

CHICAGO'S JUKE UNDERGROUND SHED EL GUINCHO KARIZMA MATTHEW DEAR

ACCELERAT
XLR8R.COM

135
SEPT/OCT
2010

DEEP INTO THE ABYSS WITH THE MIDWEST'S CREATURES OF THE NIGHT.

Salem

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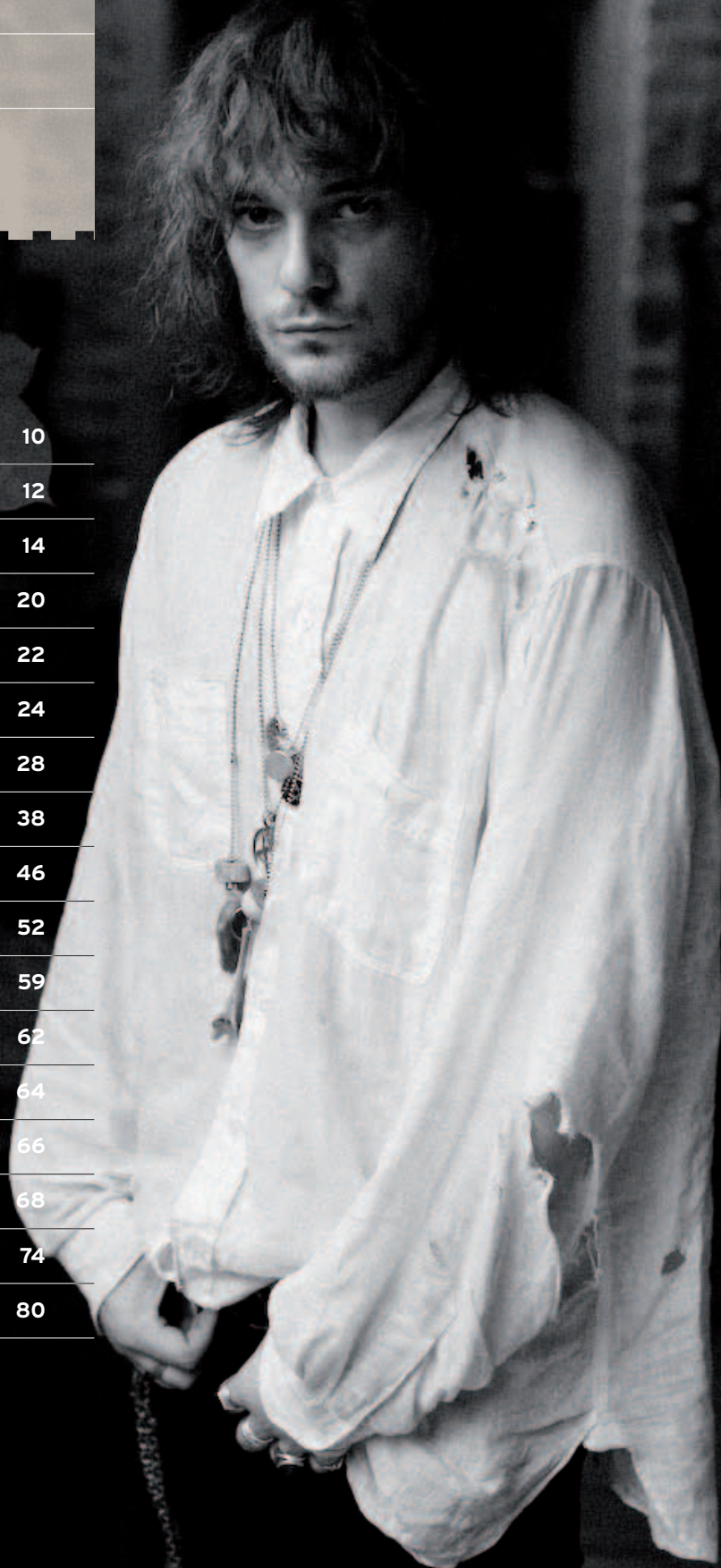


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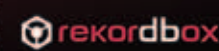
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FOOTWORK FRENZY ON CHICAGO'S SOUTH SIDE, SHOT BY DAVE QUAM

As I type this, our office is bouncing back and forth between listening to the new Sam Prekop single, old Sea and Cake YouTube clips, DJ Nate's "Ima Burn Him," Salem's *King Night*, and a ghetto-house mix downloaded from Resonance FM. It's no secret that we've been on a bit of a Chicago kick of late, and this September/October edition of *XLR8R* might as well be our second Chicago City Issue. That was hardly the plan, but when you look at it, if the artists found within these pages don't currently live in Chicago (all the juke guys; one member of Salem), they're probably either from Chicago (Brenmar; another member of Salem), or at least influenced by the city's house-music legacy (Mr. G; Altered Natives). Whether or not there's a renaissance brewing in the Midwest remains to be seen, but it's hard to refute that the frequencies from the region are endlessly reverberating outward, and some big things are happening as a result.

First up, honorary juggalo Brandon Ivers chats with cover stars Salem, from their respective bases in Traverse City, Michigan, and Chicago, Illinois, about the reality and myth behind the band, as they release their debut LP and continue to be one of indie rock's most talked-about groups. And while it ain't exactly Chicago, Brandon also shot south to Cave-In-Rock, IL, where he and photographer Kelly O went undercover to get the goods on the equally ballyhooed Gathering of the Juggalos, for *XLR8R.com*. Love 'em or hate 'em—this one's worth a look.

Back up in Chi-town proper, Dave Quam, the newest writer in the *XLR8R* stable, went deep to get the real scoop on the city's still-burgeoning next wave of juke and footwork music. From parties like Da War Zone to hangin' in DJ Spinn's basement, Quam comes back with a hell of a story from juke music's frontlines (as he also frequently does with his blog, *It's After the End of the World*, at davequam.wordpress.com). Turns out it's not just the rest of the US that's anxiously awaiting DJ Nate's record on Planet Mu—folks like London's Bok Bok also weigh in on the footwork fascination as it heads overseas.

Still not convinced that something's brewing on the banks of Lake Michigan? Ali Gitlow talks to three former Chicagoans—New Yorker Brenmar (a.k.a. Bill Salas), who infuses his style of clubby house/R&B tracks with plenty of juke sensibility, and visualists AIDS-3D, who recently relocated to Berlin to continue their experiments with tech-based art—who are now making waves outside the Midwest. And lest you tire of our temporary fascinations, Barcelona pop deconstructionist El Guincho also pops in for a visit, as does Berliner Shed, whose latest LP, *The Traveller*, takes German techno on a thrill ride.

Where do we go next? You can start by downloading the *XLR8R* City Guide app at the iTunes store, where we've recently added listings for Denver, Seattle, St. Louis, Austin, and Portland. Or you can simply read on and see...

—Ken Taylor, Editor

XLR8R

EDITOR

Ken Taylor (ken.taylor@xlr8r.com)

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Tim Saputo (tim.saputo@xlr8r.com)

MANAGING EDITOR

Shawn Reynaldo (shawn.reynaldo@xlr8r.com)

VIDEOGAMES EDITOR

Ryan Rayhill (ryan.rayhill@xlr8r.com)

EDITORIAL INTERNS

Patric Fallon, James Jano

STAFF WRITERS

Eric K. Arnold, Joe Colly, Matt Earp, Rob Geary, Ali Gitlow, Derek Grey, David Hemingway, Max Herman, Ethan Holben, Justin Hopper, Josiah Hughes, Brandon Ivers, Luciana Lopez, Cameron Macdonald, Lulu McAllister, Tomas Palermo, Dave Segal, Jesse Serwer, Evan Shamoan, Patrick Sisson, Janet Tzou, Tony Ware, Walter Wasacz, Rico "Superbizzee" Washington

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Richard Attley, Michael Byrne, Brandon Bussolini, Michael Harkin, Tom Lea, John S.W. Macdonald, Dave Quam, Thomas Rees

STAFF PHOTOGRAPHERS

Martei Korley, Morgan Howland, Paul O'Valle, Dustin Ross, Ragnar Schmuck, Mathew Scott, Christopher Woodcock

CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS

Shawn Brackbill, Megan Cullen, Oscar Garcia, Paul Labonte, Martin LeSanto-Smith, Pete Moss, Dave Quam, Yumna

STAFF ILLUSTRATORS

Chuck Anderson for No Pattern, Derek Morris for Trophy, Colin Strandberg for The Work Steady

ON THE COVER

Salem, shot in New York by Shawn Brackbill

SPECIAL THANKS

ArtRebels, Trailerpark Festival, Tom Lea, Sarah Hood, Haldan Blecher, Dana at Biz3, Sonya & Lisa at Beggars, Melissa Taylor, Judy Miller, Nate & Stephen at IK7, Leslie at Ninja Tune

TRISTAN EATON, ARTIST & TOY DESIGNER
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OSCAR GARCIA



Oscar Garcia is a Barcelona-based photographer and journalist. His work frequently appears in the main Spanish music magazine *Rockdelux*, as well as in numerous other publications. He loves combining new and old photographic techniques and tools to capture the soul of the musicians he portrays, who have, in the past, included Vic Chesnutt, Julee Cruise, Joe Henry, Arto Lindsay, and Genesis P-Orridge. For this issue, he shot El Guincho in Barcelona.

oscar-garcia.com

BRANDON IVERS



Brandon Ivers was born in 1979 into a Minneapolis bourgeois family. Educated by Jesuits, he was an excellent pupil, but one quickly enraged by dogma. An early rift with his father—who wished him to study law—led to his choice of letters as a freelance occupation. Insinuating himself into the Dark Carnival after the release of ICP's *The Great Milenko*, he became notorious for lampooning the secrets of the Neden Game. He currently resides in Seattle, where he wrote about Salem for this issue of *XLR8R*.

DAVE QUAM



Raised on good beer and evergreen trees, Portland-born, Chicago-educated Dave Quam spends his time taking photos of footworkers, and writing about music and dance he cares about, as he did for this issue's *Battle Cats* feature. A graduate of SAIC with a BFA in all things camera-related, his hobbies include duppies, maps, and avoiding student-loan payments. Sometimes he claims to be a DJ, and sometimes people actually dance to what he plays.

davequam.wordpress.com

ANDREW PORTER



A Brooklynite by way of California, Andrew Porter spends his days digging through others' clothing trash to unearth rare gems. A freelance fashion writer and blogger, former public-school teacher, former printing-press owner, former Troubleman Unlimited/Italians Do It Better label clean-up man, passionate lover, and exquisite chef, Porter is truly a jack of all trades. To quote his mother, "Andrew's knowledge is 100 miles wide and an inch deep." He compiled this issue's Elements section.

XLR8R

PUBLISHER

Andrew Smith (andrew.smith@xlr8r.com)

ADVERTISING MANAGER

Ethan Holben (ethan.holben@xlr8r.com; 212-226-4553)

MARKETING INTERN

Michael Blumenfeld

EVENTS AND ONLINE MARKETING MANAGER

Shawn Reynaldo (shawn.reynaldo@xlr8r.com)

ACCOUNTING MANAGER AND SUBSCRIPTIONS

Sally Mundy (sally.mundy@xlr8r.com)

CIRCULATION MANAGER

Sally Mundy (sally.mundy@xlr8r.com)

OPERATIONS CONSULTANT

Michael Prommer

CO-PUBLISHER

Arias Hung

ADVERTISING: Dial 415.861.7583, fax 415.861.7584,

email advertising@xlr8r.com, or mail XLR8R Magazine, 3180 18th St. #207, San Francisco, CA 94110

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CONTACT US: San Francisco HQ: 3180 18th St. #207, San Francisco, CA 94110;

New York Office: 114 Bowery, Suite #206, 10013, New York, NY 10001; letterbox@xlr8r.com, fax 415.861.7584



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PODCAST



PODCAST: ALEX B. SALEM, ZED BIAS, BRENMAR, DJ RASHAD

Prepare to get juke. Seriously, this month's lineup of exclusive XLR8R podcasts promises plenty of Chicago dance-party goodness. First up, Salem gets all post-footwork, post-gabber, post-industrial crazy on you with one of their spooky signature mixes. They're followed by fellow (albeit former) Chicagoan Brenmar, who spices up the formula with his brand of ghetto-house-influenced, chopped-up R&B tracks. And if that's not enough, the genuine juke article—and recent Planet Mu signee—DJ Rashad weighs in with some weighty, frenetic bass as well. After that batch, stick around for a set from the granddaddy of dubstep, Zed Bias, and next-level abstract-beat goodness from Denver's Alex B.

Get your dose of can't-miss hotness and sign up for our weekly podcast at XLR8R.com, where we feature exclusive mixes from all across the spectrum, including new sets from Girl Unit, Sepalcure, matthewdavid, and tons more.

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XLR8R'S "TO THE BANK" CONTEST

SNAG SOME AWESOME NEW ALBUMS, THE NINJA TUNE XX BOX SET, AND JIMMY EDGAR'S SAMPLE BANK!

It's not quite Christmastime yet (thank god!), but we're already sorta getting in the giving spirit. As we segue into the colder, rainier pages of the calendar, we've decided to offer up some killer contest prizes: a vault of Ninja Tune goodies in the form of the Ninja Tune XX box set and a bank of samples from Jimmy Edgar—get it? All you've gotta do is describe for us the perfect bank heist—yes, a robbery—in under 200 words, and you might win the grand prize, which includes those two door-busting items, plus Salem's King Night, Jimmy Edgar's XXX, El Guincho's Pop Negro, and DJ Nate's Da Track Genius on vinyl or CD.

One grand prize winner will receive the Fixed Noise Jimmy Edgar Rhythm Objekt sample bank, a Ninja Tune XX box set, and the CDs listed.

Four runners up will receive each of the albums listed.

Entries will be accepted via standard mail and email, and must be received by Nov. 1, 2010. Send your entry to: XLR8R's To the Bank Contest 3180 18th St. #207, San Francisco, CA 94110 or email contest@xlr8r.com with "XLR8R's To the Bank" in the subject line.



SEPT/OCT NO.135

Music and videos from Salem, Arp, Altered Natives, and more

Scotty B's Baltimore City Guide on XLR8R TV

El Guincho, Lazer Sword on XLR8R TV

An Outbox with Chapterhouse

Chicago juke and footwork videos galore

XLR8R.COM/135EXTRAS



JULY/AUGUST NO.134

The video for Azari & III's "Hungry for the Power"

Music from Actress, De Tropix, Mount Kimbie, and more

Podcasts from Wolf + Lamb, Ghosts on Tape, Shlohmo, and Teebs

An XLR8R TV City Guide episode with Alex B in Denver

Diskjokke's Ultimate Beach Mix

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ALTERED
NATIVES

WORDS
TOMAS A. PALERMO



DANNY YORKE BREAKS RULES WITH AN AGGRO MIX OF BROKEN AND HOUSE BEATS.

Danny Yorke lights up a spliff in his London flat and takes a patient puff before telling me about how he remixed Ikonika, released two artist albums, and is auditioning tracks for his Eye4Eye label's next release. It's been a busy 2010 so far; maybe he deserves a smoke break. But the 30-something producer, better known as Altered Natives, is also calculated, pausing like a chess player contemplating his next move.

The reticence might have something to do with his admitted bad-boy past as a graffiti writer who left home at 16 and formed a hip-hop crew in North London. Or maybe it's that with song titles like "Eating Drinking Fucking Sucking," "Cut, Slash, Mutilate," and "Rage of Aquarius," he has to clearly explain his motivations. Yorke is a rule-breaker who eschews London music scenes, but has been embraced by broken beat, house, and bashment circles thanks in part to his 2009 single "Rass Out" (Fresh Minute), which became an anthem as the UK funky scene exploded.

He's come a long way from his days in the early '90s making hip-hop and discovering acid house and jungle. Inspired by Hackney artists like Overlord X and Shut Up And Dance, Yorke began producing his own tracks with an MPC-60. He made hip-hop with his group The Heretics and then bruk riddims as Da Altered Natives for Broadcite Recordings. After a few compilation appearances in 2004-'05, Yorke issued his '08 solo debut, *A Thousand Days of Patience*. "[That album] was like my tombstone to my time at Broadcite," he explains. "I spent 1000 days with them and my patience was up. But it's all good."

No, he's not afraid to speak his mind, musically or otherwise. His music is filled with gritty drum patterns, sharp lead synths, and stabby basslines; he even released a track called "Goya Owes Me Money," which name-checks a defunct UK music distributor. "The music I make is quite personal," he says. "I've *been* that demon in my tracks. They reflect my current status in life. Some of the music that I like most is really quite dark."

That heaviness comes through both on his gully house album *Tenement Yard Volume 1* and the noisy bruk-beat vibes of *Serial Vendetta*, both released this summer on Eye4Eye. Yorke's tracks have a London edge and a sinister groove that sounds especially good on large speakers. While *Serial Vendetta's* title doesn't necessarily signify ill intents—it's an anagram of Altered Natives—other titles have a more literal meaning. "Eye4Eye is a reference to taking my own fucking life back," Yorke says about reclaiming his autonomy post-Broadcite and charging ahead with new output.

Now he has set his sights on more of everything: remixes, new aliases, and a new EP featuring fellow UK producers Ceramic, DJ Grayz, and Funkstar. He's also completed tracks for *Tenement Yard Volume 2*, a single for Martyn's 3024 label, and hopes to release music on Hyperdub in 2011. "I'm constantly working," he says. "There will never be a shortage of music—it's a matter of whether people will get bored of it."

◊ SERIAL VENDETTA IS OUT NOW ON EYE4EYE. MYSPACE.COM/ALTEREDNATIVESLONDON



JAMMER

THE GRIME STALWART TELLS US ABOUT HIS FIVE FAVORITE NEW MCS.



P. Money

Brand new and breaking bars in grime, P. Money came into the scene later on and was very consistent as part of the O.g'z. With his strong lyrical content, constant appearances on the radio, and regularly released records, he's one of the most called/mentioned names in 2010.



Blacks

His energy on stage reminds me of myself. He worked with me for a long time, and put a lot of hard work into what he's doing. He's also been really persistent to get on the radio. He sold his mixtapes on the street, and worked hard overall alongside P. Money to establish the O.g'z.



