy. At the forefront of the Motor City's house persona is Terrence Parker, a prolific veteran whose sound focuses firmly on the soulful side of things. In 'Life On The Back 9', Parker is pure in his vision of uplifting, melodic vibes, revelling in sunny piano riffs and heartfelt vocal turns from guest singers. The gospel house message runs strong throughout the album, and there are only a few techy twists (primarily 'My Virtuous Woman' and 'Pentecost', both of which boast some of the strongest grooves on the album), so don't come here expecting dark or deep dancefloor deviations. But if you're after a smooth, soulful showcase of classic house ideals from an expert, Parker provides. **Tristan Parker**



9.0

The Clover
Processes
 Bosconi
Live house experiments

The Clover's debut album on home label Bosconi is an all-Italian affair that proves there is more to the country's musical output than dry, endlessly churning minimal and tech house. Made up of Andrea Giachetti, Antonio Pecori and Stefano Meucci, the collective have been making music and playing live together since 2006, and both those facts work in their favour: 'Processes' is as accomplished sounding as it is alive from start to finish, with writhing analogue lines and ramshackle drums bring palpable dynamism to every track. Some are purposefully slow and sound like they might collapse à la Kassem Mosse, others glint and glisten at pace and come over like something Zip might play. Importantly, the same trick is never repeated and nothing sounds loopy, which means that despite this being 13 tracks deep and fairly suited to the dancefloor, it's never less than vital even at home. **Kristan J Caryl**



6th Borough Project
Borough 2 Borough
Delusions Of Grandeur

8.0

Retro refinery

ASIDE from the obligatory 'Intro', a retro disco diva sample, you'd be forgiven for expecting Glaswegians Craig Smith and Graeme 'The Revenge' Clark to venture further into uncharted territory after hearing 'Our Love', a slightly offbeat future funk track closer to Letherette than the majority of warm, stodgy slo-mo disco found on their 2011 debut LP under the same moniker, 'One Night In The Borough'. However, with 'U Know U' it's back to business as usual, but that's no complaint. There are few in the game better at languid disco with a vintage feel, and 'Think It Over' is 112bpm sample-based dancefloor fodder at its finest. 'In Your Arms' is nothing but glitter-ball class, while 'Through The Night' is lumbering funk with soulful strings made for no other

reason than to encourage us to turn the lights low and make babies. 'The Call Back' is more of the same, but even more seductive, borrowing from the Prelude Records school of boogie, whereas 'Read My Mind' is throbbing indigo house built on a bassline Carl Craig would be proud of. Indicative of dark, underground pub basements with low level ceilings, 6th Borough Project's second album once again boils the original sounds of New York, Detroit and Chicago down to their finer elements, stripping them back and laying them out into a linear 4/4 house formula. Steady, sexy and sophisticated, 'Borough 2 Borough' presents yet another solid handbook, and you'd be a silly billy to miss it. **Adam Saville**



7.0

Rocco
The Bridge
House Afrika
Roccofella

Lyon's Rocco Rodamaal has been a deep house staple since the mid-2000s, notching up releases on Ben Watt's much-missed Buzzin' Fly Records, Defected and Freerange. House Afrika takes up this long-player, boasting collaborators galore. There's Kafele from Chicago on 'Dream Cloud' and Ten City ledge Byron Stingily, who adorns the old school garage jam 'Love Me Back', wearing it like a snug-fitting glove. But it's when he's flying solo that this set really takes off, like on the sturdy 'The Callini', a chugging, heads-down groove, which melts into shimmering pads, or the tribal tech stabs of 'Le Miroir Aux Oiseaux'. 'Montmatre' also has a swelling, ecstatic charm. Among that glut of vocals, it's perhaps 'Still Water' with South African chanteuse Khensy that really soars, an undulating thing of understated beauty. **Ben Arnold**



7.0

Untold
Black Light Spiral
Hemlock
Dark and dystopian

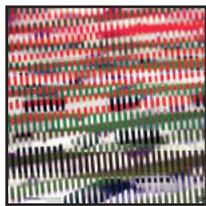
Jack Dunning has released a lot of music over the last five years. Much of it has come on his own Hemlock, but like-minded labels including Hessele and Hotflush have also come calling. In that time we've seen Dunning's sound evolve from being definitively dubstep to acerbically techno, but always it has been music that has looked forward for its inspiration, and in turn it often sounds like little else out there. That can certainly be said of 'Black Light Spiral', which rather than being a load of DJ-ready tools is instead a chaotic collection of broken loops, raw textures, atmospheric experiments and off-the-cuff compilations that variously suck you into unsettled and beat-less spaces, batter you around the head with metallic sonic weaponry or dumbfound you with ragged rhythms and ravey sirens. It sure is perplexing, if nothing else. **Kristan J Caryl**



8.0

Reboot
Deep_V
Deep Vibes
Minimal man re-invented

Reboot has been one of Cadenza's most reliable and consistent artists over the years. As a producer but also mainly a live act, he has always embodied the spirit of the label well. To kick off 2014, though, he makes a move over to Sascha Dive and Christian Schölzel's Deep Vibes label and releases 'Deep_V'. It's a six-track mini album that relies heavily on field recordings collected on worldwide DJ travels. Thankfully, though, there is plenty of analogue studio trickery also employed to make this more than just a travel document. Instead it acts like a mission statement for what minimal can be in 2014 – hugely intricate, loop-based and ever evolving on a micro level, but rather than being all dry and abstract it's organic, warm and infectious. **Kristan J Caryl**

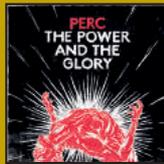


8.0

Pink Skull
Huitlacoche
My Favourite Robot
Acid-tongued rascal

Three-piece electronic act Pink Skull have shape-shifted their way through various sounds over the years — from trippy electronic rock to minimal techno dabbings to collabs with Wu-Tang's Ghostface Killah — but seem to have settled on the analogue-obsessed, acid-washed electronics demonstrated on latest album, 'Huitlacoche'. It's a strong look. The influence of Aphex (as well as newer champions of the sound, such as Legowelt) is strong throughout, but this is no tribute — 'Huitlacoche' is bubbling over with mischievous character and twisted dancefloor charm, thanks to Pink Skull's willingness to experiment, with deviant disco on 'Abalone' and über-twitchy house on 'Mutant Comfort', for example. Although the straight-up, 303-saluting trips on tracks like 'Invijt' are also massively enjoyable. The diagnosis? Raw, visceral electronica writhing around in acid and waiting to melt your legs off. In a very good way. **Tristan Parker**

QUICKIES



Perc
The Power & The Glory
Perc Trax
9.5

It's time for the Perculator

The London-based producer returns with his second LP since 2011's mighty 'Wicker & Steel', and it is a matured and rewarding expansion on the themes and sonics of the former. It defines the liminal space between techno, industrial and noise that challenges the future whilst nodding to the past and present. **Zara Wladawsky**



Uner
Tune 432
Diyynamic
8.0

Balearic beast

Tried-and-tested as one of the most consistent DJs on the White Isle, Spaniard Uner's contribution to Solomun's Diynamic imprint has culminated in a pleasingly eclectic long-player. Breezily fusing intricate, at times reptilian, minimalism with raw, funky, often slamming, tech house functionality, it's a very impressive debut. **Adam Saville**



Poemss
Hall Of Faces
Planet Mu
7.5

Languid lyrics

As rooted in the work of Kraftwerk and Bowie as more recent future-facing soundscapes from Falty DL and Mount Kimbie, Poemss is a collaboration from Toronto-based artist Joanne Pollock and Aaron Funk, aka Venetian Snares. Gothic, woody and hypnagogic, it's an entertaining listen — if at times a little disorientating. **Adam Saville**



Dena
Flash
!K7/Normal Surround
6.0

Swing out sister

Bulgarian-born Berlin-based artist Dena offers a more sugar-coated blend of hip-hop, R&B and electro-pop for those who find Grimes or MIA a bit too weird. It's mostly PG-rated stuff, and although tracks like 'Wish Me' might tempt you into trying some twerking, Dena clearly has more than enough style to need to 'do a Miley' herself. **Paul Clarke**



Radial
CruX
Radial Records
8.0

Dutch delight

Deep, dark, minimal techno from Dutch producer Jeroen Liebrechts, now rocking Radial as a solo project. 'CruX' is full of beefy techno workouts that showcase Liebrechts' ability for mechanical, winding sounds — a few bonus tracks explore lighter electronica moods, but generally it's heads-down, hypnotic assaults from a pro. **Tristan Parker**



Solvent
New Ways: Music From the Documentary I Dream Of Wires
Suction Records
9.0

Dreamy, wiry musings

Producer and modular synth-wizard Jason Amm serves up his soundtrack to the masterful four-hour documentary on his beloved machines. The soundtrack holds its own on and off-screen as a woody, bleepy foray into the wonderful world of these extraordinary instruments. **Zara Wladawsky**

REPEAT THE LPS WE CAN'T LEAVE ALONE...