Shorty

Shorty's got a good, new range of flow and style. He doesn't talk about violence—just talks about life, with a catchy, broken-down flow that's easy to understand. He does the opening verse on the smash club track "Too Many Man" by Boy Better Know; this song is banging at the moment! Download *Short Man Syndrome*, his newest free mixtape.



Maxta

I like Maxta cos he reminds me of Kano around 2001. He's really great with his lyrics, has a crazy high work rate, has knocked out a lot of tunes, and always works with various people. Great lyrics and delivery.



Jammin

He's someone you need to look out for. Excellent lyrical content but he's got a melodic flow, and produces as well. He's consistent too, and makes a lot of music. He has a new album coming out on the Boxfresh site, he's got a different style and he works hard to get his material out.

Jahmanji is out now on Ninja Tune.
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BRENMAR

THESE ARE POWERS' PERCUSSIONIST MAKES LEFTFIELD JUKE AND GHETTO HOUSE TUNES INSPIRED BY HIS HOMETOWN.



Bill Salas is chuckling during our email conversation. "I'm in Trier, Germany now," he writes. "The toilet paper is like cardboard." The Brooklyn-based producer and DJ is spending most of his summer days tweaking samplers on a European tour as part of art-rock band These Are Powers. But amid the sweaty late-night shows, he is also hard at work on his personal dance music project: Brenmar.

The project's name is inspired by his brother, who was born with a hole in his lung that made it difficult for him to pronounce certain words. While Salas studied recording and engineering at Columbia College in his hometown of Chicago—"I'd skip class to stay at home and make beats," he admits—he often hung out with his then-two-year-old sibling. "He pretty much made up his own language," Salas reveals. "He gave everyone in the family their own specific name. I got Brenmar. Where he got it from? Who knows."

After school, Salas high-tailed it to Brooklyn. At the time, Brenmar was a one-

man band of effects pedals, turntables, loopers, samplers, and keyboards. He opened for These Are Powers in 2006, and they hit it off. When a replacement percussionist was needed, he was first on the list.

As Brenmar, though, Salas has gone through many musical phases, from pop to ambient to noise, before focusing on dance music. With tunes informed by hip-hop, R&B, the London bass scene, and especially Chicago juke and ghetto house—staple sounds of his youth—he is quickly becoming known for his amped-up remixes of tracks by forward-thinking artists like Javelin and Blondes, as well as Chicago ghetto-house master DJ Deeon, pop songstress Cassie, and R&B crooner Jeremih. His "Windy City Remix" of Aaliyah's seminal tune "R U That Somebody" is three parts juke, one part UK funky, and 100% dancefloor friendly. "I wanted to play these R&B tracks but keep a certain momentum and energy going within my DJ sets. I also didn't much care for the big house and trance versions of those

tracks floating around, so I made my own remixes," Salas explains. "I'm trying to keep the sex and sensuality there—just up the tempo a bit."

Earlier this year, he also released a couple of original tracks. "Heavy Pockets" begins with ultra-slippery percussive beats before upbeat sirens kick in and make it seem like the rave police are coming for you, while "Kicked Beneath Too" features retro synths, frog croaks, and a male vocal sample that proudly repeats the words "bass kickin'." These tunes serve as previews for forthcoming releases—an EP for Discobelle and another for Sinden's Grizzly label, as well as collaborative EPs with Austin producer Dubbel Dutch and LA duo Nguzunguzu. If they are any indication of what's to come, a steady stream of Brenmar-brand dancefloor bangers are on the way, crafted by this up-and-coming producer who feels like he's found his sound. "I feel like I finally really know what 'Brenmar' is, and where I want to take it," he says.



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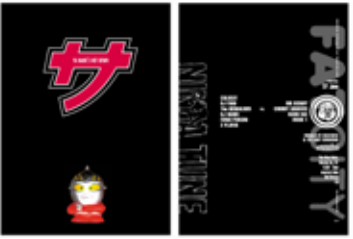


AGE OF ZEN

NINJA TUNE XX: A PHOTO RETROSPECTIVE OF 20 GAME-CHANGING YEARS.



Squarepusher @ Stealth, 1996, by
Martin LeSanto-Smith



Coldcut "Doctorin' the
House" video still, 1987



Kid Koala, 2003, by Paul Labonte



DJ Food (PC & Strictly Kev) @ Stealth,
1995, by Martin LeSanto-Smith



GO
To win the *Ninja Tune XX* box set in
this issue's contest, see page 8 or
visit XLR8R.com/135extras.



BIT AND PIECES

TRISTAN PERICH'S 1-BIT OPUS TAKES THE IDEA OF 'LO-FI' IN A WHOLE NEW DIRECTION.

Tristan Perich's 2005 release, *1-Bit Music*, presented an idea so straightforward, it was a little revolutionary: By inserting a single microchip, along with a headphone jack and some simple controls, into a CD jewel case, he replaced recorded music with a device that literally recreated the music each time it was turned on. Five years later, he presents a sequel of sorts: *1-Bit Symphony*, an electronic composition in five movements that manages to cram more musical ideas (and more executable lines of code) into the same 8 kilobytes of storage. We asked the New York-based composer and video artist to describe his process and his continued fascination with digital audio's smallest unit of exchange.

Andy Hermann

Genesis

1-Bit Music was a beginning that needed a conclusion. For *1-Bit Symphony*, I returned to my role as a composer, writing music for traditional classical ensembles but strangely accompanied by 1-bit audio. Somehow combining beautiful old instruments with harsh electronics seemed entirely logical. I spent a lot of time thinking about the identity of these traditional instruments versus the identity of electronics. They clearly come from different places, but it's surprising how much primitive electronics shares with those old things.

Speaking in Code

My first 1-bit album was composed entirely in code. This came out of the fact that its pitch system was based on mathematical ratios and didn't map to 'regular' instruments very well. For *1-Bit Symphony*, I wrote all the code from scratch, employing our traditional Western pitch system of half-steps, so finally my musical ideas could translate more directly to encoded composition. I sketched ideas for the music in desktop audio software, which connected to a special version of the electronics that I created to take input from a computer. That way I could work on the level of music instead of data.



New Directions

Music has always involved programming languages. Traditional sheet music instructs performers on what to do. On *1-Bit Symphony*, I'm instructing the microchip to create sound by doing some calculations here and there and outputting their results. It's this low-level approach to process that interests me.

Mystery Man

Somehow everyone finds the process of downloading code onto a chip extremely mysterious. Maybe it's reminiscent of movies, where someone has their brain rewritten with new software, like *Dark City* or something. In my case it's a little like synching an iPod, but closer to flash-upgrading the software for your 56k modem in the '90s. The chips plug into a programming interface (in my case, the tuxgraphics

AVR-USB), which connects to my computer, which downloads the software with some open-source tools.

How We Do

I run a sweatshop out of my New York studio, where I have four assistants who dutifully assemble each copy. A lot of work goes into the process, including drilling the case, preparing and gluing the components, soldering the circuit, testing, and packaging. If anyone somehow gets a copy that doesn't work, please write me and let me know, and I'll fire somebody.

1-Bit Symphony is out now on Cantaloupe Music. 1bitsymphony.com

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MR. G

A LONDON HOUSE PIONEER IN THE '80S, COLIN MCBEAN
FINALLY SEES THE FRUITS OF HIS LABOR.



Though he's been practicing the art of DJing since the late 1980s and producing since the mid-1990s, the productions of London's Mr. G (a.k.a. Colin McBean) are only now getting the broader attention that they so richly deserve. One of the original progenitors of a funkier, low-end house that has blown up in the past year, McBean has always been a favorite of DJs and the techno cognoscenti, but his recent debut album on Matt Edwards' Rekids imprint has brought a whole new group of fans and producers to his music. Yet McBean is anything but bitter about the belated appreciation.

"I don't get into the bittersweet thing at all, because I try not to be negative at all in anything in my life," McBean intones in his warm, silky English accent. "Fans have simply come back around to this twist on house music. Seeing the youth pick up on these sounds is a great new picture."

That said, McBean acknowledges that producers like himself and Robert Hood

"don't always get what we deserve, and that's the nature of the beast. For me, it's simply nice to get some positive feedback, because producing can be a lonely little world, and putting out singles doesn't necessarily give me the validation that I need to hear."

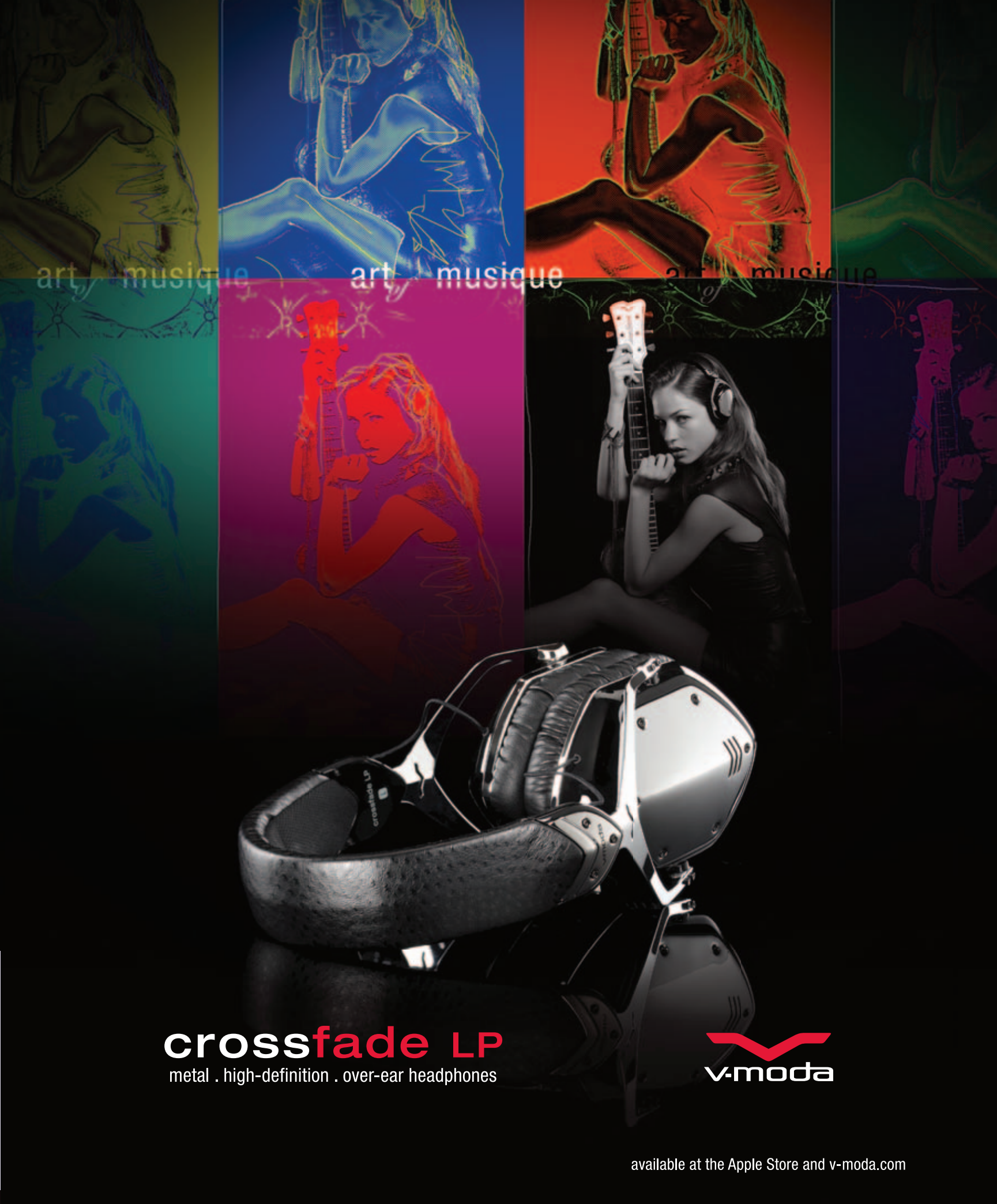
After years of releasing only singles and EPs, *Still Here (Get On Down)* acts as a long-form way for McBean "to test out the waters, to see whether I still have it." And with the accolades of the press and fans alike, it is certain that Mr. G is still a force to be reckoned with. Perhaps it's because McBean still uses an all-analog, MPC-based approach to production that allows for maximum spontaneity and freshness, both in the studio and live. "Blessed" perfectly conforms to that aesthetic, building from a bassline and slowly incorporating piano and vocal samples that eventually cut in and out in the places where the listener would least expect. "In the studio, I do my cuts and tweaks and jumps on the fly," he explains. "It's more than building a

track; it's the picture that you've gleaned while you've built the track that you'll produce again. Sometimes in the studio, it's one take and the piece is perfect, and sometimes it's 29 takes and the picture of the sound still isn't right."

Yet because his live set-up is the same as his studio set-up, it's clear that McBean has a pretty firm grip on the aural picture he wants to create. Indeed, his one-off live sets are legendary, not only for the way they push the bass to its extreme depths, but also for McBean's stage presence—unlike many DJs who simply stand behind a board, Mr. G is "doing robotics, jumps and leaps, punching the MPC," and acting like a true entertainer.

"Performing live, as I get more into it, people go crazy. It's about interacting with the crowd, creating a fantastic total atmosphere for the people on the floor," enthuses McBean. "Taking performative risks like that, it can take time to get recognized for your achievements. But right now, my sound is really ripe."

◦ STILL HERE (GET ON DOWN) IS OUT NOW ON REKIDS.
MR-G.ORG.UK



available at the Apple Store and v-moda.com

FACTOZOID!!!! LAZER SWORD

LAZER SWORD HAS A STAND-IN HAND MODEL!!!!

We're letting the cat outta the bag here, but due to our location divide, we got a stand-in hand model (our home Sebastian from Montreal!) to play Bryant's part in the photo shoot for Low Limit vs. Lando Kal's Golden Handshake EP.



LAZER SWORD DISLIKES ANGRY DUBSTEP!!!!

There seems to be some confusion about this, but for future reference, there's nothing more jarring than peak-hour muscle-step blaring from our runner's car when we get picked up from the airport. We're not so much into that type of stuff in the first place, especially right after a long flight. We'd like to hear nice music instead... something like Atlas Sound or Delorean.

LAZER SWORD'S NEW, SELF- TITLED ALBUM IS NOT ALL BANGERS!!!!!!

Sure, there are several power cuts on the new record, but you'll also find some mellower songs, even a couple compositions with no drums at all. It's important with a full-length that it's not all meat and potatoes—gotta get some veggies up in the mix, maybe some bread, a glass of wine, and dessert, fo sho.

LAZER SWORD PRODUCED THE XLR8R PODCAST INTRO!!!!!!

The same one that plays before every freakin' podcast episode was made by us. Bryant made that from some Lazer Sword loops several years back, and that's Antaeus' cool voice in there as well. That shit is so glitch/IDM circa 2006!

LAZER SWORD GOT ITS NAME FROM A KAOS PAD PRESET!!!

The actual effect isn't all that great, but we thought the name was pretty cool, so ran with it. We didn't name ourselves after a light saber. We didn't even make the connection to the Star Wars weapon until someone mentioned it.

LAZER SWORD LIVES IN TWO COUNTRIES AT THE SAME TIME!!!!

Bryant just recently moved to Los Angeles, and Antaeus just relocated to Berlin. Worry not! We'll still be going strong with Lazer Sword, as well as doing solo production and shows under our solo entities, Low Limit and Lando Kal. But don't forget, the Bay Area is the original home turf of Lazer Sword!!!!

Lazer Sword is out November 2 on Innovative Leisure. lazersword.net

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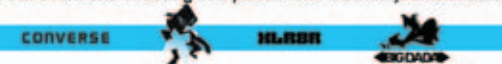
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NINJA TUNE

ARP

A TUSSLE ALUM AND KRAUTROCK AFICIONADO
KEEPS MOVING FORWARD.



WORDS WALTER WASACZ

PHOTO SEAN MCFARLAND

The conversation comes in intense waves, along with the roar of rush-hour traffic and pedestrian squawks near Manhattan's Madison Square Park, where Alexis Georgopolous, the composer/songwriter/sound mixer/producer who calls himself Arp, has stopped for a bite to eat and a long-distance chat about his life and work. The background is busy and chaotic, but Georgopolous' focus on the music he makes remains steady and razor-sharp.

"There's a thread coursing through all my work, a search for a musical identity that just feels right," he says, cutting through the din. "It's a nebulous space where I find my inspirations. It doesn't come from any one place." Some of that searching and inspiration no doubt began in early childhood, when he split time between northeast Ohio, where his father taught philosophy at Kent State University, and Greece and France, where his family on both sides originates. He went through the cultural studies program at Ohio's Antioch College before spending 10 years in San Francisco, where he was a member of funky post-rock experimentalists Tussle from 2002 to 2006.

After leaving the group, Arp was initially conceived as a sound installation at SF's New Langton Center for the Arts (a show curated by Matthew Higgs of New York's White Columns art space). But it also developed into an ambient song cycle made with electronics and additional strings, released as the full-length *In Light* in 2007.

Georgopolous moved to New York the following year. "The first three years in San Francisco felt magical. But it eventually lost its verve for me," he says. "New York is so vast, with so many things going on that interest me—classical music, dance, electronics—that I can hardly keep up with it all."

More importantly, the frenetic pace of the city's arts scene has quickly found a way to keep up with Georgopolous, who was commissioned to compose a score for a duet between Merce Cunningham and Trisha Brown dancers, has done more sound installation and other collaborative gallery work, and was also selected to be part of The Boredoms' 88-drummer live performance spectacle in Los Angeles in 2008. As a member of the Alps, a trio that blends soft French and Italian

psychedelia with harder elements of German cosmic rock, he's released two acclaimed LPs on Type. And earlier this year, he collaborated with Slapp Happy co-founder Anthony Moore.

Arp's new release, *The Soft Wave*, recombines all his influences into a highly addictive package that recalls groundbreaking art rockers like Eno, Bowie, Cale, Wyatt, and Cluster, while steering clear of mere copyism.

As Arp, Georgopolous dares to enter the established canon and finds its contents timeless, ripe and ready for the re-shaping. But he doesn't stop there. On "High Life" he adds melodic Juju guitars and West African rhythms; "White Light" borrows fuzz and Fender Telecaster strum from the Velvet Underground; and then there are classic analog synth sounds strewn about as well.

"I'm constantly moving around in the music I love," he says. "I'm learning I can make different kinds of records, none of which I hope are an escape into the past, but a continuation of experiments begun by great artists."

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THE BEWITCHING MIDWEST TRIO **SALIM** PONDERES JUGGALOS, CULTURAL AUTHENTICITY,
AND NOT GIVING A FUCK.



SALEM—THE TRIO OF JOHN HOLLAND, HEATHER MARLATT, AND JACK DONOGHUE—IS A GOTHY/WITCH-HOUSE/DREAM-CRUNK/"FUCKING HIPSTER"/DRAG-STEP/WORST.BAND.EVER./GENIUS/CRACK-CORE/AMAAAAAZING/HIDING-BEHIND-FUZZ/WIGGER/FAKE-BLACK-METAL/ANGELIC/HOMO-THUG/MICHAEL STIPE-ENDORSED/POST-JUKE BAND FROM NO PLACE IN PARTICULAR.

They make the kind of music you play for adults to convince them that the world is ending soon. And since it probably is, Salem embodies a generation that doesn't care about race, sexual orientation, authenticity, and a lot of other stuff that used to be a big deal. Their music is produced simply, probably with too much bass, and in a perpetual state of stealing from everything they like. They got their name from the Salem witch trials... maybe.

In a way, you can't help wonder if Salem is just a totally bullshit invention—another evolution of the Midwestern white kidz rap group, like a band of bougie Juggalos with long hair on some Jay-from-*Clerks* trip, giving rise to the second Dark Carnival while pretending to be stoned... and being kind of snarky about it, too. Or maybe *I* just can't help but wonder.

"I don't really know what [Juggalos] are about," says Holland over the phone. "But honestly, I don't really see them around where we live anymore."

"They're still in Chicago," Donoghue interjects.

"I just saw a Juggalo at 7-Eleven yesterday for free-Slurpee day. He had a big hatchet man on his forearms, and I was like, 'WHOO WHOOP, yo what up, family?' I have my hair in braids

right now—my friend just braided it—and this guy was so down with it. We talked for a minute and I was like, 'Anyway, have fun with that Slurpee.' I guess I respect that they're doing what they want to do. But I'm not really trying to listen to [Insane Clown Posse] that hard. I think I like Juggalos a lot more than I like ICP."

"Yeah, me too," Marlatt says, laughing. "They're, like... so much more creative."

"You're gonna start beef with like, Violent J," Donoghue says back, totally deadpan. "I saw that video for 'Miracles' the other day, and dude was like, '*Fucking magnets/How do they work?*' and I thought that was really funny. But aside from that, I haven't really been thinking about Juggalos that much. It's a miracle, brother."

When I speak to Salem via conference call, Marlatt and Holland are in Traverse City, Michigan (where Marlatt has just bought a home) and Donoghue is in

Chicago. They speak with a psychic drawl of *likes* and *ums* and long vowels, and they politely resist recounting their drug-addled history, though they do confirm the lurid drug- and hustler stories from an interview with *Butt* magazine last year were true. But that's just not where they're at now.

"There was a writer from the *New Yorker* that wanted to write a feature about us, and the editor wouldn't let him because he read that [*Butt*] article," Holland says. "He was like, 'They're too subversive... we don't want to [run the piece]'. So I feel like, if we're too honest, it can limit our options in other things. Do you guys agree?"

"Yeah..." Marlatt says, slowly. "But I don't, like, really care?"

Salem has only been around for a couple of years, but Holland and Marlatt met years before in high school at the Interlochen Center for the Arts, a boarding school in Northern Michigan that Josh Groban and Rufus Wainwright once attended. Both Holland and Marlatt studied visual arts; Holland later became addicted to heroin and cocaine, funded by work as a gas station prostitute, mostly for married men.

Holland eventually moved to attend the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and met Donoghue





while working at American Apparel. Upon their first meeting, Donoghue outlined his terms of friendship by asking Holland to "disconnect" from his other friends, to which Holland agreed, half-earnestly. In the *Butt* interview, Holland described Donoghue as "the hottest person I've ever met."

Marlatt met Donoghue while visiting Holland in Chicago for the summer, and the three immediately clicked. Donoghue and Holland had been working on high(er)-energy dance music, but Marlatt's presence shifted the focus to Salem. "We just had a certain understanding about things," says Holland. "We understand without having to talk about it."

The group's first full-length, *King Night*, comes out in late September on IAMSOUND Records, and it'll probably be the grandest moment of the so-called "witch house" scene's non-existence. The opening title track is a teeth-grinding Christmas anthem perverted by fanatical choir stabs and crumbling, blown-out subs. It's basically Salem's annihilation hymn, and it puts their most fierce, polarizing foot forward.

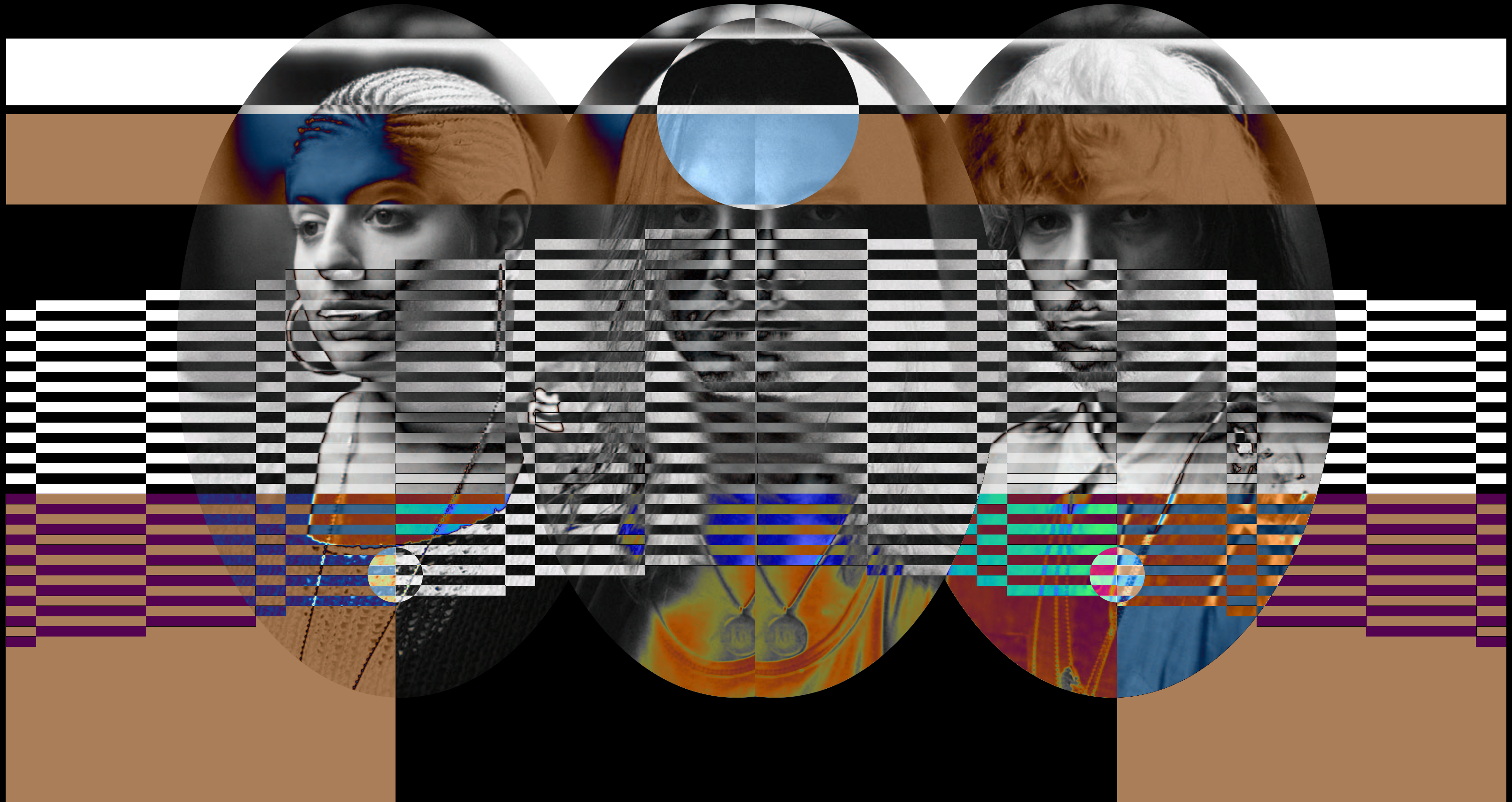
The band's previous releases over the last two years (like the *Yes I Smoke Crack* and *Water* EPs, and the "Frost" b/w "Legend" single) offered a good hint of what Salem was capable of, but they were like partially finished ideas. *King Night* is far more realized in comparison, taking tracks from old releases ("Redlights," "Frost," and the YouTube-leaked "Trapdoor") and re-mastering them with Brooklyn producer Dave Sardy. The end result isn't necessarily what you'd call slick or accessible, but, along with eight new tracks on the album, Salem's towering, overblown aspirations finally begin to make sense.

The songs on *King Night* tend to intersect around a few main components: a weird, percussive mix between Chicago juke and southern rap, a blissed-out wash of synths and vocals reminiscent of Cocteau Twins, and a fast-and-slow polyrhythm of fanned-out hi-hats and crisis sounds. There's other shit thrown in there for good measure, too—the gabber kick-drum squash on "Asia," or the almost-dubstep bass pressure on "Tair"—but pinpointing all those parts implies a reverence for influence that Salem doesn't really bother with. "We're taking liberally from so much," says Donoghue. "We're taking from rock, drone, European rave music, southern rap, Chicago, New York, whatever."

When I mention specific artists like Chicago juke/footwork producer DJ Nate, Donoghue says he's never met the early-20-something beatmaker, but he's definitely a fan. "His music is so smart," he says, "but I don't think he's, like, *trying* to be clever." Other guys like Gucci Mane (of whom Salem has done several unofficial remixes) and Wacka Flocka Flame are held in similarly high regard, but it's more like a detached appreciation

"NO ONE WOULD EVER QUESTION US FOR, LIKE, **REVERSING A GUITAR** OR SOMETHING.

AND, LIKE, WITH JUKE, I'M FROM CHICAGO. I GREW UP IN CHICAGO."



than anything resembling gushing. "We don't really know that much about any one kind of music," says Holland. "We like so many different kinds of music, but we don't do too much background research. We're just trying to find individual songs that we like."

"We all focus on different things, too," Donoghue adds. "Like, I know Heather really likes music that has bells in it—more than I do—and I like certain rap that John and Heather can appreciate, but maybe not listen to it as much. John has a whole bunch of other shit that I don't even know about at all. But we share a lot of music with each other and we share a lot of ideas—verbal and conceptual. Salem is where all our aesthetics meet."

The band works on songs collectively, but each member has a specific identity within each track. On "Trapdoor," Donoghue raps in a pitched-down, incomprehensible growl, and his hook, "*It's all blurred out/Hey bitch, I can't see ya*" could almost be mistaken for Gucci Mane. On "Traxx," Marlatt's singing is pure texture amidst a haze of deathray synths, bass, and prison clanks. And Holland sings as well. On "Killer," he conjures up a strange, rap-laced industrial rock combination that borders on pure noise.

Salem's influences might seem a little iPod-playlist-driven, but in an era of Rick Ross studio gangsterism and rock 'n' roll dudes coming out with macrobiotic cookbooks, it's hard to harp too hard on authenticity. That said, if M.I.A. can be burned at the stake for eating truffle fries, what does it mean when white kids with art-school credentials start pitching their voices down to sound like Gucci Mane?

"No one would ever question us for, like, reversing a guitar or something," says Donoghue. "And, like, with juke, I'm from Chicago. I grew up in Chicago."

"And I lived there for five years," adds Holland.

"I feel like that's something a white person would say," says Marlatt. "In a way to criticize what we're doing. It's like, to anyone that thinks that in this era—I don't know what to tell them. It's not like we're Elvis Presley. God. What, are we robbing the music from a different race? Give me a break."

"There's no such thing as owning anything in music or art or anything like that," says Holland.

"Yeah, like, I've found music that has been remade from chopped-up parts of beats that I did in high school," says Donoghue. "But I'm happy [someone] took the song in a different direction. It's not anyone's song."

That's the sort of controversy that surrounds Salem these days. That, and grumblings about

their live shows, the most ballyhooed of which was at the SXSW FADER Fort earlier this year. According to those who were there, including *The FADER* magazine's own Matthew Schnipper, the show fell somewhere between brilliantly not good and just not good—they may or may not have been booed off stage, it's hard to tell. At any rate, videos from the performance remain on YouTube.

When I ask Salem about SXSW and the FADER Fort videos, there's a moment of sincere confusion.

"I never, like, saw the video, so I don't know," says Marlatt.

"Was that, like, a YouTube video?" asks Donoghue. "I don't get it."

"Yeah, it's on YouTube," I say. "I guess the video was taken offline for a second or something?"

"That was only, like, our eighth show," Holland says after a long pause.

"There's a lot of people that want to weigh in on our live show and how it is and how it should be," Donoghue says, almost laughing. "I'm just like, straight up, I would never talk to you. I wouldn't talk to you about what I want my music to sound like, I wouldn't talk to you about what I wanted my art to look like, or like, hang out with you. So why do you think you should be weighing in on things?"

"I wanna be like, 'Why didn't you ask someone else to do it then?'" says Marlatt. "People were saying stuff like, 'Other bands would die to have the opportunities that you guys have, to get the shows that you get.' Like, [these bands] trying for years, and then they *finally* get to play [the FADER Fort]. And I don't even know what to say when people say stuff like that. It's like, 'Okay, well... sorry?'"

"The only reason we started doing shows was because someone offered to fly us to Rome to play," admits Donoghue. "So we were like, 'Okay, that would be fun,' you know what I'm saying? We're still trying to figure it out, and we will figure it out, but live performance isn't really—we don't have that much experience with it. We're still trying to come to a place where it's

as moving as the actual music we make. These shows were part of our exploration phase. We're playing bigger venues than maybe we're prepared for."

The problem is, people still *really* want to see Salem—at least people like music journalists, Terence Koh, and Michael Stipe—all of whom showed up to what was probably Salem's third or fourth show at Brooklyn's Glasslands Gallery in January. How do you keep such heavy-hitters away while Salem slowly, painfully perfects its live show?

"I don't even care. I totally don't," says Marlatt. "I'm totally confused by that whole world. I think we're more concerned with doing performance-based things, rather than standing around... just playing music. We want to do way more than that. But up until this point we haven't had any of the resources to really do what we have in our heads. But now we kind of do, and that's exciting."

As the interview continues, there's a loud noise that keeps barging its way into the phone call—either a large barking dog or maybe a boar—and I'm reminded that Holland and Marlatt are set up in Northern Michigan—home of Midwestern desolation, pain and suffering, upside-down crosses stuck in the snow, etc. But I'm also struck by how laid-back and sort of positive everyone seems to be.

"I feel like people imagine us as being so serious or dark or whatever," says Marlatt, "but it's not really like that. We don't take ourselves seriously, but we take our music very seriously. It's not about each of us as individuals. Like, 'Oh, Jack went to a party last night.' Who cares? It has nothing to do with our music."

Prior to talking with Salem, it all seemed so obvious: *Teams of marketing men carefully cultivated this band's persona using magnets and only the best SEO-baiting tricks—some real buzzband conspiracy shit!* But it turns out the reality is much more banal. Their music—and their aesthetic aura—is ambiguous and full of fuzzy definitions, but Salem is not part of a JT LeRoy-style hoax; the darkness and the crack smoking and whatever else come from a more intuitive lack of giving a shit than some secret, unfolding plan.

"I think you're giving us more credit for thinking about our 'audience' than we actually do," Donoghue eventually admits. "We're not even trying to be secretive or sensational. It's just that we're not thinking about people passing judgments. We're making what we want to be listening to. It's not like we're making anything just to get a reaction from people. If we just wanted to be sensational or whatever, we have a lot more stories we could have told." ■



FROM THE RISE OF HOUSE MUSIC IN THE '80S AND '90S TO THE TEEN FOOTWORK
COMPETITIONS AND ABSTRACT JUKE UPSTARTS OF TODAY, CHICAGO'S
CIRCLE KEEPS ON EXPANDING.

BATTLE CATS



"IT'S SO

fucking hot in here!" is the cry heard from almost everybody in the building. That includes the DJs, the spectators recording video with their iPods, the girlfriends sitting on stray chairs and buckets, and the kids with red plastic cups full of liquor—but rarely from the individuals doing the actual moving. That is, until one of them passes out from exhaustion. It's Sunday night in the Englewood neighborhood on Chicago's south side, and I'm fighting through a circle of spectators to get a good view of the action at an event called Da War Zone. And no better time, too, for the dancers to the left of me—The Legends Clique—look like the Voltron of footworkers. They're comprised of the original members of the legendary Chicago dance crews Wolf Pac and Terra Squad, and the way the scales are tipped tonight, it's not looking favorable for the opposing team.