Zed Bias
Boss
Swamp81
8.5

Stripped-back and gristly, Zed Bias' latest LP is a sinewy treat.



Mental Overdrive
Cycles
Love OD Communications
9.0

When Per Martinsen's mind goes into overdrive, our bodies do too.



Lee Bannon
Alternate/Endings
Ninja Tune
8.0

Hip-hop-meets-jungle on Ninja Tune.



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Henrik Schwarz Defected Presents House Masters

Defected

9.0

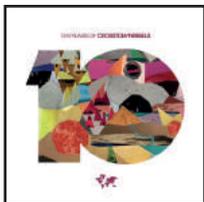
Funky bones

FUNK is in Henrik Schwarz's bones. Anyone who's witnessed one of his extended DJ sets will appreciate that he is a master of the slow burn, building layer upon rhythmic layer, often using a wealth of his own re-edits, remixes and original material. He is a man in control of his dancefloor in every sense. Now added to the roster of the 'House Masters' in Defected's long-standing mix series, it feels like the right move to align him with luminaries like MK, Blaze, Derrick Carter, Dennis Ferrer, Charles Webster and Osunlade. He has just as much to say. Much like those laptop-based club sets, in which he succeeds where



so many fail in making performances feel vibrant and alive rather than dull and tech-heavy, this double-disc affair finds his own edits and remixes front and centre. Tracks you wouldn't imagine could be bent into pulsing house music or urgent, atmospheric techno are utterly transformed while retaining every ounce of soul. The Jacksons' 'Dancing Machine' becomes a 4am anthem, as his stunning edit of Bill Withers' 'Who Is He?' did before it. He reworks jazz-funk staple Omar's 'I'm Feeling You', and 'Think Twice', Carl Craig's take on Donald Byrd as Detroit Experiment. Both are crackling, the latter a shape-shifting beast,

smashing subtly ravey stabs with pianos and brassy horns. His haunting, epic mix of 'Walk A Mile In My Shoes' by Coldcut, featuring the yearning vocals of Robert Owens, is every bit as special as it was when it emerged in 2006, just as Schwarz's star began its rapid ascendance. Similarly, 'Where We At?', his dream team collaboration with Derrick Carter, Âme and Dixon remains fresh, urgent, and mildly unsettling. And if there's a more anthemic, masterfully constructed remix than Schwarz's spine-tingling take on Code 718's 'Equinox', we've yet to hear it. It's a piece of work. But then, what did you expect? **Ben Arnold**



9.0

Various 10 Years of Crosstown Rebels

Crosstown Rebels

Crosstown traffic

Ten months after Damian Lazarus appeared on the cover of DJ Mag, we have '10 Years of Crosstown Rebels', a three-disc commemorative compilation celebrating a decade on the dancefloor. More varied than you'd perhaps expect, each part maps the back catalogue of a label that brought career-defining underground hits from Art Department, Maceo Plex and Jamie Jones. Kicking off with Amirali, Fur Coat and Ali Love, disc one opens with the druggy and opaque tech-funk synonymous most recently with the imprint, before Kiki & Silversurfer present the first curveball ('Shake Off') — indie-disco that's more Hacienda than Day Zero — before Andre Kraml offers some quirky off-kilter pop. Elsewhere, Seth Troxler ('Love Never Sleeps') bears his production hen's teeth with a deep tech house beat and Guti & Dubshape get jazzy with 'Every Cow Has A Bird'. The diversity of tech house's most eminent label is evident, '10 Years' is a definitive collection. **Adam Saville**



8.5

Kerri Chandler Watergate 15

Watergate

Somewhat very Kerri

The house music veteran has been shaping and developing the genre since he burst onto the New Jersey scene over three decades ago, so it's not all that surprising that the Berlin club's Watergate label has commissioned him to mix an edition of their CD series. However, instead of going the more obvious route of drawing from early US house roots, Kerri has instead gleaned his tracks from newer artists who produce modern European sounds like Subb-an, Tom Demac, and No Artificial Colours. Although this style can suffer from being over-polished and boringly "big room", Kerri imbues his trademark soul and swing onto the mix, and it remains rootsy and funky throughout. His own tracks, including the exclusive 'Mama', are typically great fare, but this release is more a testament of Kerri's versatility in adapting to, and utilising, the present as much as the past. **Zara Wladawsky**



7.5

Various BPM001 Mixed By Art Department

No.19

Art departure

In the same month Crosstown Rebels has reminded the world there's more to the label than groggy tech house, one of the imprint's main offenders have made an in-road into more upfront territory on the inaugural mix for arguably the most hyped dance festival of the year, BPM Mexico. Still, anyone who's heard Art Department DJ live will know that their sets are never as one-dimensional as perhaps their past productions might suggest, the duo just as ready to drop electroclash classics and big room techno sounds into material on Jonny White's No.19, the label he co-runs with BPM marketing bod (and DJ/producer) Nitin. Mixing up tribal tech house from the likes of Luca Bacchetti, Deetron and Ripperton with more hypnotic and psychedelic beats from Ten Walls, Mind Against and Eric Volta, 'BPM 001' contains as much to move the body as it does the mind. **Adam Saville**



7.0

David Rodigan Masterpiece

Ministry of Sound

Not quite

After sterling comps in this series from Andrew Weatherall, Carl Craig, Jazzie B and Francois K, long-reigning UK reggae DJ and all-round don David Rodigan takes to the canvas. Over three discs the storied selector goes deep into his musical history with some surprising results. Disc one is mostly his inspirations, before he was bitten by the reggae bug, so we get '60s mod and pop tracks from the Small Faces and the Yardbirds, and plenty of lush soul from Etta James, Marvin Gaye and Aaron Neville. All brilliant, but fairly obvious fare. He's on firmer footing when he explores the reggae greats, with roots tracks from the Abyssinians and Aswad, and the incomparable, ominous skank of Lee 'Scratch' Perry's 'Black Panta'. What Rodigan's good at and where his rivals fall down is selecting decent modern reggae — it's hard to find, but tracks from Luciano, Ini Kamoze and Busy Signal demonstrate that it's not all cheesy autotuned dancehall these days. **Ben Murphy**



7.0

Pangaea
FabricLive 73
Fabric
Ice-block rockin' beats

The third Hesse Audio member to take on the Fabric Live series, Pangaea's entry is less Catholic than Ben UFO or Pearson Sound's instalments, though in cleaving to a tighter techno script, it's closer to the former, if less exploratory. Playing it relatively straight, Pangaea settles on 27 tracks of clean and crisp, brainily percussive ("something for your mind" as the sample from Speedy J's classic here goes) ice-block beats. A tightly wound, almost airless set, there's a driving sense of momentum here, with tracks from Lee Gamble, Kobosil and Bristol cohorts Pev and Kowton all forming a churning mass. It lends to a punishingly relentless if strangely dour workout, but well-judged departures like Maum's 'The Sun God', Mumdance & MAO's lazer-firing 'Truth', Alex Falk's acid-flanging 'PTR' and Forward Strategy Group's raw 'Clean Neckline' keep this on the right side of stark. **Sunil Chauhan**



7.0

Various
HTH Vs HTH
Houndstooth
Barking, with bite

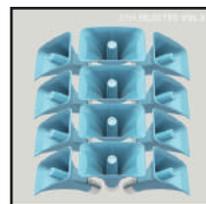
Rather than sum up their first year with a label primer, Houndstooth invited their artists to remix each other. The result feels like a friendly in-house soundclash. Second Storey's 'Quadraxx' response to Call Super's 'Dewsbury Severance' comes on like haunted-house grime, its synths now front and centre with sword slices in the background. House Of Black Lanterns get two reworks, the best being _Unsubscribe_'s take on 'Broken' which removes its former brittleness and leaves it somewhere between Big Black Delta and Instramental. The most satisfying pairing, however, is Special Request's VIP refix of Akkord's 'Destruction', now doused in simmering nu-jungle hallmarks that constantly threaten to boil over. A worthwhile addition to their catalogue, Houndstooth followers will find most to appreciate in these new nips and tucks but 'HTH Vs HTH' should also pique the unconverted. **Sunil Chauhan**



8.0

Various
Spread Love Vol. 3
Black Butter
Utterly butterly

Generously laid out across four samplers, the full 23 tracks of 'Spread Love Vol.3' smear Black Butter even wider, covering all the squeaky clean, liquid styles of garage, bassline house and broken beats we've come to expect from the label. Despite showcasing emerging talent BNRY, DVWLX and Lokate, most surprising is the appearance of two tracks produced as collaboration between Maxxi Soundssystem and MANIK, two relative veterans who inject a breath of Balearic warmth previously not associated with the Black Butter staple. 'Lift You Love' is deep, crisp funk bolstered by its capacious hollow gut and 'Owls' is a little more upfront, unfolding a sexier, darker, more robotic house work-out. Meanwhile, Just Kiddin gets molten and metallic on 'Diamond' and 'Gliss', pushing the label into a more progressive garage/house realm to make for an enticingly varied package spilling with ideas — some more original than others. **Adam Saville**