For Chicago's indigenous juke and footwork scene, a sweaty vacant warehouse, a school gymnasium, a rec center, a house party, or an El train platform can serve as a "place of the way," much like a dojo. And don't get it twisted—a martial-arts space on 57th and

Claremont is where we are right now. But it could be any number of ever-changing locations on the south side. These days, two recurring gatherings take place: Da War Zone, organized by videographer and promoter Wala "Walacam" Williams, and Battle Groundz, started by dancer AG of Terra Squad and the Leaders of the New School crew. On a good night, you'll find over 200 kids in attendance, and if not, you'll at least catch a pretty good practice session. Shootings, fights, and lack of usable space might prevent the scene from having a permanent shelter or center, but, still, the city's footwork culture thrives. Here, kids leave behind street life for a different kind of quarrel—one that involves their feet rather than their hands. The energy involved is not completely unlike that of a fistfight, and someone's bound to leave the battle feeling a bit wounded. Dancers make up their own routines on the floor, with their shuffling feet following the lower frequencies and their bodies popping to the claps. A good footwork routine, full of "soul trains," "Pocahontases," and "ghosts," will have symmetry—the patterns that happen on the left side are followed through on the right—and gimmicks are frowned upon. And the music that accompanies these events is equally confrontational—like a Jamaican soundclash—pitting DJ versus DJ, dubplate versus dubplate. Tonight, DJs T-Why, Rashad, Earl, Manny, Spinn, Roc, Traxman, and RP Boo provide the soundtrack: A clattering maelstrom of toms, snares, and bass stuttering out of a portable PA, like an extremely pitched-up take on house, techno, Miami bass, and hip-hop all rolling at you at 160 bpm.

It's debatable what supposed "wave" the juke and footwork scenes are currently in. There was a time when it was relegated to public-access TV, the Bud Billiken Parade and Picnic (an annual African-American gathering in Chicago whose aim is to promote the betterment of the city's youth), underground battles,



"MOST PEOPLE, WEREN'T READY FOR THE FOOTWORK SOUND—THEY COULDN'T UNDERSTAND IT."
—DJ RASHAD

and high-school dances. Then there was Dude N Nem's 2007 "Watch My Feet" video, which blew up on MTV for a sec. And now that teens from the city have begun littering the web with thousands of videos, and juke and footwork tracks are ending up in the crates of London DJs, it's, well, headed off on another tangent. But you could safely say that the initial seeds were taking root long before most modern footworkers were even conceived.

In 1985, the House-O-Matics dance group, home to many pioneering dancers and DJs-to-be, was formed by Ronnie Sloan. They'd battle the likes of U Phi U and House Arrest 2 at local venues like The Warehouse and the Boys and Girls Club. Armando's "Land of Confusion," Frankie Knuckles' "It's a Cold World," and later Cajmere's massive "Percolator" were hugely popular records that influenced the era, as well as anything legendary house DJ Ron Hardy played. "I was going to The Muzic Box in '87 at 15 years old, and I heard Ron Hardy spin and loved it," reminisces veteran DJ and producer Traxman (a.k.a. Cornelius Ferguson). "That was the first place I heard 'Acid Trax.' He played it like three times. People lost their minds."

At the same time, Dance Mania Records came on the scene, and would eventually amass a catalog of roughly 300 twelve-inches between 1985 and 2001. Heavier bass, synth- and drum-machine presets, and curse words were abundant, and simplicity played a large role in how the music was made. Most referred to the new sound as "trax," or "beat trax," but "ghetto house" became the more prevalent name. Jammin Gerald, Houz Mon, Parris Mitchell, DJ Deon, DJ Funk, and DJ Slugo all cut their teeth in this era, turning the heads of many East Coast and European DJs. Eventually the word "jukin'" was coined, a phrase used to describe a banging party. "Juke" latched itself onto the later years of the Dance Mania catalog, a movement led by the likes of Gant Man, DJ Puncho, and DJ Greedy.

Juke saw some success in the late '90s and early 2000s, even garnishing major-label singles like Beyonce's "Check On it" and R Kelly's "Real Talk" with remixes, but this wasn't a push in favor of the footworkers. A style of juke with less commercial aim—and more focus on the dance crews—was being kept alive by DJ Clent ("Back Up Off Me") and DJ PJ ("Chase Me"), both southsiders living in the area of the city known as the Low End. Their drum patterns became more distanced from house music's origins, and the new sound began to resemble what dance crews are slugging it out to today.

"Like the saying goes, 'We don't dance no more. All we do is juke.' That's what started killing the parties," explains westside-born Kavain Space, known to most as RP Boo. On his mantle, there's a trophy given to him by Wala Williams bearing the words "Creator of Footwork Music," the other, more twisted substrain of juke. In the last decade, Boo's drum programming and sample mutilation immensely influenced underground music here, permanently changing the way footwork tracks were made. Armed with a display-model Roland R-70 drum machine and an Akai SO1 sampler, RP would create what he called "concept tracks"—jump-off points that opened the minds of many. These concepts became the first real footwork tracks, stemming from Boo's involvement with House-O-Matics in the earliest days of the crew's existence. "I was given an option of either 'You're going to dance, or you're going to spin,' and I was more into music so I stopped dancing," he recalls about the time the crew's founder, Ronnie Sloan, asked him choose his creative direction in life. Newer groups established in the '90s, such as The Dungeon, Wolf Pac, and Gutter Thugs, needed some fresh material, and RP provided it.

In 1997, RP created "Baby Come On," a track built from an Ol' Dirty Bastard vocal sample that repeats itself until it becomes almost unrecognizable. Later songs like "Ice Cream," "That's What the Speakers Are For," and "11-47-99" (a.k.a. "The Godzilla Track") would continue to turn parties out, causing people to get to so excited and riled up that brawls would break out. He also once left DJ Clent so dumbfounded after dropping a remix of his own track at a party, that it caused him to have an asthma attack. The structure of a modern-day footwork track was changed from then on, with scattered triplets and pulsating bass replacing house music's four-on-the-floor blueprint.

The early 2000s not only marked a time of change in the structure of the music, but the structure of footwork battles as well. "It was about pride back then," says DJ Rashad (a.k.a. Rashad Harden), a former House-O-Matics and Wolf Pac crew member, and recent signee to England's Planet Mu Records. "Everything was very organized at the time. When you'd go to a party, when you battle, everyone had their own turn. If you lost, you lost; it wasn't just about who was the coldest," he recounts. "Nowadays, people battle and might lose, but still think they won. There were more girls back then, too!"

Along with his colleague DJ Spinn, Rashad ran with the style that RP Boo masterminded, to this day providing footworkers with tracks that even change the dancing itself. "Most people, especially those outside the city, weren't ready for the footwork sound when



FROM TOP: DJ RASHAD, DJ SPINN

"LIKE THE SAYING GOES, 'WE DON'T DANCE NO MORE—ALL WE DO IS JUKE.'" — RP BOB

it was created—they couldn't understand it," says Rashad, who is now a mentor to the younger producers, many of whom have set up in the basement studio of Spinn's Markham home in the south suburbs to work on tracks.

DJ Earl and DJ Manny are just a couple of those kids who you might find there. "I started going to Battle Groundz while I was in Creation [dance crew], and [Prince] Charles would get tracks from people like DJ Solo and Clent for us to hear," says the 19-year-old DJ Earl (a.k.a. Earl Smith). "I was making footwork tracks at the time, but I couldn't really get over the curve. I didn't really know what a good track was supposed to sound like, but I had a passion for music. I asked Rashad if they were willing to recruit me, and when they did they taught me almost everything."

It's that cross-generational, cross-cultural pollination that is proving to be what the future holds in store for this music. Since Farley "Jackmaster" Funk's "Love Can't Turn Around" charted #10 on the UK charts in 1986, transatlantic conversation about electronic dance music has been flourishing. As an extension of that back-and-forth, the venerable experimental label Planet Mu recently signed three artists from the Chicago scene: DJ Roc, for his album, *The Crack Capone*; DJ Rashad's *Itz Not Rite* EP; and one of the scene's biggest UK exports, DJ Nate, who released his "Hatas Our Motivation" single and *Da Track Genious* LP on the label. Mike Paradinas (a.k.a. µ-Ziq, and owner of Planet Mu) first discovered footwork on YouTube, through a coworker. "I was really into Nate's sound," he says, "which seemed (and still seems) very removed from the rest of the scene. He has this very odd sense of rhythm, and his percussion seems more influenced by hip-hop/crunk than Chicago house, which I don't hear in a lot of other footwork tracks." Three or four years ago, Nate (a.k.a. Nathan Clark) and a few other young producers, like DJ Elmoe and DJ Yung Tillum, began uploading their tracks onto the web, exposing the more broken, twisted side of juke to the masses. On the ground in Chicago, these artists had minimal impact, existing as part of a digital underground seemingly removed from the actual physical juke and footwork scenes, but their music undoubtedly turned the heads of many overseas and on the 'net. As a result, folks that were generally off the trail of juke's evolution were all of a sudden name-dropping Nate, tastemaker sites like 20jazzfunkgreats and writers such as *The New Yorker's* Sasha Frere-Jones began blogging about his music, and Nate's tracks started showing up in mixes by everyone from Salem to UK funky/bass DJs.

Regardless of what strain of juke has been doing the influencing, you need only listen to Addison Groove's dubstep-tempo footwork track "Footcrab," Girl Unit's "I.R.L.," and French juke enthusiasts DJ Hilti and Kaptain Cadillac to find the connections between Chicago and the dance music coming from across the pond. With more transatlantic touring going on, there's hope for even stronger bonds to be made. "We've been collecting and playing this stuff for ages!" says DJ/producer Bok Bok (a.k.a. Alex Sushon, of London's Night Slugs crew). "It just fits into the greater whole for us. Chicago makes sense as one of the global hubs for ghetto innovation."

It's now 11 p.m., and Da War Zone is shutting down. What goes down inside the circle tends to stay there, and while a few salty losers may have stormed out in defeat, the community remains one of the healthiest outlets available to both young and old residents of Chicago. "I've been on the wrong side of the tracks before, and because of footworking, I'm a much more positive person today," explains Lite Bulb, a passionate 20-year-old footworker and member of the Terra Squad, with seven years under his dancing belt. He just lost his friend and teammate Miah to gun violence a few weeks back, so he relies on the scene's community for support. "They are my lifetime brothers," he says. "I'm their baby brother, they brought me up." It's obvious that his, and many others', evolution in this scene is as natural as anything else. "I love footworking, it's second nature to me," he continues. "I do it when I'm sleeping, I do it when I wake up. I do it when I'm at work, and at school. The money part—I don't really care about making money from footworking. I do what I do for the love."

The music creeps to a silent halt, everyone is shooed out the door, and people are dismantling the soundsystem. These 200 or so kids just took in a piece of footwork history 10 minutes ago, the first time the entire Legends Clique had danced together in battle—and anyone with the cajones to face 'em are now licking their wounds. It's a massacre like I've never seen before, but everyone walks away with limbs intact. Outside, everyone crowds around parked cars, socializing and smoking blunts like nothing even happened. ■

DE
Listen to DJ Rashad's exclusive
podcast at XLR8R.com/135extraz.



FROM TOP: FROST, DERYON WEBSTER

LEAVE THEM ALL BEHIND

AS **SHED**, PRODUCER RENE PAWLOWITZ CASTS OFF ALL REMNANTS OF TECHNO PAST.



WORDS ANDREW RYCE PHOTOS MEGAN CULLEN

IT'S

almost ironic that since the release of his landmark debut album, 2008's *Shedding the Past*, German producer Rene Pawlowitz (a.k.a. Shed) has been viewed a savior of modern techno. His music is wildly unpredictable and doesn't quite mesh with the genre's obsession with rigid structure and functionalism. Held up as one of the cornerstones of the world-famous Berlin scene, Pawlowitz clashes sharply with the city's obsession with dark, steely techno and bright tech-house grooves. Shed's musical vision is unaffected by the poisonous purism or close-mindedness that so often lurks in local scenes, especially one as long-established as Berlin's unparalleled techno community. Instead, his music is colored by a distinct and ravenous hunger for the new and unexplored. Reflecting that hunger, Pawlowitz is uncommonly prolific: On top of nearly 20 releases as Shed, Pawlowitz has also made dancefloor-destroying singles as WAX and Equalized, and has explored a dubbier side as STP and Panamax Project.

Pawlowitz has been releasing music since 2003, first on Delsin and his own Soloaction label, the latter of which would eventually yield another label, Subsolo, where Shed's pan-genre tendencies and excursions outside of techno are front and



"AN ALBUM MUST BE DIVERSE...

EIGHT STRAIGHT TRACKS WITH AN ARTY-FARTY INTRO AND OUTRO MAKE NO SENSE TO ME."

center. But for his 2008 debut LP, Pawlowitz signed to Ostgut Ton, aligning himself with the resident DJs of Berlin's legendary Berghain club, who have used the label as their personal playground—and molded it into one of the finest institutions in modern techno, an imprint at the forefront of the more experimental side of Berlin. Still, Pawlowitz's earliest productions for Soloaction and Delsin sound like something that could only come from Shed, paying homage to classic techno but infused with lifelike percussion and unpredictable breakbeat patterns.

His unique mishmash of styles is influenced by all manner of childhood experiences. First, the radio, and then when he got older, his grandfather. "He was kind of a facility manager in a big location for diverse events," Pawlowitz informs. "And so I got into music technically during my holidays in Frankfurt as a child. Playing on stages, sitting behind big mixers, watching musicians..."

Berlin record shop Hard Wax—founded by dub-techno don Moritz von Oswald and currently serving as day-job employer for Marcel Dettmann, among others—proved enormously influential in his move towards techno. "I've been buying my records there since 1992. Hard Wax is responsible for my taste in music. My records are sorted in the same way as the assortment in the Hard Wax store!" he exclaims.

In Pawlowitz's case, history isn't foremost in his mind. His debut LP, *Shedding the Past*, um, sheds a bit of light onto the idea. "I was always thinking about the past," he explains. "And in the meantime, I forgot the today. And to release myself and my music from this kind of depression, I created this; Shed sheds the past." That first album was a sprawling but cohesive record that effectively swallowed up past techno tropes and spit them out in a glossy, but thoughtful, travelogue through the style's history.

For all its variety and experimentation, it sounded of one mind. His new, second Shed LP, *The Traveller*, is a deconstruction of the unified sound of his first album, taking it apart and laying out the constituent ingredients in plain view for all to see. *The Traveller* takes on a much more fragmented feel than the gluey progression of *Shedding the Past*, though it's the kind of wonderful fragmentation where every single track impresses in a different way. An album's album, each of *The Traveller's* tracks is a brief and vibrant vignette, from the epic, near-dubstep crawl of "The Bot" to the sexy slam-and-swell of "44A (Hardwax Forever!)" to the gauzy shoegaze wash of the title track to the sputtering jungle closer, "Leave Things."

There's a fragile cohesion found in these shattered remains: If *Shedding the Past* was a journey, then *The Traveller* is an outright circumnavigation of electronic music, with blips of land masses floating by, each with its own unique character. Pawlowitz himself seems to believe it. "This time it was [about] creating a long-player," he intones. "All the tracks were made for the album. It grew from track to track. I think it's more contiguous than the first. All but one of the tracks were made in two months."

That kind of quick genesis shines through in the album's breakneck pace, less than 50 minutes spanning 14 diverse tracks. The album format is important to Pawlowitz, an affinity that certainly not all dance music producers share or even understand. "An album must be diverse—a techno album as well. Eight straight tracks with an arty-

farty intro and outro make no sense to me," he says. He's not concerned with how well his albums work on the dancefloor, recognizing that an album is something meant to be listened to personally. "For listening at home, it's not necessary to have a seven-minute track," he says matter-of-factly. "My tracks end before you get bored!"

It's clear that Pawlowitz is no standard techno producer, and he's perhaps known best for his extensive use of the breakbeat, which dangles and thrashes in a majority of his productions. "There is more space, more groove," he says. "[The breakbeat] gives me freedom and more possibilities with where the track can end up. When you start with a straight drum, you're captured in that. Everybody can build a straight drum—that's not interesting to me."

But it's not just his use of the breakbeat that sets him apart from his German peers; it's also his open love for UK bass music. The UK's hardcore continuum seems to course through *The Traveller*, from hardcore to jungle to dubstep, as the tempos dip and rise and time signatures are melted and deformed. Pawlowitz rattles off a list of his favorite producers of the moment—names like Pursuit Grooves, Instramental, dBridge, Zomby—and all but one are from the UK. Of course, he resists that style of categorization. "It's not standardized," he declares. "Just cool music."

Amidst all this talk of breaking boundaries and avoiding what he refers to as "standardization," there's one thing that Shed unequivocally loves: true techno music, which he calls "*Full of energy and vigor/Not yet touched, used, or exploited*," in a memorable spoken-word passage on *Shedding the Past*. To him, it's perhaps more of an ideology than an identifiable sound. So would he consider his music "techno"? "Yes," he answers, emphatically. "It's electronic—hard beats, deep bass. Always good to have it on a big PA and to dance to. Almost always." ■

The Traveller is out now on Ostgut Ton.
myspace.com/sheddingthepast





EL GUY SING LO

WITH POP NEGRO, BARCELONA'S **EL GUINCHO** CREATES A GREATEST-HITS COLLECTION FOR AN IMAGINARY GENRE.

PABLO

Diaz-Reixa, the soft-spoken fellow behind El Guincho, needed to start his interview about one and a half hours later than was originally planned. "I had the chance to ride a black horse!" he tells me over the phone, having driven to a small town outside of his current hometown, Barcelona, to ride the steed in question. "It was like a dream. I had to take that chance." This explanation unwittingly gives voice to the possibility that the arduously molded, rhythmically mesmerizing *Pop Negro*, the newest El Guincho full-length, might be the dark-horse candidate for the year's best record: It's immediately engaging, but more moody and mysterious than his prior work, and only gradually revealing its nuances.

In early 2009, Diaz-Reixa met with some friends at a beachside Barcelona restaurant specializing in *paella* and seafood. It was at this restaurant that he spotted what appeared to be a fortuitous pairing of words. "I was kind of hung over and started reading the menu," he explains. "'Pop,' in Catalan, means 'octopus.' At one point, I read 'Pop Negro.' It was like 'Pop' was one line and the other was 'Arroz Negro' ['black rice']. I misread it and I started thinking about 'pop negro' as a music concept." Wondering what "pop negro" would actually sound like, he decided that day that the phrase would be the guiding principle behind his next album—he would make the "greatest hits" for this imaginary style, figuring it out as he went.

Work quickly began on the album, which would be written and recorded over several months in what ended up being four different locations. Going into the process, he already had a few songs written, including "Bombay," the album's lead-off track, and "Soca del Eclipse." These songs would be finessed to fit into the still-nebulous "pop negro" sound, for which the intensive recording would happen in Berlin, where Diaz-Reixa flew in May 2009. His work schedule there divided nearly all of his time between the studio Planet Roc and a small portable recording set-up in the place he was renting, and he more or less eschewed a social life altogether. "When I was doing the record, I missed so much music. I couldn't listen to anything else," he explains, claiming it was a cycle of real studio, home studio, dinner, sleep, studio, and so on. After those two months, which yielded 10 or 11 songs with about 100 audio tracks within each, he flew to Madrid to visit friends and re-work this sizeable pile of material.

This second phase in Madrid, and each subsequent one, would involve erasing and re-working arrangements, opening up the songs to breathe a bit, and restructuring as necessary. The next step came when he went on vacation to Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, his home in the Canary Islands off the coast of northwest Africa. As it turned out, a friend of his had just started a studio in Gran Canaria, to which he invited Diaz-Reixa to listen back to the working tracks on his massive system. "I thought, 'Wow, these songs sound really cool when you turn the kick drums and basslines up really loud,'" he

recalls. It was a breakthrough of sorts for the record, leading ultimately to the crisp, heavy rhythms of the end result. He would finish the album where it started, back in Barcelona, where he decided to record a couple more songs, finishing with the twisted ebullience of "Ghetto Facil," the album's third of nine tracks.

Writing and recording, which happen more or less concurrently for El Guincho, occurred in a much different fashion for *Pop Negro*, his second album proper for Young Turks/XL, than it did for 2008's highly acclaimed *Alegranza!*. With this first album (not counting the folksy, limited 2007 record, *Folías*, which he didn't intend for wide release), Diaz-Reixa had to go through a lengthy sample-clearing process, which pushed back the US release of the LP significantly. "I love sampling as an artform, as a way to make music," he says, "but for this album I just got so tired of all the talking with the publishing companies and clearing the samples... I just thought, 'I'm just gonna make a straight synthesizer-and-drum-machine record, and try to make interesting sounds by myself.'"

Whereas songs on *Alegranza!* would begin with four or five loops blended in a sampler, everything on *Pop Negro* started in the drum machine—recording kick drums, snare, and hi-hat sounds, Diaz-Reixa would make drum patterns and put together melodies on his synthesizers. In every studio but the one at Gran Canaria, he was joined by producer Alex Mazoni, who played bass parts and engineered throughout. Together, they worked in a mode that Diaz-Reixa considered to be fairly straightforward and 'pop.' "We'd drop a drum beat, play the chords on top of that, play some synthesizer arrangements, and work on the lyrics." On this album, too, he tended towards using line recording for guitar and bass sounds,

preferring that straight-to-line sound to that of the small amps he had been using before.

This method was something he picked up out of what he claims were his greatest influences while writing and recording this new album: not so much particular artists or records, but a pair of books—*The Mixing Engineer's Handbook* and *Behind the Glass*, two fairly technical tomes containing interviews with renowned and respected producers and engineers. "I read these books and started listening to the records they made and produced—that was the biggest influence," he explains. In his reading, one engineer with whom Diaz-Reixa felt a certain affinity was Jon Gass, who was interviewed in *The Mixing Engineer's Handbook*. "I loved the approach he had to the sound—the way he explained that he was more like a music guy than a proper engineer, and how he got all his sounds improvising and trying stuff he wasn't supposed to do," says Diaz-Reixa. Interestingly enough, he finds Gass' work on Babyface's track "Tender Lover" especially enthralling. "That record sounds so huge. The stereo image is amazing; so wide." Writing an unsolicited inquiry to Gass via his





website, Diaz-Reixa managed to get him to mix *Pop Negro*. To Diaz-Reixa's surprise, Gass happened to enjoy both *Alegranza!* and these new recordings, even asking him for production tricks for aspects of the record that he liked.

Babyface's name alone should be a tip-off that this record was sonically inspired by less-than-obvious sources. As much of the rest of the electronic pop music world began to catch up with where El Guincho was at two years ago, Diaz-Reixa found himself listening to early Luther Vandross records, including *Busy Body* and *Forever, for Always, for Love*, as well as a number of Spanish pop productions from the '80s—in particular, the work of Spanish producer Paco Trinidad, who produced for a mainstream, female pop-rock singer named Luz Casal. "This song he produced for her sounds amazing," notes Diaz-Reixa, "[with its] synthesizer sounds, the super-weird compression, and the super-big, loud drums." Meanwhile, he says that the sounds of synthesizing Spanish hit-makers Mecano had a bearing on his songwriting, idiosyncratic as it is in its structure.

So what do these greatest hits of the "pop negro" style sound like? Not much like the R&B and Spanish pop that Diaz-Reixa name-checks, but every now and again the listener might pick up on a production technique that he borrowed from that somewhat esoteric oeuvre. Although coming from a similar aesthetic sensibility as that of *Alegranza!*, *Pop Negro* is warm in a different way—bright, lean, beat-heavy, and vibrant. Genre-wise, it's as summery and obstinately eclectic as what's come before—saxophones, African highlife guitars, steel drums, Diaz-Reixa's cheery, expressive

voice, and a wide array of keyboard sounds collide to conjure an exciting, unconventionally seductive sound. The lyrics, although entirely in Spanish, are worth attempting to translate. "Muerte Midi," for instance, the name of which was inspired by its original filename, "Muerte. midi," finds him singing about death as a cruelly fast, cold affair. Diaz-Reixa felt that the experience of a death had a peculiar resonance with the media type in question, which itself has a kind of cold quality to it. This sort of wire-crossing lyrical/thematic synesthesia seems indicative of the El Guincho body of work as a whole—difficult to ascribe to any particular genre or geographical region, a collision that could only have occurred in Diaz-Reixa's wandering mind.

Parallel to the *Pop Negro* project, and showcasing an almost entirely different side of Diaz-Reixa's musical personality, is the *Piratas de Sudamérica* series. The first EP was released by Young Turks in July, kicking off a series of releases featuring El Guincho covers of select South American folk songs. All the recordings for this series took place back in 2008, back when Diaz-Reixa bought the synthesizer he uses on *Pop Negro*.

These recordings, which have a warm, mysterious air about them, were originally meant to serve as signposts for his musically inclined friends towards the folk music he so loves. He had been listening to the songs in question for years—this was the first music with which Diaz-Reixa knowingly became acquainted as a boy, songs he would hear at home with his father in Gran Canaria. What inspired the actual *Piratas* recordings that Diaz-Reixa made was his realization that none of his music fanatic friends in Barcelona had heard any of this music. The artists he covers on the

first EP include Orefiche y Valdespi, Miguel Matamoros, and Felix Benjamin Caignet, and rather than playing these songs straight, he decided to employ production techniques that he thought his friends would enjoy. "To me, they're classics," he says. He originally imagined the process as "write, record stuff to tape, mix it down to four-track, and release it as a white label, cassette, MP3, etc." Luckily for the listening public, these songs caught the ear of his label, and are being gradually rolled out as EPs. They're really beautiful-sounding recordings, sweetly arranged and swaddled in an iridescent, psychedelic production. These recordings end up doing more than just Diaz-Reixa's friends a service, allowing El Guincho fans an introduction to a deep, rich well of music likely unfamiliar to his listeners.

As his recording pseudonym suggests—"El Guincho" comes from the name for a bird native to the Canary Islands that always flies alone—Diaz-Reixa seems to perch on his own musical plane, sounding little like anyone else in Barcelona or elsewhere, and drawing inspiration from things that don't seem to inform his sound in an obvious way, whether Vandross or Babyface or South American folk. He's just as excited (if not more) about the music of musicians he admires as he is about his own music—an enthusiasm especially palpable in the *Piratas* series—and if he's as adventurous as his pre-interview horse-hopping suggests, he'll soon carve out another genre as compelling as "pop negro" all over again. ■

Pop Negro is out September 14 on XL/
Young Turks. myspace.com/elguincho

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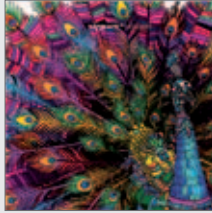
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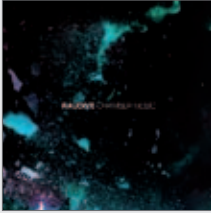
DETROIT GRAND PUBAHS – MADE CIRCUS DETLEFUNK CD/DIGITAL – DETI6CD
New album by Detroit's finest Paris The Black FU & Mr. O sees the Pubahs back in best "Funk All Y'All" shape. check the single numb, deaf & dumb with rmxs. by sj pierre & space djz!
Out: 27.09.2010



LEE JONES – WATERGATE 07 WATERGATE CD/DIGITAL – WG007
Berlin's legendary Watergate Club continues their stunning mix series with Lee Jones (of My My Fame) and lots of exclusive Tracks and Edits!
Out: October 2010



JOHANNES HEIL – LOVING COCOON RECORDINGS CD/2LP/ DIGITAL – COCC0024
With "Loving", I want to embrace the whole world, because this journey to the origins of electronic dance music in between Modern Detroit, high tech Soul and House is coming from the very bottom of my heart." (Johannes Heil, 2010)
Out: Now!



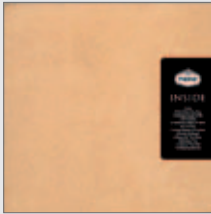
RAUDIVE – CHAMBER MUSIC MACRO CD/ DIGITAL – MACRO119
A modernist masterpiece that defies the distinctions between techno, minimal, dubstep and deep house. Dark acoustic depth meets the sexiest beats of the year 3000.
Out: Now!



TRAVERSABLE WORMHOLE – VOL. 1-5 (AN EXCLUSIVE 68 MINUTE MIX BY ADAM X) CLR Create Learn Realize CD/DIGITAL – CLRCD009
Very Limited Edition Album Release on this much acclaimed work by Adam X on Chris Liebing's CLR Labelly
Out: 20.09.2010



SECRET CINEMA – TIMELESS ALTITUDE 2010 (INCLUDING REMIXES BY SLAM) 12"/DIGITAL – GEM006.
Secret Cinema brings us a re-release of his classic 'Timeless Altitude'. The EP contains remixes by Slam, Secret Cinema himself and others. The 12" is accompanied by the digital release of the original. A must-have timeless classic!
Out: October 2010



PULSHAR – INSIDE DESOLAT CD/DIGITAL – DESOLATCD003
Desolat is proud to present Pulshar, true musical heavyweights, with compositions that traverse the borderlands between spacious songcraft and the futuristic outer-reaches of the dub-techno universe!
Out: 20.09.2010



DJ KAOS – HORNY MORNING LOOP (RMXS BY DR DUNKS/TVS & AERA) JOLLY JAMS001 – 12"/DIGITAL
New label by DJ Kaos (DFA, Clone, K7). See him on america tour in September: 8 NYC, 9 Philadelphia 10 NYC, 11 NYC, 12 NYC, 16 Tecate, 17 Baja, 18 Guadalajara, 19 San Francisco
Out: 06.09.2010



SASCHA DIVE – RESTLESS NIGHT DEEP VIBES DV014 – CD/DIGITAL
"Restless Night" is: from dusk till dawn, for a nice open-air party, or a gorgeous after-hour event on Ibiza. Sascha Dive's is: Deep House of the finest!
Out: Now



COURS LAPIN – COURS LAPIN FAKE DIAMOND CD/DIGITAL – FDRCD011
NME favoured Scandinavian/ Indie Pop Sensation Cours Lapin with their Debut. Think if Domino are to release the ultimate Vanessa Paradis album she never did and Sigur Ros to produce it as a soundtrack for Tim Burton and David Lynch.
Out: 27.09.2010



OLIVER KOLETZKI & FRAN – LOVESTONED STILL FOR TALENT CD/DIGITAL – SVT050CD
Koletzki's "Grosstadt märchen" was the Techno Pop Sountrack of the 2009 Berlin underground Summer. This is his new first international album – bright and unique in sound!
Out: 06.09.2010



LOUIE AUSTEN – LAST MAN CROONING ELECTROTAINING YOU! LA MUSIC 2CD/DIGITAL – LAM005
Last Man Crooning! Frank Sinatra, Barry White & Leonard Cohen on steroids! Dean Martin kidnaps Giorgio Moroder and gets very drunk with him in the studio before running away with his wife! Yes, his electrocrooning majesty Louie Austen's back with a double dose = album & remix album on his own label!
Out: 22.10.2010



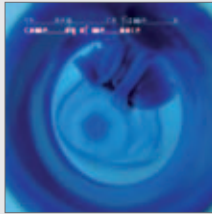
BOYS NOIZE – 1010 / YEAH BOYSNOIZE RECORDS 12"/DIGITAL – BNR050
For the golden 50 and in reminiscence of the very first BNR release the master himself presents two new original tracks: a real BOYS NOIZE monster, the neoteric 303 Acid-House track named "1010" and on the flip the gracious good-vibe-fun-house hymn "Yeah"
Out: 20.09.2010



PEDER – DIRTY & GOLD FAKE DIAMOND RECORDS CD/DIGITAL – FDRCD012
Dane Peder has been recording formo' wax, beastie boys, the prunes, ninja tune, dj krush. This is the solo follow up to his Debut on Ubiquity – Think Gonzales and Portishead meet in a Brooklyn Drinking Spot!
Out: 06.09.2010



CHRISTOPHER RAU – ASPER CLOUDS SMALLVILLE CD 03 – CD/DIGITAL
Together with it's Mother "Dial" Smallville are one of the critic's choice electronic labels year by year. Christopher Rau's depth Debut is set to make no exception from this.
Out: October 2010



TERENCE FIXMER – COMEDY OF MENACE ELECTRIC DELUXE CD/DIGITAL – EDC010CD
With 'Comedy Of Menace' Terence Fixmer created a true techno album: instantly recognizable pure sound, a deep and dark atmosphere throughout. Hypnotizing and mental, yet keeps the energy and a effectiveness for the dancefloor.
Out: 20.09.2010



V.A. GREEN & BLUE 2010 MIXED BY STEVE BUG & CHRIS TIETJEN COCOON RECORDINGS CORMIX031 – CD/DIGITAL
Steve Bug,Chris Tietjen and Cocoon release is like one first official soundtrack of this summer's anthems in house, techno and electronic.
Out:13.09.2010



WOLF & LAMB – LOVE SOMEONE WOLFANDLAM MUSIC CD/DIGITAL – WLC0001
In intimate picture of the dynamic brooklyn duo's sound that made them come up on (nearly) everyone's playlist over this summer. Love Someone is hypnotic dance music forged and refined (XLR8)
Out: Now!

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JOHN ROBERTS
Glass Eights CD

The debut album from American electronic artist **John Roberts** blurs real instruments with deep house music, creating a delicately enigmatic diversification of the Dial label's output. The album's influences touch upon everything from **The Smiths** and **Bonnie "Prince" Billy** to the introverted house music of early '80s Chicago.

dial.



MOUNT KIMBIE
Crooks & Lovers CD

Post-dubstep pioneers **Mount Kimbie** float through genres with an experimental edge, weaving the hardened spaces of **Burial** and the sad-eyed glow of **Grouper** into something uncategorizable. "The funk on Crooks is too intimate to be whored out to clubs. It's beat music for hearth and home." —Pitchfork (8.0)

hot flush **ooo goo**



SHED
The Traveller CD/2LP

On the follow-up to his highly-acclaimed debut, **Shed** further taps into the heartbeat of concise, genre-defining dance music. "In an era when many techno acts have reduced themselves to a handful of tricks and signature tropes, Shed goes broad-spectrum. Difficult to pigeonhole, he defies needle-drops." —Dusted

EST - 801 - 100 -



SKREAM
Outside The Box CD/2CD BOX/4x12" BOX

DJ/producer **Skream**'s highly-anticipated second album is a widescreen step forward from one of the UK's most central figures in dubstep, featuring guests **Sam Frank**, **La Roux** and **dBridge & Instramental**. "If *Burial*'s *Untrue* was dubstep's first crossover album, *Skream* is the genre's first potential star." —MOJO (4/5)

Tempa.



MIM SULEIMAN
Tungi CD

East African vocal and percussive traditions meet ultramodern rhythm trax and futuristic pop on the debut album from Afrobeat powerhouse **Mim Suleiman** (Bare Knuckle Soul, Rafiki Jazz), produced by **Maurice Fulton** (*Syclops*). "...a bright, breathless excursion into disco, house and tribal rhythms." —Resident Advisor

RUNNING BACK



MOEBIUS & BEERBOHM
Double Cut CD/LP

Originally released in 1984, the second collaboration by **Dieter Moebius** (Cluster, Harmonia) and **Gerd Beerbohm** is at once powerful, sensual pop music and a startlingly prescient work of future music, featuring the 22-minute proto-techno masterpiece "Doppelschnitt." Reissued with liner notes by **Asmus Tietchens**.

bureau b



SUPERPITCHER
Kilimanjaro CD/3LP

In his near-decade history recording and performing for **Kompakt**, Cologne's **Aksel Schaufler** aka **Superpitcher** has become synonymous with the sound of the label. After now-legendary remixes for **M83**, **Dntel** and **Foals**, **Superpitcher**'s long-awaited new full-length is his most accomplished work to-date, featuring the hit single "Rabbits In A Hurry."

KOMPAKT



MAGDA
From The Fallen Page CD

Magda creates a disorienting, evocative album of haunted electronic soundworlds, low-slung grooves, eerie chords and solid rhythms that tell of her days growing up in Detroit. A darkly-tinged collection that takes on a personal, animated effect from this highly-acclaimed DJ.

—



ON (REWORKED BY FENNESZ)
Something That Has Form and Something That Does Not CD/LP

Experimental electronic pioneer **Christian Fennesz** guests on the third album from French composer/producer **Sylvain Chauveau** and percussionist **Steven Hess** (**Pan American**) under their **On** moniker. Echoes of Fennesz's best work drift through the crackle and pulse of these intense, slow-building dronescapes.

Type



I'M NOT A GUN
Solace CD

The fifth collaboration between jazz/improv guitarist **Takeshi Nishimoto** and prolific techno producer/DJ **John Tejada** is hands-down the duo's best work to-date. With refined production and incredible songwriting, *Solace* embraces a more upbeat approach and a shimmering love for pop anthems.