8.0

Various
EPM Selected Vol.2
EPM
Slick BPMs from EPM

EPM is a modern day musical empire that encapsulates PR, publishing, digital distribution and also a label. Now for the second time they offer up a taster menu from their back catalogue, with a focus on the more techno-leaning output offered to date. It's a fairly in-the-know selection that pairs known names like Orlando Voom and Abe Duque with forgotten experts from yesteryear, including BPMF and Inigo Kennedy, and explores a wealth of styles. From Duque's squelchy tech funk to Kennedy's electro-charged techno stomper via Paul Mac's serene but equally speedy 'Old', this is fast-paced stuff that breaks free of modern concrete funk or industrial associations to explore the outer regions of our galaxy. Highlights include The Third Man, who recently released a full-length on the label and who is at his cerebral and cinematic best on acid-laced closer 'Sleep It Off'. **Kristan J Caryl**

QUICKIES



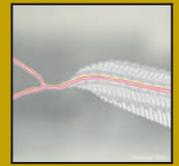
Various
Selected: Compiled By Fred P
Boards
8.0
I'll have a Fred P please, Bob

Lush, hypnotic house and techno, 'Selected' recalls a time when vinyl comps were the most valued source for discovering new artists. Unearthing fresh, timeless gems from Lapien, Ryo Murakami and Bobby O'Connell, this unmixcd collection offers an insight into the textures of Fred's magical DJ vision. **Adam Saville**



Various
Pop Ambient 2014
Kompakt
8.0
Beatless joy

What better soundtrack to quell the festive gluttony than Kompakt's annual 'Pop Ambient' album? Now on its 14th installment, the Wolfgang Voigt-curated celebration of beatless joy is indeed laden with drum-free bliss, like Orb man Thomas Fehlmann's shimmering 'Treatment' and as Gas, Voigt's own towering mix of The Field's 'Cupid's Head'. **Ben Arnold**



Various
Crossing Lines
NX Records
8.0
New school heroes

This is a high concept release from Matthew Herbert's Accidental Records and Goldsmiths University that sees a wealth of new talents offer up their idiosyncratic wares. The well-crafted sounds range from ambient and arty to Balearic and indie-licked. Expect to hear plenty more from everyone involved before long. **Kristan J Caryl**



Acid Arab
Collections
Versatile
8.0
Rock the casbah

As you'd expect, this comp merges acid house beats with Arabic melodies and instruments. But rather than being a tepid, lightweight "world music" mess, it's a brilliant, clever conflation. Authentic artists from both sides of the equation come together, with the Acid Arab project — duo Guido and Hervé — inviting lots of musical friends onboard. **Ben Murphy**



Various
Pure Deep House
New State
6.0
Kiss of death

If MK topping the UK charts pissed off the purists, 'deep house' getting picked up for a 'Pure' compilation is likely to give the hardliners among us a hernia. The stars of 2013 — Breach, Dusky, Shadow Child, Duke Dumont — they're all here, immaculately mixed, with '90s classics thrown together on disc three. **Adam Saville**



Various
Majestic Casual Vol. 1
Majestic Casual/AEI
7.0
For your ears only

Given that it epitomises 21st century pick'n'mix multiplatform musical consumption, it seems odd that YouTube channel Majestic Casual are releasing something as archaic as a CD. But it does mean you can enjoy these tracks from the likes of Disclosure, SBTRKT and Toro Y Moi without having to skip through adverts. How quaint is that? **Paul Clarke**

REPEAT THE LPS WE CAN'T LEAVE ALONE...



D'Julz
This Is Bass Culture
Bass Culture
9.0
Deep masterclass from the French don to celebrate four years of his label.



Danny Howells
Balance 024
Balance Music
8.5
The prog veteran rears a fresh face on 'Balance 024'.



Various
Boys Noise Presents A Tribute To Dance Mania
BNR
8.0
Electro stadium-filler turns attention to '80s acid on V/A comp.

Akai MPC Element

words: ALEX BLANCO



VERDICT

BUILD QUALITY	9.0
EASE OF USE	9.0
FEATURES	9.0
VALUE FOR MONEY	9.0
SOUND QUALITY	N/A

HYPE

Beautiful to look at, a joy to touch, and inspirational to use.

GRIPE

No LED feedback in MIDI-controller mode.

The most portable and affordable entry into the MPC-range works just as well on the road as it does in the studio.

9.0/10

PRICE

£119

CONTACT

akaipro.com

TALKING ABOUT A REVOLUTION

Akai's MPC Element may be small, but it can still kick off a new world revolution...

In production history there are few product lines that are as revered as the MPC. Akai's Music Production Centre range of sampling drum sequencers began in 1988 with the Roger Linn-designed MPC 60, and since then has been immeasurably influential on just about all of the electronic music genres we listen to today. The intervening quarter-century has seen numerous successors and revisions and, more recently, some hybrid hardware/software combinations, namely the MPC Renaissance and MPC Studio which allow computer-based editing, programming and mixing but which offer MPC-styled hardware. Those latter two have met with near-universal praise, and deservedly so, but they are not what you would call portable. Enter MPC Element, a combined all-in-one USB-powered MIDI-controller and music production software package. Let's start with the hardware.

The MPC Element comes in about the size and weight of the original iPad and even has a flip-lid similar to the type you can get for Apple's prestige device. Opening the lid instantly offers the user 16 drum-pads. These offer a sexy black tone with back-lighting around the edges that change colour the harder the pads are hit. These pads really are unbelievably nice for something at this price range, putting all of the competition in this market place (and much above) utterly to shame. The other controls are fairly basic, which is understandable given the size. Obviously there are transport and record controls, the famous Note Repeat button for beat building and rolls (when held down, any pad will play continuously at the selected quantise value), undo and erase buttons, a Full

Level control (when engaged, all pads trigger at the hardest level irrespective of how hard they are hit), Mute- and Solo-Track buttons (more on these later) and buttons to scroll through the different banks of samples — up to eight can be loaded at a time. Other than a few small things that would have been nice to include, like quantise value buttons, it's hard to fault the design and the build quality of the MPC Element — which seems magnificent. Also, while there's no onboard audio interface, there are mini-jack to five-pin MIDI connectors for incorporating other MIDI hardware into the MPC set-up.

When it comes to the software that drives the MPC Element, it can run as either a standalone application or as a AU/VST/RTA plug-in, and like the original MPCs it allows producers to construct everything from basic loops to full tracks, with the added benefit of digital mixing. Each pad can have up to four insert effects added (in standalone mode these can be third-party plug-ins) and there is also a selection of Akai effects — including a tasty bit-crusher. Individual pads have a selection of envelope, LFO and filter controls — as you'd expect in any sampler — and there's even an automatic loop-slicing facility. It's all very well-designed and incredibly conducive to fun and creative music production, and while not as fully-featured, perhaps as NI's Maschine V2 software, many would argue that nothing has ever come close to the effortless MPC-workflow, and having computer-based visual editing has only made it more appealing. Also, using a camera connection kit, it is easy to connect your iPad and run the iMPC software for truly portable use.

Compared to its older, larger siblings, MPC Renaissance and MPC Studio, the MPC Essentials software and sound library are slightly reduced. Instead of a 7GB sound library, there are three banks of useful drums and bass sounds for a variety of electronic styles (house, deep, tech, techno, garage, hip-hop etc). Software-wise, you can only have one track per MPC project, so while you can apply plug-ins to individual drum-pads, you can't have any master effects to pull them all together. You can have multiple plug-in instances in your DAW, of course, and when you do, the Mute-/Solo-Track buttons rather cleverly operate on the different instances. However, one of the downsides is that whilst you can load software instruments into the MPC software (in standalone mode), with one track you're limited to one instrument, which renders the function largely redundant as it seems convoluted to load a drum sampler when the MPC offers precisely that function, and very few people will want to load a soft-synth and sequence it without any additional beats. Finally, the Vintage mode, available in Renaissance, is not on offer, so there's no virtual modelling of the sound of classic MPC models.

It should be fairly clear by now how DJ Mag feels about this machine, but let's just spell it out: whether you already own an MPC or not, or produce primarily on the road or in the studio, there are any number of reasons to buy yourself an MPC Element and, frankly, almost no good reasons not to. The pads are stunning, the build is great, the price is right and everybody owes it to themselves to have at least one MPC in their life.

**JEREMY
VANCAULART
PANIC**





EVERYTHING IS UNDER CONTROL

Pioneer's CDJ-900 Nexus is the new must-have addition to their vastly expanding DJ controller range family...