COLORED COFFINS



WE LOVE
We Love CD

Italian multi-media duo **We Love** struck the European pop scene like a bolt of lightning with their innovative video art and inspired performances. Their debut album on **Ellen Allien**'s **BPitch Control** fuses the ecstasy of club-land with the emotions of irresistible synth-pop.

—



MARC HOULE
Drift CD/2LP

Marc Houle's first album for **M_nus** is inspired by Berlin's prolonged winter, drawing on industrial, retro and Detroit influences, all with a modern vision of path-finding techno. This latest venture for the label, although inspired by the coldest moments of the year, is undoubtedly hot as fire.

—

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ALBUM REVIEWS

SISTOL

Sistol (Remasters & Remakes) +

On the Bright Side

Halo Cyan

SUPERPITCHER

Kilimanjaro

Kompakt



TWO ECCENTRIC TECHNO
VETERANS UNVEIL NEW ALBUMS,
WITH VARYING RESULTS.

It's hard to believe that the careers of **Aksel Schaufler** and **Sasu Ripatti**—you might know them better as **Superpitcher** and **Vladislav Delay**—stretch back to the late 1990s. Those were heady times for minimal techno producers. **Rob Hood**, **Daniel Bell**, and **Richie Hawtin** had already sonically rewired the borderlands of Detroit and Windsor; the **Hard Wax** axis (**Basic Channel**-**Chain Reaction**-**Burial** Mix) reduced and recombined dubby grooves from a studio command center in Kreuzberg; and **Mike Ink**, before he became fully formed as **Gas** and **Kompakt** exec **Wolfgang Voigt**, artfully ruled rave and club culture from the psychedelic forests near Cologne.

But **Superpitcher** and **Delay** (that latter of whom also produced glammy vocal house tracks as **Luomo** and drier polyrhythmic beats as **Uusitalo**) each found his own niche quite separate from what came before. It was **Delay** who got there first, with impressive, frigid but weirdly expressionistic dubscapes that earned him the tag the "boy wonder" for his prolific work on **Mille Plateaux**, **Force Inc.**, and **Chain Reaction**. In 1999, he also released a curious LP, made from sludgy drum patterns and ever-thickening basslines, under the name **Sistol**.

While the success of his other work overwhelmed it, the **Sistol** moniker has now been resuscitated, and that early work given

new life in a re-mastered edition. *Sistol* also comes with remixes and remakes by **FaltyDL**, **John Tejada**, **Alva Noto**, **Mike Huckaby**, and other notables. The verdict? Despite some clever interpretive work (**Alva Noto** and **Huckaby**, in particular), the overall mood falls flat. What sounded bold and radical at the turn of the century has become stunningly dated and mundane, despite the studio enhancements.

But the kicker is that **Ripatti** is also releasing a new **Sistol** full-length at the same time. *On the Bright Side* is a more expansive, engaging record that features nearly all of the artist's unique ways with dub, tech-house, and space-jazz. The latter trend is especially exciting, given **Ripatti**'s recent work as percussionist with the **Moritz von Oswald Trio**. You can hear the influence on the gorgeous "Glowing and So Spread" and the noisier, more cosmic trance-rocker "Fucked-Up Novelty." Two other tracks also stand out: the electro-pop cruiser "A Better Shore" and "Funseeker," both additively danceable and, strangely, reminiscent of early recordings by **Superpitcher** like "Tomorrow," "Heroin," and "Shadows."

Of course, **Schaufler**'s music doesn't sound like that anymore, unfortunately. His new LP, *Kilimanjaro*, suffers the same problem that cursed his 2004 debut full-length, *Here Comes Love*. The songs—and

these are songs, not tracks—contain few hooks to grab onto, lack narrative energy, and start to bore at a point when they should begin to thrill. His real talent lies in making other artists sound better; a "Best of **Superpitcher**" list would arguably include his re-works of **Dntel** ("This is the Dream of **Evan and Chan**"), **M83** ("Don't Save Us From the Flames"), and **Hell** ("Je Regrette Everything"), or his 2005 mix CD, *Today*. At his best, he sings less, tinkers and tweaks the guitars and strings more, and keeps the action fun and flowing on the back of tasty bass hum and well-placed drum kicks.

Kilimanjaro has its highlights, though they are not what you'd expect—or necessarily want—from a **Superpitcher** listening experience. "Moon Fever" is dark, brooding, and would serve as lovely soundtrack material; "Who Stole the Sun" has traces of **Morricone** melancholy and drama; and "Black Magic" features the LP's best vocals, though the sexy Spanish whisperings belong to Mexico's **Rebolledo** of the **Cómete** collective.

Schaufler is clearly ambitious. He says he wants to make records like **Roxy Music** or **Prefab Sprout**, two of his boyhood inspirations. He admirably sets a lofty bar for himself, but needs to go higher, deeper, or—here's the brutal irony—just have more fun. *Walter Wasacz*



!!!
STRANGE WEATHER, ISN'T IT?

Warp

A decade has passed since !!!'s debut album took a snapshot of the sweat, noise, and antsy groove those guys hashed out in overcrowded parties and basements across the sleepy state capital of Sacramento. Fortunately, *Strange Weather, Isn't It?* proves they won't be doomed as quaint hipster schlock from the "dance punk" movement of yore.

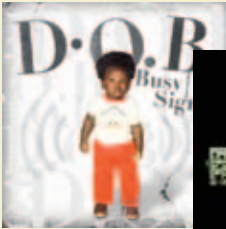
This album is !!!'s leanest, funkiest, and most accessible work ever, as well as their darkest—the deaths of their drummers Jerry Fuchs and Mikel Gius loom high in the atmosphere. Frontman Nic Offer often dwells on betrayal and isolation. "*You can roll up the window/ But you can't drown out the wind,*" as he puts it on opener "AM/FM." The band later channels Public Image Ltd's death-disco vibe on "Jump Back," where somber, *koto*-like guitar riffs and Offer's graveyard imagery blanket a disco rhythm exhaled from the Paradise Garage. Guitarist Mario Andreoni deftly anchors such mood swings again on "Jamie, My Intentions Are Bass," jumping from gothic textures to bright, Chic-graced licks before ending the tune on a melancholic note through chords that drip like a rainshower. The closest thing to a centerpiece, "The Most Certain Sure," dives from a narcotic dancefloor groove into a dub-echo space where Offer's hazy vocals float upon the ether as if easing out of heartbreak.

Such uplift from dread makes *Strange Weather* a fitting party record for our age when so many American Dreams, lived and fantasized, are falling apart. Pass the bottle. *Cameron Macdonald*

BRACKLES
SONGS FOR ENDLESS CITIES

Cool in the Pool

The inaugural mix in a series meant to showcase young talent, Brackles' 17-track strut through the post-dubstep landscape sounds, at times, more like a revival than the next leap forward. Deep house sounds and two-step rhythms are there if you want them, but it's the stylish, oft-kilter beats and assured, fluid delivery that mark Rob Kemp as a DJ pursuing new directions. The 24-year-old co-owner of the Blunted Robots label maintains a tautness throughout, laying down a steady future-garage tempo that wavers slightly with prickly, prismatic beats and then snaps back into the grid. Every little glitch and undercurrent of a



top, at least not by dancehall standards.

Busy's mic persona is brash, swagger-heavy, and authentically Jamaican. He bigs up the ladies, ghetto youths, high-grade marijuana, his bank account, and the gossip talk at the "Hair Dresser Shop." He updates The Commodores, Phil Collins, and the Stalag 17 riddim. His stylistic versatility shines on "Busy Latino," a brassy, jazzy tune complete with *en español* backing vocals.

But the album's best—and most original—song is "Opera," a sparse, minimal track consisting of nothing but strings, Auto-Tuned arpeggios, and a relentless cadence. Stripped bare of the multilayered bashment riddims, Busy's lyrical skills are undeniable. It would have been nice had *D.O.B.* taken even more experimental chances, which could have elevated the album above its somewhat predictable adherence to dancehall conventions. Then again, in dancehall, artistry has always been secondary to making butts shake to earth-rattling grooves. *Eric K. Arnold*

JIMMY EDGAR
XXX

IK7

For a producer as young, talented, and lauded as Detroit-reared Jimmy Edgar, releasing two albums within four years—not counting his output as part of Plus Device—is simply not enough. To be fair, Edgar wasn't focusing on his music, per se, and instead spent the time exhibiting his photography and honing his video work. So, the man keeps busy, but what has the lengthy gap between *Color Strip* and *XXX*, his sophomore full-length, yielded for those of us anxiously awaiting his new album? Exactly what you'd expect.

Essentially, *XXX* is a mirror image of Edgar's 2006 debut. He continues to skin '80s funk, R&B, and electro to tautly stretch over the skeleton of Detroit techno, and his themes remain solely driven by sex. Downright jams like "Hot, Raw, Sex," "Push," "Turn You Inside Out," and "Vibration" are energetic body movers whose chilly synth melodies and skittering beats will surely fill as many dancefloors as bedrooms. Sultry standout "Physical Motion" sounds like it just missed Justin Timberlake's *FutureSex/LoveSounds* tracklist, and the instrumental "Rewind, Stop That Tape" could've introduced the The-Dream's latest.

Edgar has soul, even if he masks it under a frigid guise, and yet something's slightly flat about *XXX*. The music can sound over-labored in

its stylistically austere and hollow production, although when Edgar warms things up and employs a talkbox on "New Touch" and "Midnite Fone Calls," it does sound slightly less contrived than Chromeo. Regardless, *XXX* delivers 11 reliably funky, beat-driven, and retro-futuristic songs, and after waiting for years to hear them, that's not half-bad. *Patric Fallon*

GLASSER
RING

True Panther Sounds

Albums from Delorean and Girls may have arrived with larger fanfare, but Glasser (a.k.a. Cameron Mesirow) has been part of the True Panther stable from the beginning and *Ring* could be marked as the end of the young label's first wave of releases. More than a year ago, the label released the *Apply* EP, a charming effort that introduced the world to this girl with a big voice and an otherworldly pop vision, albeit one limited by her amateurish production skills and predilection for recording in GarageBand.

This year's "Tremel" 12" hinted that something grand was on the horizon, but sonically, *Ring* is a quantum leap forward, a fact at least partially attributable to Mesirow's time spent with folks like producers Van Rivers and the Subliminal Kid, whose work with Fever Ray is an obvious reference point, as is someone like Björk. Yet Glasser's music is far less alien; *Ring* finds Mesirow dwelling in warm, lush surroundings and her efforts sound fully realized, whether it's the chimes and vocal robotics of the pulsing "Mirrorage" or the vaguely tribal percussion paired with her soaring voice on wonderous standout "Home." "Apply" and "Glad," both of which first appeared on her debut, show up again, and while the repetition may be disappointing, the re-worked versions of the songs are not. The latter is buoyed nicely by some new horns and both tracks are among the album's best. *Ring* may not be perfect—certain songs have a nondescript, meandering feel—but this kind of growth is undeniably exciting, and makes both Glasser and True Panther well worth watching. *Shawn Reynaldo*

MADDSLINKY
MAKE A CHANGE

Tru Thoughts

Seven years after his LP, *Make Your Peace*, paved the way for what the whole world now calls dubstep, Maddslinky is back. In fact, he never actually went away, but the recent popularity of music inspired by his early work has brought the man also known as Zed Bias back to everyone's attention.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, *Make a Change* doesn't set out to test the ear. The opening track is an uplifting wedge of soulful house—featuring British soul singer Omar—that sets us up for a proper album with proper songs. The production is classic Zed Bias (909 hi-hats, piano melodies, Juno synths, garage percussion), the programming is concise, and, as a result, the strongest beats are those with vocals. On "Hiding



Place," half-step drums swagger beneath an enchanting hook, courtesy of Taniah; "Inspiration Meditation" features Paul Randolph brooding over a thick square-wave riff, guided by flickers of crisp percussion; and on "Fly," Jenna G (most commonly seen standing next to DJ Zinc) rides a surging house jam that is destined for the record bags of UK funky DJs like Marcus Nasty.

There is, however, an exception that disproves the rule. The album's highpoint comes courtesy of an instrumental track—featured on Martyn's 2009 Fabric mix CD—entitled "Lost on Tenori Street." Mesmerizing from start to finish, the track swirls around a dreamy melody, played on a marimba, that creates an effect something like a sedated *shangaan* electro. Sublime. *Richard Attley*

PALE SKETCHER
JESU: PALE SKETCHES DEMIXED

Ghostly

Listening to the career trajectory of Justin K. Broadrick gives one the feeling that he has mellowed significantly with age—how else could the man who helped bring Godflesh and Techno Animal to the world be creating trip-hop-infused ambient soundscapes? While the sonic palette of Pale Sketcher may be completely divorced from the dark, industrial metal of his former projects, Broadrick's precision and technical expertise still shine through on this slab of 'demixed' tracks from his Jesu project's last album.

Initiated as a side-project to explore the more electronic side of Jesu, *Pale Sketches Demixed* brims with crystalline highs, chunky percussion, and a sense of longing that recall Richard D.

James' more sentimental moments. Each track from the Jesu album is elevated to a higher plain of meaning—on "The Playgrounds Are Empty (Slumber Mix)," Broadrick brings the original's vocals up from murky depths, delays guitar lines into gauzy dreams, and places lovely synth drones beneath it all. Thus, while the producer's lyrics are still recognizable as bleak, there is a hope beneath the despair that is equally heartening to both the Godflesh fan and the newcomer to Broadrick's music. Indeed, a track like "Supple Hope (2009 Mix)" contains shades of the heavily delayed vocals of Broadrick's past while inhabiting a sound that has more in common with electronic downtempo than the claustrophobic blast beats of more industrial outfits. Paired alongside tracks like the Kraftwerkian "Dummy (Bahnhof Version)," Broadrick displays his ability to craft music that embraces listeners as effectively as his former projects alienated them. *Thomas Rees*

SHIT ROBOT
FROM THE CRADLE TO THE RAVE

DFA

Shit Robot's debut full-length is also a coming-out party for Marcus Lambkin, the spotlight-shy guy behind the unusual handle. Closely associated with DFA, Shit Robot also embodies the label's meticulousness: He has only dropped an EP a year between 2006 and 2010, skipping 2008. Even though *From the Cradle to the Rave*'s running time roughly equals the rest of Shit Robot's discography, this collaboration-driven album is a low-stakes affair compared to the label's 2010 marquee release, LCD Soundsystem's *This Is Happening*. This doesn't prevent the album from reaching impressive heights thanks to the contributions of guest vocalists like Hot Chip's Alexis Taylor ("Losing My Patience") and DFA's house diva Nancy Whang. The latter contributes a huge chorus to the icy dance-pop of "Take 'Em Up," showing how Lambkin can play to his collaborator's strengths while retaining the analog meanderings of his instrumental work.

Vocals also throw Shit Robot's shortcomings into relief. Lambkin's own pitched-down voice fails to find chemistry with the bassline-driven "I Found Love," the closest the album comes to running in place. On its own, the song is skippable, but the album's intended audience would probably prefer to let the track play out and add to the overall effect, as *From the Cradle to the Rave* is an album proper, meant to be experienced as a whole.

The signature Shit Robot tune, 2007's "Chasm," positioned Lambkin as a dance-music classicist with light techno vibes. Oddly enough, the production styles of his debut album are so collaboration-sensitive that Shit Robot almost disappears into the background. (John MacLean's singing isn't the only thing that makes "Grim Receiver" sound like a Juan MacLean track.) But Shit Robot's classicism extends to his persona: This is functional, workmanlike music built out of sturdy analog technology. For home listening and for the club, this is useful music to have around. *Brandon Bussolini*

BUBBLIN'



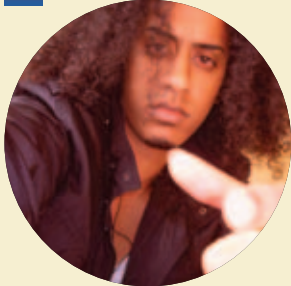
CANBLASTER



Douai, France

Cedric Steffens used to compose music for videogames. But after founding the Chub Cheval crew in early 2009 with fellow Frenchmen Myd, Sam Tiba, and Panteros666, the 22-year-old DJ and producer set his sights on the club. Citing Basement Jaxx as a major influence, Canblaster's tunes brim with energy and often take an everything-but-the-kitchen-sink approach, borrowing from old-school rave, classic house, Detroit techno, UK funky, Latin and African rhythms, and whatever else strikes his fancy. Apparently it's working, as he's been tapped for remixes by Drop the Lime, Teki Latex, Style of Eye, Rusko, and others, including electronic music legends Underworld, who recruited the entire Club Cheval team to re-work one of their songs. There's also plenty of original Canblaster music on the way—his debut, the *Jetpack* EP, comes out this month on Sound of Sumo, and will soon be followed by and second EP on the Nightshifters label.

myspace.com/canblaster



MUNCHI

Rotterdam, Netherlands

When Dave Nada slowed down some Dutch house tracks to reggaeton speed and stumbled across a new sound that he eventually called *moombahton*, he had no idea that half a world away, a 21-year-old Dominican producer living in Holland would be inspired to take the sound to the next level. Munchi was already a music freak who'd spent years obsessing over reggaeton, not to mention *bachata*, Baltimore club, *kuduro*, *baile* funk, bubbling, breakcore, dubstep, and a litany of other sounds, but his *Moombahton Promo* EP, along with his bonkers remix of Datsik's "Firepower," all made available as free downloads, offered some of the nascent genre's first truly original work.

munchiproductions.blogspot.com



OPTIMUM

London, UK

The UK hardcore continuum continues to evolve, and exciting producers keep sprouting up. Optimum (a.k.a. South London native Malcolm Chen) is one of the latest, and although his name is new to many, he's been dabbling in music since he was a kid, learning piano and guitar before eventually buying decks and delving into the world of DJing. Hip-hop came first, but was eventually followed by grime, dubstep, house, and, lately, whatever you call the current incarnation of UK bass music. These days he's busy making tunes, both solo—his *Max Power* EP comes out on Planet Mu this month—and with frequent collaborator Ikonika, with whom he's launched the new Hum and Buzz imprint.

myspace.com/optimummusic

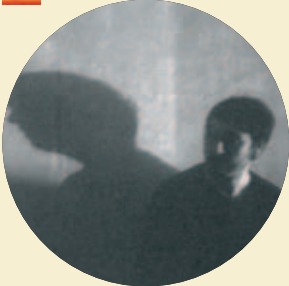


SEPALCURE

Brooklyn, NY

Travis Stewart (a.k.a. Machinedrum) and Praveen Sharma have been friends for years; the duo runs the Cassette NYC parties and the online community mix archive Percussion Lab, but only began collaborating on music last September. Bored with their solo projects, they threw out past blueprints and delved into '90s house, the skittering sounds of 2-step, and the sexier, more soulful and melodic side of UK bass music. The Hotfush label—home to like-minded acts such as Mount Kimbie and Scuba—seems like the perfect place for Sepalcure's talents, and released the pair's debut EP, *Love Pressure*, earlier this year.

sepalcure.com



JOHN TALABOT

Barcelona, Spain

This young Spaniard's true identity remains a mystery—the name John Talabot was borrowed from his former school—but there's no question that the producer's work is top-shelf. The slow-motion house of "Sunshine," bearing traces of disco and Detroit techno, first put him on the map in 2009 and even won over the Pitchfork crowd, a process bolstered by the single's 2010 reissue with remixes from Blondes and his friends from Delorean. Artists like Glasser and The xx have taken notice and enlisted Talabot for remixes, his own acid-flavored "Mathilda's Dream" 12" recently dropped on Permanent Vacation, and a follow-up on Young Turks is in the works, as is a full-length album.

myspace.com/johntalabot

GUEST REVIEWS: CHRISTOPHER WILLITS



San Francisco's Christopher Willits is a bit of a virtuoso—in the past 10 years he's produced 20 albums, both solo and in collaboration with experimental heavyweights, such as Matmos and Ryuichi Sakamoto. His most recent solo effort is *Tiger Flower Circle Sun*, his second full-length for the Ghostly International label and quite possibly his most organic offering to date. That's not to say that Willits has abandoned his penchant for gear and technology—the guy practically lives in recording studios, designs his own software, and still finds the time to occasionally host our tech-oriented *What You Talkin' Bout, Willits?* series on *XLR8R* TV. Here, Willits takes a quick break from—no joke—the next *three* albums he's working on to let us know about what he's been listening to lately. christopherwillits.com

EMERALDS

DOES IT LOOK LIKE I'M HERE?