Of late, Pioneer have been particularly prolific when it comes to releasing new DJ technology and one could be forgiven for thinking that this rate of progression is pushing their other products close to obsolescence far too quickly. However, upon closer inspection, the facts reveal that with some of their bits of kit this isn't quite so. It has

been quite a long time (over four years, in fact) since the release of the original CDJ-900, so the release of the CDJ-900 Nexus is something that has been eagerly awaited. As the CDJ2000 Nexus has become the de facto standard in DJ booths across the planet, the release of the CDJ-900 Nexus will be of great interest to DJs wishing to own essentially the same equipment

they use in the clubs to practice their sets and hone their skills. It will also appeal to venues who don't quite have the budget to purchase the CDJ-2000 Nexus decks but are desperate to stop complaints from DJs at the lack of latest generation CDJs to mix their sets on. Just as the CDJ-2000 Nexus provided a massive jump in terms of technology when compared with

the original CDJ-2000, the new CDJ-900 Nexus takes things to a whole new level in terms of technological trickery and usability, making this upgrade very worthwhile in terms of new features and improvements. In fact, so good is the job that the chaps at Pioneer have done in adding improvements and features to the CDJ-900 Nexus that it makes it a hard decision to choose between

this and the more expensive CDJ-2000 Nexus, as there are only a few noticeable differences between the two. This means DJs who are on a budget can take advantage of the cheaper price without sacrificing key features, as the £350 price difference largely buys a higher level of convenience rather than a different mixing experience.

The most striking new feature to grace this new incarnation of the CDJ-900 is a gorgeous new colour display, which makes the previous generation of CDJ-900 look primitive when compared with the CDJ-900 Nexus. This new display is capable of showing zoomed waveforms in stunning clarity in addition to a track overview, as well as a phrase indicator, which makes mixing easier than ever before. Rekordbox beat grids can be viewed and adjusted, while there's the addition of browsing tracks complete with their artwork and information such as the harmonic key. In a surprising departure from both the original CDJ-900 and the CDJ-2000 Nexus, the screen is now mounted flush with the control surface rather than at an angle, which is something of a disappointment because it makes it harder to read when the units are mounted high in a DJ box. It also makes the CDJ-900 Nexus look decidedly less slick than its more expensive counterpart, which is perhaps the reason for the change.

NETWORKED

As those familiar with any of the products in Pioneer's range that carry the Nexus badge will no doubt have guessed, the CDJ-900 Nexus has a multitude of ways of reading digital audio data — giving DJs the option of storing their music on CDs, USB sticks (or hard drives), computers running Rekordbox or even iOS or Android smart phones and tablets. Up to four CDJ-900 Nexus controllers can be networked together, with the option of using Wi-Fi or cable-based Ethernet to connect computers or

smart phones running Rekordbox and the possibility of having two computers connected at the same time to make DJ changeovers seamless and hassle-free. USB ports at the top and back of the CDJ-900 Nexus also enable the connection of computers, smart phones and tablets, with the added advantage of charging these portable devices while in use.

Of course, the added Nexus functions do a lot more than just play tracks from various devices, because everything is now tightly synchronised to Rekordbox beat grids. Between CDJ-900 Nexus players and Nexus-enabled mixers, the possibility of adding quantised-based features and effects is possible and Pioneer have taken full advantage of this fact. A new quantise button ensures that all of the FX, cue points and loops are kept perfectly on beat across players, in addition to making loop creation an absolute breeze.

OVERHAULED

The Auto beat loop functions from the original CDJ-900 have been overhauled and are operated via the familiar beat divide buttons to make them easier to use — and sonically much better when used during live mixes. Engaging the Auto beat loop buttons in standard mode causes a loop roll effect to start to cut up the track playing, using the selected beat division. Engaging the new Slip Mode turns these buttons into Slip Loop effects, which are triggered when the buttons are held down while the track continues to play in the background — switching back to playing the track once the button is let go perfectly on-beat. Slip Mode also works with the play/pause button, making it possible to create drops without needing to ride the crossfader or channel fader on a mixer. It is also possible to scratch up to a drop without losing the position of the track, ensuring the bars and phrasing still match the other tracks that are playing on other CDJ decks.

The looping section of the CDJ-900 Nexus has been upgraded to the same specification as the CDJ-2000 Nexus, with quantize available on all effects to ensure they stay in perfect time. Pressing the loop cutter button once will engage a perfect four-bar loop, pressing it again will halve the length of the loop. Holding the loop out button and pressing the loop cutter button will double the length of the loop, while doubling or halving loop lengths can also be done via the call buttons. And those who like doing things the old-skool fully manual way can use the loop in and out buttons, with the in and out points being adjustable via the jog wheel platter. The result of the refinements and new features that have been added to the CDJ-900 Nexus is a deck that has been improved massively, making it more fun to use with the addition of some rather lovely effects. These make it possible to make studio quality edits while live in the mix and the sync, slip and quantize functions make it possible to be more creative, putting more combinations of effects and tricks at DJs' fingertips. When comparing the CDJ-2000 Nexus and the CDJ-900 Nexus there are more common features than there are differences, with the CDJ-900 lacking a needle search strip.

The hot cue buttons found on the CDJ-2000 Nexus have been replaced with the beat-divide buttons on the CDJ-900 Nexus, there is no jog wheel stiffness adjustment knob, and no SD card support. When looking at the back panel the two players are almost identical, with both having a stereo pair of analogue audio outs, control port, a digital out, LAN port as well as a USB port. All in all, the CDJ-900 is an excellent device with all of the major features found on the more expensive CDJ-2000 but at a significantly lower price. The CDJ-900 Nexus is going to fly off the shelves in the coming months.

VERDICT

BUILD QUALITY	9.0
EASE OF USE	9.0
FEATURES	8.0
VALUE FOR MONEY	8.0
SOUND QUALITY	9.0

HYPE

Nexus connectivity to allow tracks to be played from computers, smart phones, tablets and USB devices and new features such as slip mode, quantize and an amazing new colour display take the CDJ-900 Nexus to the next level.

GRIPE

The display now sits flush with the control surface rather than being angled, which feels like a step backward.

The CDJ-900 Nexus has been improved immensely, bringing its features very closely in line with the flagship CDJ-2000, despite the cost savings of nearly 25% — making it a very tempting choice indeed.

8.6/10

PRICE

£1149

CONTACT

pioneerdj.eu



TECH NEWS



EVERYTHING IS UNDER CONTROL

Pioneer's new CDJ-900 Nexus is the new must-have addition to the DJ controller family. **p.110**



IN THE STUDIO WITH... PETAR DUNDOV

The Croatian cosmic techno DJ/producer shows us his kit. **p.113**



TALKING ABOUT A REVOLUTION

Could Akai's MPC Element kick off a new world revolution? **p.117**



SOMETHING IN THE AIR

The Hercules DJ Control Air+ controller is a welcome addition to the budget brigade. **p.118**

TECH PRODUCER

Assorted tips and tricks to help your productions on their way. **p.120**



CAN'T TOUCH THIS...

Numark claim that their NS7II is the best DJ controller ever built — is this a boast too far?

Given the amazing reputation that the original NS7 has rightfully gained, the release of the next generation NS7II has had many tongues wagging in the DJ community, especially given the fact that Numark are making the bold claim that this is the best DJ controller that has ever been built — well they would say that, wouldn't they? But the question remains, is this really the best DJ controller money can buy? The short answer is "probably", unless portability is high on the list of features that will sway the decision to hand over the cash.

Just like the original, the NS7II is a massive controller in every way, from the intimidating size and weight to the stunning amount of top-notch features and quality components that Numark have crammed into its all-metal case. Numark have clearly gone for a no-compromise approach when designing and building this controller and have gone to town on this, their flagship controller — size and weight be damned, the NS7II is all about making the best possible machine for mixing, which is a refreshing change from the built-to-a-budget controllers so often released onto the market.

The NS7II is a four-channel controller with a four-channel mixer designed to be used in conjunction with Serato DJ and has more than a few significant improvements over the original NS7. The most notable of these improvements are the new mixer, which now has four channels rather

than the two channels found on the original NS7, as well as built-in FX control and the addition of eight RGB colour pad-style trigger buttons to each deck section. Of course, there were many features that the original NS7 got exactly right first time too, such as the stunning motorised platters complete with vinyl and slip-mats which thankfully have also made their way into the NS7II.

The build quality of the NS7II is nothing short of breathtaking. The case is made entirely from metal, components such as buttons and faders are all of the highest quality and feel amazing to use. Many of the knobs are touch-sensitive, which means instant control and some rather fancy features like being able to use the EQ knobs as kill switches when the shift button is engaged. The control surface is beautifully designed, managing to pack a dizzying array of controls onto the front panel without feeling cluttered. All of the controls are nicely spaced and logically laid out, adding to the user-friendly nature of the NS7II.

As mentioned previously, the NS7II has a fully featured four-channel mixer, which is also capable of working as a stand-alone mixer and has a generous amount of inputs including two mic inputs and four aux inputs, two of which are capable of accepting either line or phono level signals. Each mixer channel has a three-band EQ, gain control knob, filter control knob and two FX engage buttons, and its own 11 segment LED level meter. The mixer's master section is equally well-appointed, with a master

DJ MAG

STAR
PRODUCT

level meter, booth and master gain controls, track browsing section with an encoder knob and eight dedicated buttons to make finding and loading tracks a joy.

The deck sections are equally blessed with outstanding features, including a needle-style touch-sensitive "strip search", four encoders complete with LED ring indicators for FX control, five hot cue buttons and eight pad-style buttons that can be used for cues, rolls, loops, samples and splicer functions. The addition of Pioneer-style slip mode is the final icing on an already impressive cake, which allows DJs to scratch and cut the platter with the track resuming at the point it would have been at, had the platters not been touched.

The NS7II is a thing of beauty. It manages to tick every single box and is simply wonderful to use. Even diehard vinyl purists will find this controller fun and intuitive once they get their hands on it. It is extremely rare to find a piece of DJ equipment that has been so well-designed and executed. The designers at Numark have outdone themselves once again. This controller is absolutely exceptional and unless portability is a major deciding factor, DJs will be hard pressed to find a better purchase.

VERDICT

BUILD QUALITY	9.0
EASE OF USE	9.0
FEATURES	9.0
VALUE FOR MONEY	8.0
SOUND QUALITY	9.0

HYPE

A top quality stand-alone four-channel mixer and motorised platters complete with vinyl and slip-mats, pad-style triggers, touch-sensitive knobs and build quality to die for.

GRIPE

The only possible complaint any DJ could have is the fact that this controller weighs a ton and is very big, making it less than convenient to move around.

The next generation of Numark's flagship controller manages to keep the quality high and adds some amazing new features that will delight DJs the world over.

9/10

PRICE

£1249

CONTACT

numark.com

SOUNDBYTES



IT TAKES TWO

More of an update rather than a new product, Denon have released the MC6000MK2. Building on the popularity of the original, rather compact but feature-rich controller, the MK2 now comes with tighter Serato integration as well as new features, décor and knobs that bring this controller bang up-to-date. The MC6000MK2 comes with DJ Intro out of the box, but can be upgraded to DJ Pro for a small fee.

£569
dm-pro.eu



GOLDEN DELICIOUS

If you're feeling a little bit bling then opt for Pioneer's limited gold edition DDJ-SX-N. Exactly the same feature set as the original DDJ-SX, except for the incredible gold colour scheme, this is going to split camps for sure with one of those Marmite moments, you're either going to love it or hate it.

£859
pioneerdj.eu



NOT SO CROSS DJS

Android owners delight, as Mix Vibes are the first of the big name companies to take the jump to the Android platform with their popular Mixvibes Cross DJing app. Bringing 'pro' quality mixing to the ever-popular Android devices, the new Cross DJ app offers all the usual mixing capabilities and functions that can be found on the iOS versions.

mixvibes.com

DJ DOCTOR

Does it make sense to enrol on a course to enhance my DJing and production skills or am I better off just trying to grasp the concepts on my own?

DANIEL ANNALS, COVENTRY

Hi Daniel,

When it comes to mastering the art of DJing, there is no substitute for hard work in the form of practice, and this is even more important when it comes to production — many of the top producers in the world will tell you they are still learning, so clearly there is no substitute for putting the required time in. Of course, this dedication is required even when attending a course, as the instructors can point you in the right direction but they can't shortcut the learning process. A good course will shortcut much of the initial learning and can be very beneficial in teaching good techniques and workflow early on, before bad habits are formed, and thus will get your skill level up quicker than by doing it alone. It is important to find a good organisation and teacher, as not all schools are equal, so do your research first and if possible ask to be shown around to get an idea of the level of training before you pay any fees.

GOT A BURNING QUESTION?

SEND your query to the DJ Doctor at djdoc@djmag.com and you could win the wicked ORIGINAL FAKE headphones.



TECHTALK

YOUR SELF-HELP FROM THE FORUM

► I'm looking for a small device to record my DJ sets on, does anyone have any advice as to what I should be looking for?

James Preston, Chichester

► If you are looking for something cheap and easy, the chances are you already own something that will do the job. If you buy the right cable you will be able to record sets onto your smart phone (assuming you own one) or computer by plugging the cable into the booth or aux out of a mixer. Just keep an eye on the output levels from the mixer to ensure you don't overdrive your device, which will lead to distortion.

Damien Parker, London

► If you want something super-portable that doesn't need a computer, check out Reeloc's TAPE which lets you record directly onto a USB stick without a computer attached. Unfortunately, TAPE does require an external power supply, so you will need to take that with you too.

Fred Hamilton, Crewe

► Both TAPE and the smart phone idea are good solutions to your problem but they will only record MP3s, so you will lose quality. If you want proper high-quality recordings check out Tascam's DR 07 and DR 05, that record at professional 24-bit 96 kHz quality directly to microSD.

Nikki Smith, Essex



**YUKSEK
CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT
ROLAND JUPITER 8**

"Since becoming the lucky owner of the Roland Jupiter 8, it has become the central piece of my studio. As a crazy synth collector I already have lots of Roland gear like the Juno60, Sh2, Sh8, MC202. Each one of those synths has a specific purpose. However, the Jupiter 8 has everything inside – '80s bass arpeggios, warm subby bass, silk pads, hardest hits etc.

"It's an eight voice polyphonic keyboard and in my opinion only the Memorymoog is equally interesting in that category, but for different reasons, they are really complementary. The Memorymoog is more 'psychedelic' and a bit warmer, but that's another story. The Jupiter 8 is also more efficient and easy to use in a mix with other 'virtual' keyboards and modern drums. I used this keyboard on most of my previous songs and remixes released on my label Partyfine, like 'Last Of Our Kinds', 'Truth', and even the last songs I wrote together with The Magician. All those songs included a mix of real instruments, drums but also drum machine, a few virtual synths and of course the Jupiter 8 on top.

"Compared to all the younger brothers of the Juno and Jupiter family this one only misses the typical Roland chorus, but as soon as you process it on an external FX it starts to sing and give its full potential. It's really on another planet.

"People often ask me which analogue keyboard they should buy to start a studio and I always say 'break your piggy bank and go ahead'. It's expensive, but it's got everything you need if you want to get into fat analogue keys."

APP REVIEW



APP NAME : **SYNTHORIAL** DEVELOPER :
AUDIBLE GENIUS
FORMAT : **VST/AU**
PRICE : **USD \$129.99**

When producing tracks it is easy to rely too heavily on pre-sets and often only tweak a few settings by trial and error. So wouldn't it be fantastic to find a way to learn how to properly program synthesisers in order to get the best from the tools already at your disposal? This is where Synthorial comes in because it is designed with the sole purpose of teaching sound design and synthesiser programming by ear. Synthorial is much more than just a tutorial, it teaches producers to stop relying on presets, and instead to program the sounds you hear as well as when, why and how to use over 60 common synth parameters.

There are nearly 200 lessons included within Synthorial. Each lesson starts with a video that teaches one specific control or group of controls. Each video is then followed

by a "challenge" or exercises designed to give hands-on experience using the built-in synth within Synthorial. These challenges are rather clever and really do push users into properly understanding the lessons by making them tweak the parameters on the built-in synth to match the example sounds from scratch, thus training both the ears as well as the eyes. Synthorial is very easy to use, the design is clever and well thought-out and this app really will improve your synth programming skills in a fun step-by-step way that can be completed at your own pace. And there's a free demo to download from Synthorial's website.



VERDICT

8/10

**FOCAL
RANGE**

Focal Monitors are a regular fixture in many pro-end studios, now they have taken all their industry know-how and put them into their first pair of pro studio headphones. The Focal Spirit Pro headphones have been designed for sound engineers, DJs and producers aiming to deliver a neutral sound that reflects the true nature of the audio being recorded. Made from aircraft-grade aluminium, leather and rubberised plastic, the Spirit Pros look good as well as sounding great.

£239
focal.com



**DIFFERENT
STROKES**

Editors Keys make a range of handy add-on keyboards for Mac and PC users that will get your workflow turbo-charged. They visually put all your software shortcuts on top of the keys of a genuine Apple keyboard. The keyboards cover all the main DAW programs like Logic, Cubase, Live, Reason and Pro Tools, as well as popular video editing software. Built to the highest standards, the Editors Keys shortcut keyboards will turn any producer into a power user in no time at all. editorskeys.com

ALPHA DOG

AlphaSphere have delivered a novel approach to the world of controllers with their AlphaSphere control surface. The AlphaSphere has 48 touch-pads that can be used in a variety of ways. Giving a completely new perspective on the way DJs and musicians can operate their favoured software of choice, the AlphaSphere can also be customised using the accompanying AlphaLive control editor, which lets users programme and tailor fit the AlphaSphere to their own particular needs.