Mego Editions

Years from now, synthesizers will sound even more timeless. If you grew up with synth arpeggio soundtracks in elementary school videos, you know what I mean, and you'll love this record. Synthesizers help us to understand and feel the nonlinear landscape of space/time, and there's so much to explore. If you like this music and you are freaking out, you also need to listen to Richard Pinhas' *Variations Sur Le Thème Des Bene Gesserit* (on repeat) as soon as possible.

TAYLOR DEUPREE

SHOALS

12K

Taylor's music just keeps getting more natural and at ease with itself. This is a great entry point to his work. There is a effortlessness and natural sway that is more alive than what you usually find in so-called 'ambient' music. This is natural music, unforced and created with a light touch.

BRAD LANER

NATURAL SELECTIONS

Hometales

Another great solo album by one of my favorite guitarists and people. His noisy band Medicine changed my sonic world when I was in high school. The first time I heard this, I actually thought my friend's tape player was messed up. It's very diverse, with all of the usual Laner twists and turns. He's integrating everything he knows into his solo project, and the scary thing is that Brad Laner has not even hit his prime yet.

FIELD MUSIC

MEASURE

Memphis Industries

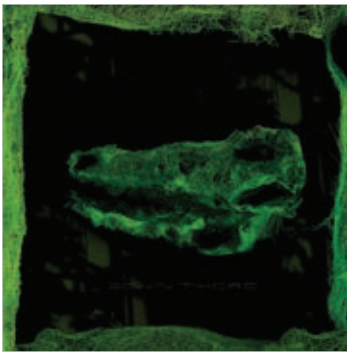
I really respect this band, even when I don't love the hyper-self-conscious music they make. The production is so tight and there's a great use of good-ol' hard panning. Why not have the drums or guitars only on the right channel? The music is almost overly controlled at times, but for me it's all about how they puzzle the arrangements into the production. That dimension is very awesome.



Prince Rama

Shadow Temple CD/LP/digital

An ethereal chorus of voices and anthemic melodies creates sonic artifacts drawing from southeast Asian rituals, krautrock legacies, hallucinatory operas, and dance hall psychedelia. *Out September on Paw Tracks*



Avey Tare

Down There CD/LP/digital

Animal Collective member Avey Tare's first official solo full length carries you through a murky realm of sound, an alien death world of soul grooves that is both honest and otherworldly. *Out October on Paw Tracks*



Cloud Nothings

Turning On CD/digital

These thirteen songs (a collection of out of print singles) are the perfect introduction to the taut catchy lo-fi indie rock world of Cloud Nothings. *Out October on Carpark*



Les Sins

Lina 12"/digital

Les Sins is the dance alter ego of Toro Y Moi (a.k.a. Chaz Bundick). *Out November on Carpark*

The Carpark Family of Labels:

www.carparkrecords.com
www.paw-tracks.com
www.acuterecords.com

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KARIZMA: IN THE STUDIO



THE BALTIMORE BASS GURU TALKS BUILDING DRUMS AND DRAMA.

Wham City and club music aside, Baltimore is still a place where you can roll up to a red light and hear deep house thumping from a car window, or find a "House Music Lives" sticker plastered on an alley door. Before club music, house was the dance music of the city—and its old-school residents remember it fondly. Right as Baltimore club exploded into the world's DJ crates, Karizma (a.k.a. Chris Clayton) got into the studio with the Basement Boys team of DJ Spen and Teddy Douglas, and learned how to make house music. After a baffling amount of remix work, and a well-received leap into solo production, Karizma is keeping the house music faith alive. On a stifling early-Summer day in Baltimore, we caught up with the producer and DJ on a brief stop back in his hometown to talk about learning from the masters.

XLR8R: What are some of the biggest things you learned from working in the studio with the Basement Boys?

Karizma: How to structure a song. And, from Spen, I learned engineering and the technical aspects of the studio. It's a big part of everything I do now. Unruly [Records] was different—[I] pretty much made the Baltimore [club] tracks and that was it. This was a whole different meal. I learned song structure, how to make drama in a song, how to make something happen when there is nothin' happening with voices and stuff. I don't think I would be half of what I am without that experience.

Why did you move from making club music to house tracks?

It was what I wanted to do with music anyway. I had this Baltimore record that was nine minutes long—the longest club record ever. It took a year for anyone to play it. They was just used to three- or four-minute songs playing the same thing over and over. I used to tell the DJ, 'You gotta play for at least five or six minutes. It does different things.' When I saw that happenin', that they didn't want to let the song do anything, that's when I became discouraged and decided to move on. I thought the music should always grow and develop into something else. Moving to the Basement Boys was a breath of fresh air. I was constantly doing remixes, constantly doing something different drumwise—which doesn't apply to Baltimore club. I never used the same drums at Basement Boys, and that was something I promised I would never do.

When you hear a track, what tells you whether or not it's something you can work with as a remix?

If I think I can take it a different way, or it's a good song—hopefully both. If I just hear, like, a chant in the song I

think I can work with. Or, the third thing is just something completely different that would give me a challenge. How can I make it way different than what it was, hopefully to make it a better track? I always try to throw different things into the circle so people don't become bored with what I do.

Where do you start in the studio?
[It] depends. Sometimes the [Ensoniq] ASR-10, because that's what I use for drums. For years, that's all I used. I never even used to use computers in my stuff. I was just too scared. I like the sound, the dirtiness of the stuff that's analog. I kind of do a little bit of both now—call it digi-log. I take stuff from the ASR or the MPC and then dump it into Logic. The majority of the time, it starts out with my drums. And then keys or synth.

Why did you decide it was cool to start using a computer?
It just seemed like the right move. Some of my friends were just *killing* it on Logic. I used to use a PC, which is really cheap and you can get everything cracked—but it's not the most stable thing. Viruses come, and then you lost your song. 95% of my friends use Logic and a Mac, so that's how I ended up making the move. [Live], I still use [Pioneer] CDs. I still don't have enough trust in the computer.

What piece of gear do you covet?
An original Moog synthesizer. I wish I had one of those.

What production technique or style are you just sick of hearing?
Right now, I guess a lot of the big-room stuff I really don't like because it's just all the same and there's nothing different. Like, you can expect that 16 or 32 bars will be filtered down and come back up. When I can figure a record out two or three minutes in, those are the types of records I can't stand. I like records that take me somewhere else or throw me [for] a loop. Predictability in a track is what turns me off the most. ■

myspace.com/kohesiveproductions

CD
[Download Karizma's exclusive XLR8R Podcast at XLR8R.com/135extras.](#)

MATTHEW DEAR'S VOCAL TIPS

There are two distinctly different sides to New York-based producer/DJ Matthew Dear: his lengthy excursions into DJ-friendly techno (most commonly heard under his Audion guise) and his eponymous pop-oriented side, with which he's explored playing as a live three-piece with his Big Hands band, and has crafted two critically acclaimed full-lengths. If there's one major element that sets these sides apart, though, it's singing. Dear uses more of his voice than ever before on the just-released *Black City*, so who better than the illustrious Ghostly/Spectral co-founder to give us the lowdown on how to get the most out of vocal recordings? Here are a few tips from the techno-pop singer-songwriter himself. *Patric Fallon*



1. Consider your location

I've recorded vocals with a microphone in an oven, in the corner of brick walls, shower stalls, and on the street. When you change the environmental factors and wave patterns coming into the mic, you're rewarded with all sorts of uncontrollable benefits.

2. Make some physical changes

Stretch your neck back and sing upside down into the mic. Record the same verse in the morning and at night and notice the difference a day of living will have on your voice. Sing a couple of takes through clenched teeth, or after you drink a cup of tea. Take a shot of whiskey and sing while sitting on your hands. All of this will change the result of what ends up in your song.

3. Layer your vocals

Now blend all of those various takes and positions onto one verse. You'll get an immense amount of depth. Play with the volume levels and panning. Sometimes I'll put a very guttural and almost inaudible groan under the regular vocals and get a strange result.

4. Use effects

Treat your voice. Chorus is always helpful, whether thick or thin. I like to use an AMS-DMX clone preset in the Eventide H8000 Ultra-Harmonizer, which slightly delays a panned pitch-shift on my voice. Subtle delays on the last word in a verse or only on certain frequencies can also add a lot of dimension.

5. Pen your lyrics creatively

Write cryptic lines that you can't even figure out. Draw from the depths of your soul and write from the core. Confuse yourself. Listen to your own music for the answers you want to find. Give people something they'll have to listen to again and again. Find your own methods that work for your voice and singing style. Everyone has their own pocket. Find it, and you'll be happy with the results. Others will be as well. ■

matthewdear.com



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09/'10 COMPONENTS

Apogee Gio Foot-Controller Audio Interface

MSRP: \$395; apogee.com



If you are a Mac-based recording musician with blazing, delicate, or down-right deafening guitar licks in your tracking plans, Apogee's Gio could be your perfect studio companion. Apogee, an industry favorite for their pristine audio converters, aims to please the guitar-welding recordist with this new foot-controller/audio-interface combo. Technically, any Mac-based DAW (Ableton Live, for example) can be controlled by the Gio, but the product is intended for—and works best with—GarageBand '09, Logic Pro 9, and MainStage 2. Offering a standard 1/4-inch instrument input, an expression pedal input, and an output suited for headphones, powered monitors, or an instrument amplifier, the Gio delivers pro-audio clarity with a no-brainer signal path. It's built like an iron ship, sporting the type of sturdy shell and robust mechanics that can handle all the stomp you can muster. Due to the lack of an on-board screen to provide clear preset indication, this product is really most useful off the stage rather than on, but as a studio-based foot-controller/audio-interface for the Mac guitarist, the Gio has a massive, power-chord-like grip over the rest of the market. *Ryan Edwards*

Guitar Hero: Warriors of Rock

Activision; X360, PS3, Wii

Okay, okay, you know the *Guitar Hero* drill by now. Play along to rock 'n' roll hits great and small with plastic whooziwatsits... *blah, blah, blah*. What you may not know about *Guitar Hero: Warriors of Rock*, however, is that this time around, the game's story mode focuses heavily on the lore of Rush's *2112*! Gene Simmons also apparently has something to do with it, but...*2112*! Yes, you'll be able to play 90-plus other songs including those from Megadeth, NIN, and Buzzcocks. Yes, you can still hook up your DS to the Wii version to become a "roadie." Hell, you even get a free copy of the new Soundgarden(!) album a week before everyone else if you buy the damn thing. But really, hearing the dulcet tones of Geddy Lee and Alex Lifeson narrate you through "The Temples of Syrinx" to destroy "The Beast" with the Power of Rock is really what you are paying for here. *Ryan Rayhill*

IK Multimedia AmpliTube iRig iPhone Interface

MSRP: \$39.99 (hardware); ikmultimedia.com



The iPhone can now take you from ringtones to ringing tone. The pocket-sized iRig builds off AmpliTube's low-latency gear-modeling engine. Combining an app and guitar-slide-sized dongle, a mono 1/4-inch input, and 1/8-inch stereo output, the adaptor converts the iPhone headphone jack into a functional practice amp for guitar/bass/keyboard. You can save/recall 12 preset chains featuring one amp, cabinet, and microphone with three effects (purchased from an expandable selection, with gratis tuner and metronome). Crank a Marshall-style lead amp and modulation pedals and you're ringmaster to a throaty psychedelic circus. Through sliding panels each component mirrors much of its desktop customizability, though don't expect session-worthy fidelity. It delivers a stable, perspiration-free entry to solo jamming and a surprisingly convincing sketchpad for dialing in virtual tone.

Tony Ware



Korg Monotron Analog Ribbon Synth

MSRP: \$90; korg.com

Remember when the MicroKorg came out? Everyone and their brother was suddenly "into" synths, and an almost equal number of bands started using the small, affordable instrument live and in the studio. Well, it seems we ought to get ready for the next level of that integration, as Korg recently released an even more compact synthesizer, the Monotron. This little bugger fits into the palm of your hand, and boasts many capabilities of some of the biggest pieces of hardware. One VCO, one VCF, and one LFO combine with other modular controls, Korg's classic analog sound, and a ribbon controller keyboard to pack a portable punch unlike anything else currently available. The battery-powered device also has a built-in speaker for sharing your sound creations on the go, but if those get to be a bit much for your audience, you can jam out alone with the handy headphone jack. *Patric Fallon*

Ultrason e HFI-680 Headphones

MSRP: \$249; ultrason e.com



As the description on Ultrason e HFI-680 headphones' packaging points out, most run-of-the-mill phones on the market attempt to put whatever you may be jammin' to inside of your head. With its patented S-Logic™ Natural Surround Sound, these cans put the audio *around* your head, and the thick, comfortable cushioning around the acoustically designed earcups helps keep the professional-quality sound in (no sonic bleed coming from these guys). If that's not enough, Ultrason e's proprietary ULE (Ultra-Low Emission) technology, utilizing a MU Metal buffer board, keeps the magnetic radiation away from your precious brains. Comfortable and safer ear gear with excellent sound, at a very un-Ultrason e price? We're into it.