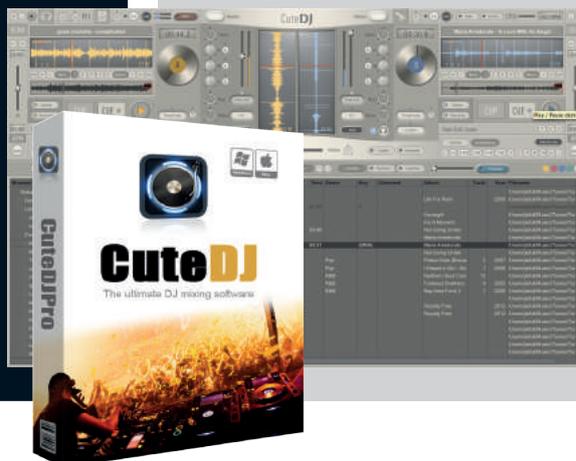
£678
alphasphere.com



CUTE WITH A BITE

CuteDJ is yet another new DJing application for the beginner and Pro DJ alike who doesn't want to get bogged down with all the power features that some of the top-of-the-range DJing software offers. CuteDJ offers an intuitive user interface and powerful mix engine that allows DJs to mix audio and video in a quick and easy manner. CuteDJ is open platform DJ software and can be used on a variety of controllers straight out the box.

£99
cutedjpro.com



A MOMENT OF YOUR TIME

HOT SINCE 82

IN the past 12 months, Hot Since 82 has taken his productions to another level. His Green Velvet, Rudimental and Shadow Child reworks have become anthems in their own right and he was recently awarded Essential New Tune on BBC Radio 1 by Pete Tong. He's just released the first instalment of Moda Black's 'Little Black Book' project — all this, as well as being inducted into the Essential Mix hall of fame. DJ Mag wanted to know what makes this man so HOT!

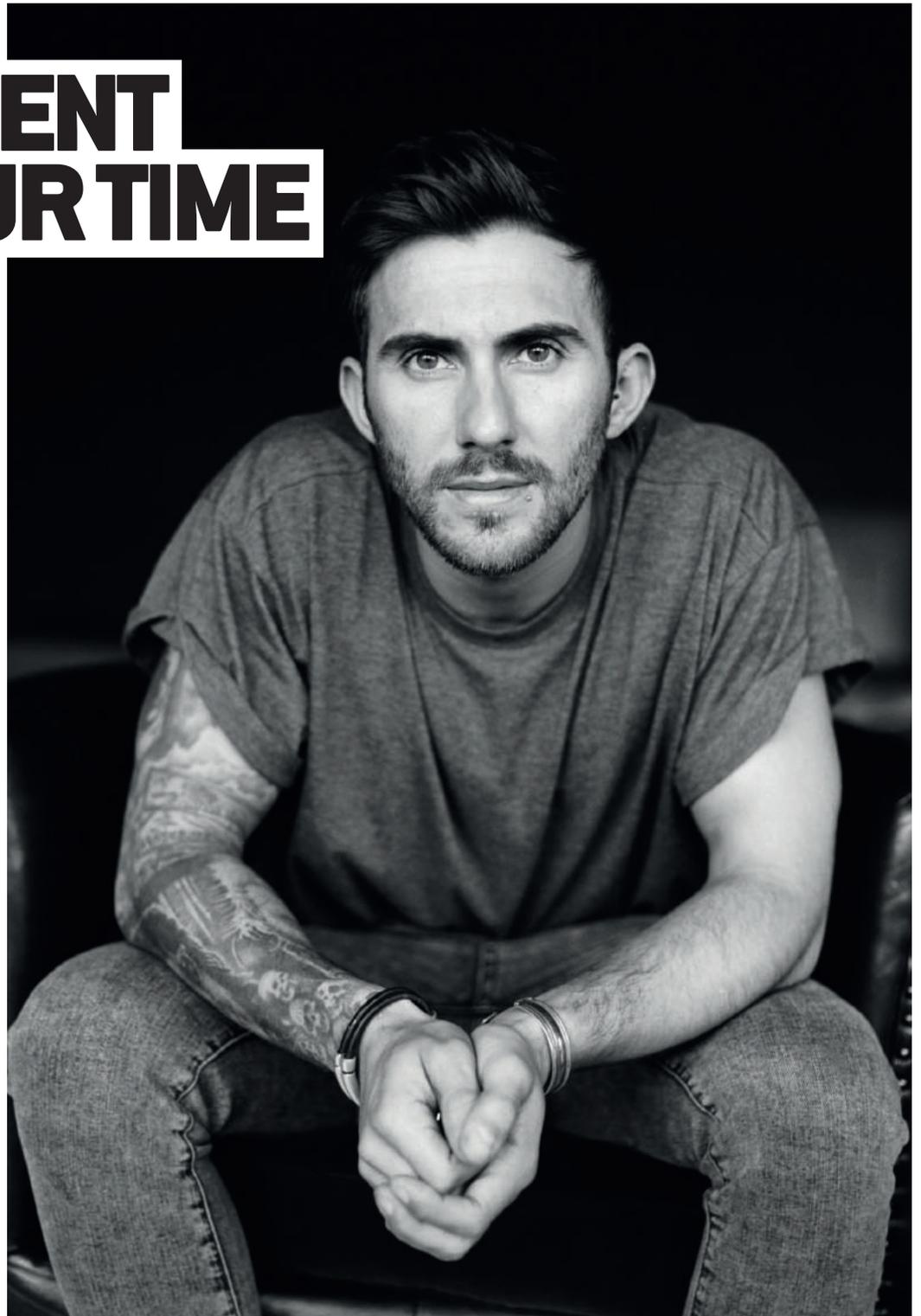
How did you get involved with the 'Little Black Book' project?

"I was the first person to release a track on Moda Black, so I guess Jay and Andy felt it right that I was the first person to be handed the reins to produce, curate and complete the first instalment of this new compilation project. The guys have been putting out some great music on Moda Black via the comps and the label, and this is a cool idea for an artist-led project without the pressure of it actually being a debut album. In fact I'm interested to see who will do the second 'Little Black Book'."

It's quite an ambitious music project...

"Indeed! I've not worked on a project this big before, it took the best part of seven months. I have to admit the deadline did get pushed back a couple of times, it's a massive thing to take on board, especially as I wanted to include so much exclusive new material. It was very important that the listener goes on a bit of a musical journey, like one of my sets. That's why I mixed it live and kept the energy and vibe that can sometimes get lost in the studio."

Talking about ambitious, you've worked with one of the scene's legendary artists, Green Velvet...



"Yeah, that was amazing. Yousef sent me the track and I jumped at the chance to remix it. It's crazy to see how well it's done. Caj (Green Velvet) is a real legend in the game, so to work with him and see the remix become an Ibiza anthem is just incredible. I played in Chicago (his home town) recently and he got on the mix to perform it live, it was a crazy moment!"

Your Essential Mix has been received with great acclaim...

"Yes, that was a real landmark for me. I've been listening to Pete Tong and the Essential Mix since I was knee-high, so being asked to join the Essential Mix hall of fame was a

great moment. I spent quite a bit of time thinking about how to go about it, and then just jumped in the deep end and mixed it live!"

When it comes to kit, what are you using at the moment?

"I am currently using Logic X on a new iMac retina i7, coupled up to two Terabyte harddrives, the amazing Universal Audio Apollo soundcard, and a few synths: Dave Smith Tetra, Moog Slim Fatty, Arturia Analog Factory Experience, Mackie 824 monitors and loads of soft synths — Arturia's Legacy Collection and the new Native Instruments' Komplete Ultimate are two of my favourites. "When I DJ it all depends, as I tend

to use a collection of anything, depends how I'm feeling and what club I'm playing... USBs, CDJs, 1210s, 12"s, laptop, Traktor controller, doesn't matter to me."

Your sound seems to have evolved over the years...

"I've been producing for the best part of 10 years, so I guess my production and sound has evolved a lot over the years. There's always something to learn when you're in the studio, the main thing is just to make what you enjoy. If you don't enjoy it then you shouldn't be doing it."

Hercules DJ Control Air+ controller

words: LUKE PEPPER



SOMETHING IN THE AIR

The Hercules DJ Control Air+ controller is a welcome addition to the budget brigade...

When it comes to tech, the spotlight of attention tends to fall on the latest and greatest high-end DJ technology, with the cost of ownership often in the thousands of pounds range. But not everyone can afford to spend a king's ransom, and not everyone needs or even wants the high-end features that come with that high-end price tag. While professional DJs may turn their nose up at products found in the budget end of the market, it is worth remembering that there are plenty of DJs taking their first steps in the world of mixing — along with music fans who fancy getting their feet wet by mixing at home — without spending a fortune or dealing with the complexity of a professional product, not to mention the headaches that can often come with getting a new controller installed and working on their computer. This is where the Hercules DJ Control Air+ steps up to the plate, offering the chance to get up and mixing with the least amount of fuss and money spent.

The DJ Control Air+ is a two-channel DJ controller complete with DJ software and in-built audio interface. It manages to pack an awful lot of features into a compact package while also offering great value for money. The size of the Air+ is similar to the Traktor Kontrol S2 or Vestax VCI-380 which — combined with the light weight of the unit — makes

it very portable and perfect to throw into a bag to take to parties, or friends' houses to have a jam. Everything needed to get up and mixing is included in the box, with a set of speakers and an amp being the only additional items needed to get a party rocking — even if that is a party of one rocking in their bedroom for one of those 'live in my underpants' mix sessions!

The software included with the Air+ is called DJuced 40, which once installed on a computer makes this controller completely plug-and-play. This neatly sidesteps any potential installation headaches, which is exactly what the doctor ordered for those brand new to the world of digital DJing.

At the heart of the DJ Control Air+ is a two-channel mixer with each channel featuring a three-band EQ, channel fader, cue button and three segment LED level meter. Interestingly, each channel also has a gain control knob, but rather than being at the top of the channel as one would expect, the gain knobs have been placed on the deck control sections along with a button that toggles between gain and filter control. While this arrangement is not ideal, it works well enough in practice and is only likely to irk DJs who are used to a conventional mixer layout.

At the centre of the mixer is a large browser encoder knob, along with buttons to load the currently selected track into either deck A or B. All of

the channel faders and knobs have metal shafts, which is an unexpectedly high quality feature for such a budget controller. However, while the faders are perfectly serviceable they feel cheap when in operation, and the crossfader's performance leaves more than a little to be desired when attempting battle-style scratching and cutting. A microphone input can be found on the front panel along with its own gain control knob sitting next to the headphone controls which feature both small and large headphone sockets, a headphone volume control, and a button which toggles between cue and mix-style monitoring. DJs looking to connect other input sources such as CD players or vinyl decks are out of luck as the Air+ has no external input sources available.

Each of the two deck sections that sit either side of the mixer are surprisingly well appointed, with nicely-sized pressure-sensitive jog wheels that perform admirably thanks to low latency performance and rubberised tops which make them very easy to grip. However, the stiffness of the platters detracts from an otherwise well-executed design. Sitting above the jog wheels are four buttons used to trigger either FX or loops, with two dedicated buttons which can be used to switch between banks. At the edge of each deck section are small pitch-faders which are usable but frustrating when it comes to accurate tempo control during beat mixing.

VERDICT

BUILD QUALITY	6.0
EASE OF USE	8.0
FEATURES	7.0
VALUE FOR MONEY	8.0
SOUND QUALITY	7.0

HYPE

Large jog wheels, on-board audio interface, pad-style triggers and a unique gesture-based 'Air Control' make this controller a whole lot of fun.

GRIPE

Lack of external inputs and the strangely located gain knobs may put some potential owners off.

The DJ Control Air+ is a compact DJ controller perfect for new DJs and casual mixers to get up and mixing without breaking the bank.

7.2/10

PRICE

£199

CONTACT
hercules.com

This, though, is easily remedied when mixing by using the Sync button to tightly-match beats. Each deck also has four pad-style buttons that can be used either for hot-cues or to trigger samples.

Given the very reasonable price of the DJ Control Air+, there are a lot of cool features packed into this controller, some of which are surprisingly advanced, like the Air Control function that allows DJs to tweak FX by waving their hand. This controller is absolutely perfect for new DJs and casual mixers looking to have some fun without breaking the bank.

In The Studio with Petar Dundov
words: MICK WILSON



SAIL OF THE CENTURY

DJ Mag were welcomed 'on-board' Petar Dundov's impressive studio to discuss all his lovely production toys and how he recorded his latest long-player, 'Sailing Off The Grid'...

Croatian DJ/producer Petar Dundov has been a key figure in electronic music since he released his first tracks in the early '90s. Ranging from deep techno to cosmic, chugging arpeggiated trance symphonies — transcendental in the truest sense — his singular sounds have found a home on labels as varied as Derrick May's Transmat and well regarded Belgian stable Music Man. His umpteenth album is the mighty fine 'Sailing Off The Grid', another galactic exploration that unfurls new charms with each spin. We got in touch with Petar to find out how he works, how he teases out those mind odysseys from his machines, and why hardware is the best way to unlock the imagination...

You've got a very impressive collection of studio toys. How did you go about amassing all this kit?

"I have always been attracted to sound and I realised very soon that just one piece of gear would not be able to reproduce all of the sounds that I want. This all happened in the early '90s when digital samplers and PCM synths were still new things. They changed the way music was made and people were so impressed by new technology that everybody started selling old analogue synths and drum machines. Me, on the other side, I was more into synthesis, I like to programme sounds and was looking for machines that have their own character. I was interested in synths that could sit in a particular place in the mix. At the time I got some nice pieces for silly money. Most of the stuff that I bought came

from this era. There was another good moment for buying equipment, when computers started to take over at the turn of the century. Digital plug-ins were something new and at that time I bought top-of-the-line digital synths."

Where did your passion for hardware come from?

"I think the drive for me was to be able to create those beautiful sounds that I heard in my first experiences with electronic music. There is something eternal when you sit by the keyboard, start tweaking those knobs and in a moment sound appears that leads you — it creates a mood and you start to play a melody... it is like it all comes from sound. It opens a door for imagination and everything else follows. Instruments for me are a kind of interface, a key that unlocks a realm of music and you are there, floating freely, unbound by anything, just you and sound. I still have those experiences and that is the main reason why I started doing music in the first place."

In this day and age considering that soft synth/virtual plug-ins are so good, wouldn't it be easier to have a set-up that is based in the box?

"Of course. If I were starting now, I would almost surely go for an ITB set-up. The digital realm is so powerful today that if you train yourself to work freely in that domain, you can do pretty much everything you want. Also, look at the prices of analogue gear today, it's ridiculous, I don't know who could afford it. A good digital set-up, plenty of controllers, lots of screens and a control



surface that you work on long enough to be able to do the mix with your eyes closed would be the way to go."

Often debated, do you think that you can tell the difference between hardware and software?

"Depends on the song. On softer songs with lots of dynamics where you have just a couple of elements, one or two synths, you can tell. You can even tell if it is a digital or analogue oscillator. It is just knowing how these things sound. On the contrary, if it is a busy song, it is more difficult to tell, especially if you have a lead vocal sitting right in the middle."

What is the big modular beast we can see in the corner of your studio?

"That is a Roland Synthesizer System 100 and 100m stacked together. I bought that one second-hand from Zagreb School of Animated Film. That was my first analogue synth and I learned that beast to the atom. It has a five oscillator, five filter system with lots of envelopes, LFOs, modulators. You can get some really crazy sounds with that one. Sometimes I even connect external sources like a sampler or feed from the desk into it, the possibilities are limitless. I use it on every song I do. Like for example from my first album 'Oasis', one of the songs is purely System with 909 and 808. That was it, simple as that. It is so rich in sound that sometimes it is enough to drive a complete 10-minute song."

In regards to software, what are you actually using?

"I am using Logic 9 for my main sequencer and audio tracking. It is great for MIDI if you have lots of things you need to route and handle from one spot. The audio engine is decent, and automation is quite simple. There are many built-in plug-ins that sound good as well. I also use Numerology 3 for modular-style MIDI sequencing. You can do some interesting stuff with it, I've used it for some time now and it's become an essential tool for me. I also use PD (pure data) sometimes when I need to do some complex mapping of controllers or do conversions of audio to data streams."

I guess it's important to get the right vibe in the space that you use to record?

"Sure. We spent lots of time thinking what would be the best options regarding the space that we have. In the central area there must be enough room to move around to all the different keyboards, to be able to sit or stand and still be able to play them. The main console is in the middle of the room, the sweet spot is just large enough, so even if you're bending from side to side you are still hearing accurately what you are doing. Colours are nice, I went for light orange and Bordeaux red. Since there is a lot of gear and with it lots of heat generated, I have four oversized air-con units that can lower the room temperature to normal during any part of the year. The purpose of this room, other than good sound, is not to be distracted in the creative process and I am happy that we could accomplish that."

How would you go about recording a project like 'Sailing Off The Grid'?

"There are three stages I need to complete for every project. Composition/recording, arrangement and mix-down. Composition could start from an idea that I have or some sketch I've already done on my laptop at home. I load



my main sequences, add a simple beat and then open the recording channels and press record. I just jam with my synths and see where it will lead me. I'll add other layers, and record overdubs, new ideas pop up quickly when I find a nice hook. When I see that I have enough elements, I switch to arrangement stage. I also do automation at this point, fade ins and outs for particular elements. Finally when all is done, I go to the mix-down stage where I add effects, position elements in stereo space, do equalisation and dynamics and so on. Some final touches with VCA and effect automation. I check everything again on three different sets of monitors, and record a master."

Bit of a master-class here — can you share one tip for making better-sounding music?

"Get a decent pair of monitors. Being able to hear what you are doing is the most important thing, much more important than a sound-card or computer. Do simple room acoustic treatment, it doesn't have to be anything fancy, just a couple of sponges on the walls will do the trick. Have a set of headphones nearby, to use as a second pair of monitors. When you eventually upgrade to bigger systems, things will get better instantly."



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TECHPRODUCER

We reveal some handy tips and tricks to help you on the road to wicked productions...