PF

Tom Clancy's H.A.W.X. 2

Ubisoft; X360, PS3, Wii



Despite bearing the name of the almighty Clance, the original *Tom Clancy's H.A.W.X.* did little to, uh, Goose the public's interest, with laggy aerial battles and less-than-spectaclar graphic representations of both the environments and the planes—a cardinal sin when making a game about, you know, planes. Throw in the lack of online play and the game received a reception worthy of an Iceman. *Tom Clancy's H.A.W.X. 2*, however, remedies all of those issues and then some. Taking the helm of American, British, and Russian jet fighters, with a cast and crew to match, you must quell various Middle Eastern insurgencies while doing battle with enemy forces over land, sea, and air in hyper-ramped-up dogfights that call out for an itchy trigger finger. In addition to the increased action, everything from the somewhat mundane (like taxiing and take-off) to the thrilling (battling alongside the Ghost Recon team, from another Clancy game, and UAV drone-piloting for precision stealth kills) is represented this time around, making *H.A.W.X. 2* a real Maverick of aerial arcade action! *RR*

Halo: Reach
Microsoft; X360



Are you ready for more Space Marine madness?! Well, Microsoft is certainly ready to give it to you! Taking place in the days shortly before the original Halo kicked off a galactic firestorm, *Halo: Reach* follows the tale of Noble Team, a squad of pre-Master Chief Spartans who are earth's last of hope of turning back an attack by the alien conglomerate known as the Covenant, which, as we know—SPOILER ALERT—didn't really work out. But that's okay, because it's the journey, not the destination (or some shit), and boy, what a journey *Reach* is! At different times allowing you to choose from a small variety of all-new weapons and abilities, ranging from hologram decoys to jetpacks, with which to crush the alien hordes, *Reach* offers several new experiences for veterans of the series—even the ability to helm a starfighter, albeit briefly, in order to repel an attack on an orbiting space station. Pure badassery abounds here. In addition, no technical or visual detail has been left unpolished, making *Reach* the best-looking, best-playing *Halo* game in the series' near decade-long existence by an impressively substantial stretch. It doesn't stop there, either, as the game's multiplayer capabilities take full of advantage of *Halo*'s prestigious online multiplayer and level-building by re-imagining and significantly bolstering just about everything that has made the previous entries so popular. For any fan, *Reach* is a must-have. For any detractor, *Reach* will change your perspective. *RR*

Spider-Man: Shattered Dimensions
Activision; X360, PS3, Wii, DS



While most of us are familiar with the friendly neighborhood Peter Parker story of Spider-Man, there have actually been several Arachni-Dudes spread throughout many parallel universes, four of which come together in the far-out button-masher *Spider-Man: Shattered Dimensions*, each one displaying different strengths and weaknesses. After an artifact of arcane divination that affects different dimensions manages to get destroyed during a battle between Spidey and Mysterio—as those sort of things tend to do—it's up to the four Web-Heads, ranging from a 1930s detective-style Spider-Man to a bio-mechanical badass, Spider-Man 2099—to bring order out of chaos. Expect plenty of Marvel mayhem as friends and foes across the various books drop in and out of this game's tangled web of fanboy fury! *RR*



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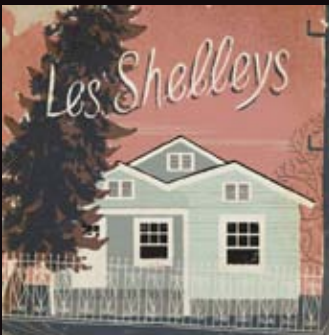
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PlayStation Move

Sony; PS3

With the surprise success of the Wii and its waggle controls a couple of years back, it took the other guys a minute to catch up. But catch up they have, and Sony is next out of the gate this month with their personal-body-massager-esque PlayStation Move. The Move features a prominent light-up bulb on the end that, while looking rather risqué, is actually quite ingenious in that it changes colors depending on the game you are playing, enabling the sensor on the PS3 to more accurately sense motion and differentiate between players and their environment much more easily. Games you'll be playing with your new toy range from what are basically extremely elaborate demos like *Sports Champions*, which includes everything from frisbee-golf to archery to bocce to a medieval gladiator sim to next year's alien splatterfest, *Killzone 3*. The Move will of course be compatible with a plethora of other upcoming titles, including *NBA 2K11* and *LittleBigPlanet 2*. *RR*



Super Scribblenauts

Warner Bros Interactive; DS



One of last year's most surprising gems was undoubtedly *Scribblenauts*, a puzzle game that allowed you to type in the name of thousands of objects that would then appear before your eyes and then allow you to complete your goal... or just cause chaos, as we often did when conjuring the likes of Cthulhu and Santa Claus at the same time. *Super Scribblenauts* has not only stepped up the game's controls and physics significantly, but improves on the already amazing object-summoning system with the ability to trick out your items with adjectives. Where previously you could write, say, "football" and kick it around the room, now you can perhaps create a "flaming football," adding a whole new dimension to your puzzle-solving and/or mayhem production. *Super Scribblenauts'* library of items has also increased, though, unfortunately, typing "naked Daryl Hannah from *Blade Runner*" yields no good results. Despite this glaring oversight, *Super Scribblenauts* is an impressive and entertaining experience nonetheless. *RR*

Shaun White Skateboarding

Ubisoft; X360, PS3, Wii



Like some straight-up OG *Picture Pages* shit, with The Flying Tomato as the Mortimer Ichabod Marker to your Dr. William H. Cosby Jr., the ability to create and guide the direction of the surfaces you are grinding on as you do it in *Shaun White Skateboarding* is what separates this one from other successful franchises. And boy, does it make a difference! Decline of a hill not steep enough? Make it into a fibula-shattering monster on the fly. Want to extend that rail grind another 20 yards? Make it so! There is also a story mode that has something to do with Mr. White leading a rebellion against "The Man" or somesuch, but more importantly, did you even know Shaun White skateboarded? Or furthermore that he is a real person and not a magical snow elf that appears once every four years to hawk Red Bull? Nor did I, gentle reader. Nor did I. *RR*



Def Jam Rapstar

Konami; X360, PS3, Wii

You say you want to make a change from a common thief to getting up close and personal with Robin Leach? Do any of you junior thuggists even know who that is? He was the Queen of England in the '80s! And if you want to meet him, as the Prince of Bed Stuy once did, then you best bust your freshest flows with this month's *Def Jam Rapstar*! Featuring some of hip-hop's greatest of all time, like Slick Rick and Uncle L, to more recent artists, like Kanye West and Lil Weezy, *Rapstar* offers a tremendous amount of options for both young up-and-comers (like yourself) and ill-ass vets (like us!) to flex their skills on the mic—karaoke-style or freestyle—over the backing tracks. *Rapstar* also allows you to videotape your performance, assuming your console has a camera, and upload it to the game's site for the world to judge. Here we go, yo! *RR*



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VIS-ED AIDS-3D

A BERLIN-BASED EXPAT DUO MASHES TECHNOLOGY, THEORY, '90S GRAPHICS, AND HIGH ART IN MIXED-MEDIA WORKS

In the corner of a white room sits a tall, sleek, black pillar, a serene-looking symbol of some thoroughly modern form of ceremonial worship. On the front of it, the letters "OMG" (the well-worn internet abbreviation term for "Oh My God") appear in blue LED lights, blinking on and off. On either side of it sits a clump of lit black torches, suggesting that we are all bordering on religious zealotry in our ever-escalating obsession with technology.

This monument, called "OMG Obelisk," can be attributed to 24-year-olds Daniel Keller and Nik Kosmas, known by their collective name AIDS-3D. Originally from Detroit and Minneapolis respectively, the duo spent a couple years at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago before moving to Berlin in 2006 to complete their studies. Since then, they have created numerous installations, performances, videos, animated gifs, and sound pieces displayed at the likes of the New Museum in New York and the Venice Biennale. Much of their work addresses the intersection of art, technology, and society, crafting cheeky visions of the future using janky production techniques.

This month, they have a solo show at the Autocenter in Berlin, for which they are "making a series of custom solar panels that discuss alternative energy in an open and critical way," according to Kosmas. In addition, they'll soon be showing at the Frame Gallery within the Frieze Art Fair in London, and partaking in a group show called *Smart Fridge* at the Kunstverein Medienturm in Graz, Austria. We caught up with the guys while they were preparing for their autumn takeover.

AIDS-3D.COM

Opposite:
Tower, 2009



XLR8R: How did you guys meet?

Nik Kosmas: One of us was born very close to the summer equinox and the other was born very close to the winter equinox. This professor of ours was like, "You should collaborate." This was before we had anything in common. We had opposite strategies for getting problems solved. It was really eerie.

How long have you been in Berlin? What do you like most about the city?

NK: We've been here since 2006. We were deciding between London and Berlin. We chose Berlin 'cause we like Germans; we like their reputation. They have this history of taking things very far, and I think we appreciate that sort of commitment to aesthetics. It also just seemed more foreign, and [we thought] that we'd grow more being put into a non-English-speaking country, although we haven't learned very much German; *nur ein kleines bisschen*.

Some of your work deals with the concept of accelerating change—the belief that technological development happens at a constantly increasing rate. Do you believe in it?

NK: Yeah. We are skeptical believers, or are at least interested in the idea. Most of the people that talk about that put it in a positive light, but we are more in between. I just read a book by [Stanislaw] Lem, where he's writing as an [artificially intelligent being] lamenting the evolution of life. He says, "You think of algae as simpler than an eagle, but algae turns the flow of cosmic energy directly into life, it feeds on a star. What does an eagle feed on? Like a parasite on mice who feed on roots, a land variety of algae."

How tech-savvy are you?

Daniel Keller: We'll spend a lot of time researching emerging technologies and somewhat obscure industrial processes on the internet. But our computer skills are only

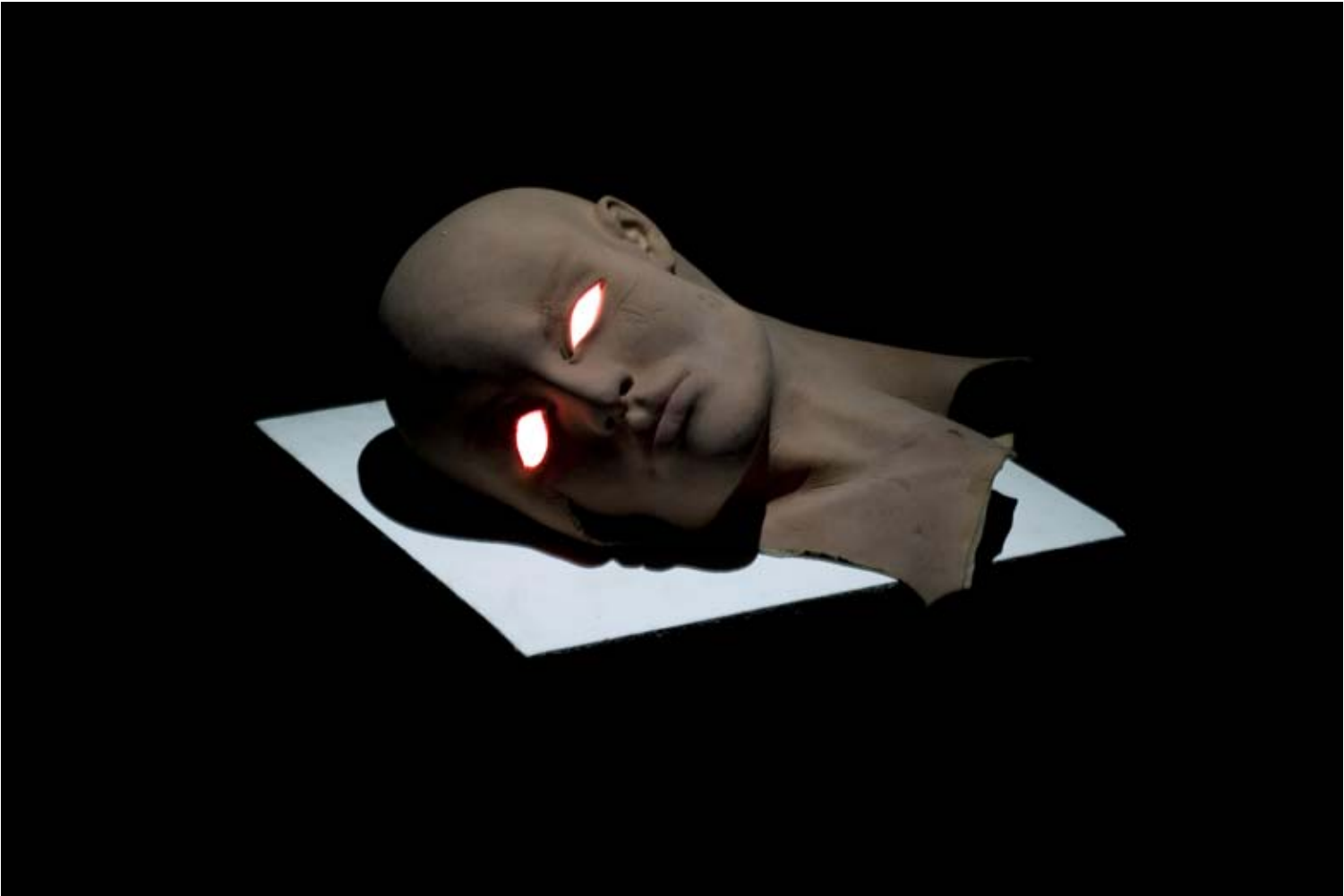
about average for people around our age... some basic understanding of image, sound, video, and 3D software; mastery of none.

I hear that you don't like to explain the name AIDS-3D. Any particular reason?

NK: That's not true! We have a perfect explanation. Dan's mom is a branding consultant and she used a proprietary algorithm to generate the name based on our mutual interests in state-of-the-art technology and social activism.

What was it like having your "OMG Obelisk" included in the Younger Than Jesus exhibition at the New Museum in NYC? Did you feel that the piece fit in with the rest of the show?

DK: We were very happy to be selected, and I see how in a pretty literal way it fit the concept of the show very well. That being said, we weren't totally satisfied with the reproduction of our original makeshift crappy version. But



I guess it was a good lesson on the importance of craft—or lack thereof. They did exactly what they said they would with the piece. It's just that the original was so random and then the re-do felt a bit dry, but it's more our lack of instruction than any fault of the installation team. There's a special skill to being an artist who works more like a production director, and it's something that we still haven't become completely comfortable with. At some point we realized that we can't build things to our own standards of perfection. And it's not always easy to find ways to keep the soul in the work.

When and how did you guys make your video piece "Heat Death"?

NK: We made it with help from a museum called FACT in Liverpool. It's a dark, dusty office cubicle with a computer that has the classic star-field screensaver. The idea behind it that we put online is: Automated Mission Report: 3rd Planet of the System Sol.

Opposite:
OMG Obelisk, 2007

Above:
Discarded Mask, 2007



Above (from left):
Teen Atlantis Cyber Chat, 2008
Laser Grid, 2008



Opposite:
Berserker, 2009

System Scan initiated: Faint signals of electronic activity....No sign of sentient life... Humanity is wiped out in the near future and this crappy screensaver is the closest we get to creating the "Omega Point" simulator/ computer. The Universe expands forever and slowly converts all energy into cold, dead matter, no information is stored—Heat Death. It was part of a show called *Speculations on Cosmic Culture*, which we had in Berlin at a now-defunct space called Montgomery. It was work that discussed ideas around cosmic evolution and accelerating change. I think these are subjects that we are going to be coming back to over and over again, because they feel so, well, universal.

It made me think about how much desk jobs suck. Have either of you ever had a 9-5 office job?

DK: I once had a 9-5 internship at the Chicago Historical Society as a digital archivist, which was pretty fascinating. But other than that, we haven't had normal jobs since before we went to art school.

How do your families feel about the work you make?

NK: They are very supportive. We are following in their footsteps, in many ways. They are all involved in advertising in some way or another, and at least two of them had artistic aspirations, but they had to use those skills to sell stuff so they could feed and clothe us. So we're sort of part two of a multi-generational project to breed some professional artists. DK: I think for the most part they are very proud of us. There were a few issues where they thought we might be making things too alienating, but overall I think they trust our judgment.

Your piece "Alpha" asks that the collector who owns it keep \$25,000 in a US bank account, and the piece of wood will trade stocks, thus "growing" even after it is dead. Has someone bought it, and are your intentions being carried out as you've stipulated?

NK: It's a smart piece of Thai driftwood which automatically day-trades stocks and futures, as long as it has an internet connection. It's not sold now, so it hasn't had the chance to really

win or lose using more than a test account. We're going to be re-releasing the work with a custom algorithm. Right now it just subscribes to a Collective2 feed, which is a platform for people to share and sell monthly subscriptions to algorithmic trading platforms, which are the programs that issue the 'buy' and 'sell' signals.

The "Berserker" sculpture, a Styrofoam alien head on a classical-looking human body holding a USB stick with an image of the sculpture on it, begs viewers to think about the piece in terms of reproduction. How do you guys feel about copyright issues in relation to your work?

NK: We're not really concerned... the MP3s and JPGs are certainly free for the taking, and if people start making counterfeit sculptures, we'd be honored.

Is there any medium you guys haven't worked in that you'd like to try out?

NK: Genetic engineering custom plant strains, more robotics, more algorithmic things that aren't gimmicky, controlling animals or their cells with electrodes and/or chemicals in a safe and humane way.



OUTBOX:
UNDERWORLD

Even if you're talking to someone completely unaware of electronic music and its history, mentioning the name Underworld is likely to garner a look of recognition. Thanks to its storied, 30-year musical career and notable involvement with filmmaker Danny Boyle, who basically broke Underworld internationally through his use of "Born Slippy .N.UXX" in *Trainspotting*, Karl Hyde's and Rick Smith's pioneering outfit is as close to a household name as respectable electronic artists are likely to get. Now on the eve of Underworld's eighth full-length album, *Barking*, we've taken Hyde aside to get the scoop on what's kept his Essex, UK-based band ticking for more than three decades, and discover what old bands of his and Smith's might reunite if they lose their minds. *Patric Fallon*

XLR8R: Name three of your favorite bands from when you and Rick first met.
Karl Hyde: Kraftwerk, Bob Marley, and Gyorgy Ligeti.

Your live performances are world renowned. What have some of your favorites been over the years?
New York Giants Stadium, Rainbow 2000 (la rave) in the mid-'90s) on Mount Fuji in Japan, Glasgow Barrowlands in Scotland, Megga Dog in London (1990), Borealis in the Roman Amphitheatre in Nimes, Cream in Argentina, Glastonbury in the UK, the Lowlands Festival in Holland, I Love Techno in Belgium, Cocoon Club in Frankfurt, Germany, an impromptu performance in the Blue Mountains in Australia, The Fillmore in Denver, Colorado, and Hyde Park in London.

Were you ever asked to contribute to any of the Underworld movies?
Strangely, no.

Follow up: If you did give them any music, name two songs you'd put on the soundtrack.
Note to self: Always leave that kind of decision up to the director.

What's your design house/art collective, Tomato, been up to lately?
Making brilliant TV commercials, installations in Japan, art exhibitions around the world, publishing books, and creating films to accompany all of the tracks on the *Barking* album.

What three things were most important in keeping Underworld alive and kicking for more than 30 years?
Not dying, being inspired by one another to want to work together, and [my] stopping drinking.



What did you guys do between making *Oblivion* with Bells and your new record, *Barking*?
We toured the world, performing live for three years, during which time we wrote and developed new material in front of live crowds, who helped us create the sound and basis for the new album. [We] pulled off the road at the end of November 2009 to be in the studios and finish *Barking*.

Which of the co-producers on *Barking* was your favorite to work with?
All of them. (Did you think I was going to say anything different?)

Which is worse, Underworld's bark or bite?
Its snore.

What was the hardest part of working with Danny Boyle on *Sunshine*?
Stopping working with him when the score was completed.

Your latest single, "Scribble," is written from parts of an unreleased track, "You Do Scribble." What parts do the two songs share?
We're going to release a special edition of all the versions of the tracks that were sent out to our fellow producers. It's something we've wanted to do for years, and will give our fans the opportunity to hear how the tracks developed,

what parts they share with the originals, and the journey they were taken on.

Any plans for a Screen Gemz or Freur revival?
Only if we become clinically insane.

What's one of the worst things Underworld's ever been called?
Geoff.

And the best?
Kevin.

If you had to switch out "Born Slippy .N.UXX" for any other of your tracks, which would you want to hear in *Trainspotting*?
The other track of ours that's in *Trainspotting*: "Dark Train." It's in the cold-turkey, train-wallpaper, baby-crawling-on-the-ceiling scene.

Barking is out September 14 on Cooking Vinyl/
Om. underworldlive.com

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