KILLER SOUNDS

How to create the freshest sounds on the dancefloor...

AUSTEN SMART, one half of Brodanse/Danse Club Records, spills the beans on working with the almighty Groove Armada...

"We met Groove Armada at a gig they did six months ago at Village Underground. They were 'big fans' (their words, not ours) of a track we made called 'Activate' featuring Cari Golden and they played it on their BBC 6Music show. From there we talked about doing some music together.

"We kick-started an idea and sent it over to Cari, she loved it and laid down some vocals that night in her studio and sent them over the next morning. It was quite serendipitous really as she had this vocal hook for ages but no one was sending the right stuff. Anyhow, Groove Armada loved it, and then we all went away and did our thing with the tracks, eventually coming back with the 'Club Version' and the 'Deep Version' — there was meant to be a third version, but it never happened. We were so happy with the two edits and could not see any reason to add more to the EP. "Talking from our side on the production front, we used Logic



alongside an Arturia Minibrute, Spectrasonics Omnisphere 'mother synth' and a mixture of samples we have gathered over time. We worked the vocals with some relatively simple effects, e.g. reverb, delay and a bit of EQ. Obviously, production methods are quite subjective and we don't believe there is ever any right or wrong way. We have a template already set up so that as soon as we want to get to work we can instantly get an idea down and not lose momentum at the outset of a project — we would highly recommend doing this in a format to suit your production needs. "The most important thing we can say

to upcoming producers/DJs, though, is get out there and meet people! This whole EP came about from meetings in person. We met Cari at Sonar festival through our friends Anja Schneider & Ralf Kollmann [Mobilee Records] and we met Groove Armada through our main man, great friend and Danse Club ambassador Severino of Horse Meat Disco. "We are currently working on what's known as a triptych, so 'Sweat' is part one of three of this collaborative EP, which seems to be working nicely! 'Part 2' is with Kevin Knapp, who you may remember from his bomb 'Like This' with Audiojack, and 'Part 3' is with... no, we can't tell you..."

SAMPLE TANK: LOOPMASTERS: 'MEDIKS' DRUM & BASS SURGERY

IT'S all about the drum and the bass this month as we take a look at Loopmasters' newest sample library designed to tear apart those bass-ready dancefloors...

Loopmasters turn to Bristol's freshest bass-meisters Ross, Dan and Rob — also known as the Mediks — to deliver this slice of drum & bass sample library goodness. Focusing around the original uptempo jump-up sound of the genre, the pack is filled to the rafters with deep, wobbly basses and high-impact drum samples that have been associated with the drum & bass scene that is still flourishing in deepest Bristol.

As the blurb so simply puts it, "Expect to hear over 500MB of precision-tooled samples including cutting-edge beats, bold basslines, upfront leads, twisted SFX and a whole bunch of filthy one-shot sounds ready to drop into your drum & bass productions". The Mediks have used their extensive production know-how to bring to the masses a sample pack that champions their sound and gives instant inspiration for those future dancefloor fillers. To make things even easier for producers, as well as the usual sample formats 'Drum & Bass Surgery' is available in Ableton Live Pack, Apple Loops and Reason Refill variations which can be purchased separately, and producers can even buy various elements of the pack individually at a reduced rate.



VERDICT

7.0/10

PRICE

£24.95

CONTACT

loopmasters.com

PLUG IN CORNER

Welcome to Plug-in Corner, our monthly exposé of some of the best plug-ins around for creating electronic music

sponsored by



PLUG-IN: SIGMUND
DEVELOPER: D16 GROUP
FORMAT: VST, AU
PRICE: £49.16

LET'S FACE IT, the guys at D16 Group make great-sounding plug-ins at near-unbeatable prices. Their Phoscyon replication of Roland's 303 legendary silver box has won a load of fans in the dance world, and the rest of their collection of useful sound creation tools has found favour with many producers the world over.

Their latest offering, Sigmund, is a more ambitious affair. What at first could be described as a delay unit is very far off the mark as it is in fact four delay units combined into one monster delay, enabling a whole multitude of sound-mangling opportunities. The four individual delay modules that make up the main FX can be routed and connected to each other in any particular manner, with the output signals from each of the delay modules controllable via an inbuilt mixer that allows detailed sound sculpture.

In truth, Sigmund is all about sound sculpture and creation. It can be used to develop your sounds in the most inventive of ways, and serious sound buffs will fall in love with it. It is easy to get carried away with the sound mangling.

For those not too comfortable about delving into the complexities of sound design, Sigmund is still a very creative and versatile delay as the presets are a great way to get started with this virtual unit and also offer a quick solution for adding character to stock sounds that need a little bit of spice. The FX results from Sigmund can go hard and yet it can be gentle, but either way Sigmund is a very good and novel take on a basic effect that has been used so many times in so many productions — definitely worth taking a look at.



VERDICT 8/10

Plug-in corner is sponsored by pluginboutique.com, your login for plug-ins!



BASS IN THE PLACE

Novation delivers serious bass right in your face with their Bass Station II analogue keyboard...

NOVATION'S original Bass Station was first launched 20 years ago and quickly gained a huge following in the dance market, thanks to the awesome analogue sounds that it produced, with its own unique timbre and squelchy filters. While in-the-box-style production has taken over from onboard — with producers often going from writing to final mix-down without ever touching a physical knob or slider and instead relying on plug-ins and soft-synths — proper old-skool analogue synths are making a comeback, thanks largely to the popularity of recently released products such as Arturia's MiniBrute and Moog's Minitaur. This old skool renaissance has not been lost on Novation and the release of the Bass Station II will be of great interest to producers who are looking to get back to the hands-on programming and real analogue sound that only hardware can provide.

Of course, with any sequel — whether a movie or a synthesiser — comes the potential for disappointment, especially when the original was so

loved. Luckily, Novation have not opted to give the original Bass Station a quick facelift in an attempt to cash in on former glories, but have taken the ethos of the original and brought it kicking and screaming into the 21st century thanks to some very cool new features. These come together to create a synthesiser that performs and sounds like a modern analogue beast should.

When compared with its older brother, the Bass Station II has a completely redesigned keyboard, new sequencer, arpeggiator and many other smaller improvements over the original design. While the layout and design of the Bass Station II are clearly paying homage to the original, this is a new animal altogether that shares the portability and low cost with the original Bass Station. Unfortunately, some of the less fantastic features have also found their way into this latest incarnation, including a rather plastic-feeling build quality. That said, it's all about the sounds — and this thing belts those out with gusto. While the original vibe of the Bass Station remains, thanks to the colour

scheme and layout, the Bass Station II has a control surface that is much more professional and slick. This is due to the use of faders and sliders, rather than sticking with the flimsy switches and dials used by Novation 20 years ago. The layout of the control surface has been executed in a neat and logical way that will be instantly familiar to anyone who has used analogue synths such as the SH101 or Juno 106, with separate sections for controlling oscillators, mixer, envelopes, LFOs and filtering, as well as sections dedicated to effects and the new arpeggiator. Controls are well spaced and provide exceptional levels of control, making this synthesiser a whole lot of fun to programme without becoming cluttered or over-complicated. The two-octave keyboard does an admirable job, with a nice action on the generously-sized keys, and has both pitch and mod wheels located to the left of the keyboard. While the LCD display is a little disappointing due to the fact that it only displays three numbers, in use it works perfectly well thanks to the clever design work done by Novation. This adds to the old

skool analogue feel. When it comes to sound quality and palette, the Bass Station II does not disappoint. While this synthesiser excels in creating awesome bass sounds, it is also capable of creating a wider range of interesting noises, thanks largely to the improved filter section. The new step filter and arpeggiator functions further expand the usefulness of the Bass Station II, and will ensure that it appeals to a wide range of producers across many genres. The Bass Station II is the rebirth of a legend that has been worth the 20-year wait and is destined to be an integral part of many big records in the months and years to come. ◀

VERDICT

BUILD QUALITY	7.0
EASE OF USE	8.0
FEATURES	8.0
VALUE FOR MONEY	8.0
SOUND QUALITY	8.0

HYPE

Vastly improved filter section, a new step sequencer and arpeggiator make this synth very attractive.

GRIPE

The plastic build quality could be better.

This reinvention of the original Bass Station adds great new features while keeping the original ethos to create a winning analogue synthesiser for the 21st century.

8/10

PRICE
£399

CONTACT

novationmusic.com

DO WHAT EXCITES YOU

If something is exciting or scary, then do it. If it bores you or drains your energy, stop doing it and leave it to someone who enjoys doing it.

DON'T FORGET TO NETWORK

Networking is one of the keys to success in the music industry. Make sure to put aside some time each week to meet new people and keep in contact with the useful people you already know.

CLOSE CUTS

When editing vocals, make sure not to cut too close. That breath before and after the singing can often add a lot to the performance.

LISTEN TO YOUR FANS, NOT CRITICS

While taking criticism well is an important skill to learn, make sure to also pay attention to the constructive comments too.

TIPS



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