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ELECTRONIC CULTURE
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Editor
Walt Miller

Deputy Editor
Clarence Gelwicks

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CONTRIBUTORS:

Rod Miller, Timothy M. Wlasiwski, Eric
Rabenold, Delliiah, Mike D, DJ Spurz, Mike
Benner, Clarence Gelwicks, Jeno Laszlo,
Junebug, FBUI, Chad M. Dravik, DJ Facknult,
Rene Passet, Mark Kolmar

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Dear Fact,

I'm flattered that you've offered to interview me for the upcoming issue,
as well as organize and release a tribute album in my honor.
Unfortunately, I'm way to big to appear in your puffy little magazine.

XOXOXOXO

Christina

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Michelle Anderson, Nick & Adam at Blue Room America, Stuart at City Of Angels, Frank at Motormouth Media, Barbi at Deluxe Media, Alison at Astralwerks, Amy at Island, Pam and Brendan at Circle Motion, Lynn, April and
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Howard at Thrill Jockey, the artists we interviewed this ish, the locals scenesters, our writers and all of our readers, and those we forgot. If you need a new computer: www.tlcsystems.net

FAQT

FAQT Magazine
P.O. Box 685
York, PA 17405

mindfield@compuserve.com
www.mindfield.net
fax 717 / 246-2649

"Pulling Tigerboys."

You hold in your hand the Christina Ricci issue of FAQT Magazine. If you're lucky, you bought this issue with a copy of "Ricci's Pieces" a tribute album of sorts to our lovely indie queen and rising star. If there was no disc inside this package, you either bought this cheap or you got ripped off. Don't fret. We still might have a few copies left - so get in touch. You can order a CD directly from us, but it's going to cost you 10 bucks.

"Ricci's Pieces" turned out wonderfully. I must thank all of the artists who sent in tracks, and apologize to those who didn't make it on. You'll find the music here more than just pure novelty. It's excellent stuff, and we're proud to be a part of it. The line up is amazing:

VVM, Tranquil, Burning Rome, Cex, Electric Company, David Kristian, Puppy, Precenphix, Lesser, Mourning Cloak, TM & The Schoolgirlz, Oxbow, Cathars, KK Null and Kid 606. Whew! There are also five bonus MP3 tracks. If you are one of the few to get a hold of this disc, count yourself lucky!

Naming the "Ricci's Pieces" compilation was quite a chore unto itself. If you remember, last issue we staged a Name The Christina Ricci Compilation where we gave you several options to choose from, or a blank space to write in a vote. The winner is now clear, but we wanted to give you a breakdown of the voting.

- 34% - "Ricci's Pieces"
- 20% - "The Other White Meat"
- 19% - "Lovin' Them Mammaries" (write in vote)
- 4% - "Ricci For The Stars"
- 2% - "The Stupidist Tribute Ever Made"
- 1% - "Stalking Ms. Ricci"
- .05% - "That Darn Compilation"
- .05% - "You guys are idiots for doing this"

Employee Of The Month



Jeez, what does it take to get a crummy interview? We dedicate an issue to Christina Ricci, organize and press a CD compilation dedicated to her, and what do we have to show for our adoration? A big fat blow off from her publicist. We bet Natalie Portman wouldn't have treated us so shabbily.

PMK Publicity

driven. Even politicians have do be more than just politicians. Everyone loves a good celebrity and we're no different.

Because of our concept for the issue, we thought we might be a shoo in to talk to Ms. Ricci and we reserved space for it. Now, since it's clear we will get no interview, we have no choice but to take matters into our own hands and fill

the reasons we've done what we've done, but the pure absurdity of doing it was reason enough. The times we live in are celebrity

the empty space in with our own



Christina Ricci flavored articles. We take no responsibility for our actions, and we hope the CR camp finds what we've come up with satisfactory.

Hungarian avant-garde musician
Laszlo Hortobagyi

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What's in a forehead?



It may seem strange but the forehead is the most identifying feature on a human face, next to the eyes. Don't believe? We'll give the first person who can't identify at least three of the four people up above - using just the forehead as a clue - a copy of the movie "That Darn Cat" (taped off of cable via an illegal converter) signed personally by the FAQT interns. Just send in the form below, marking the appropriate number in the spaces provided. Blank entry forms will be burned into ash and promptly snorted.

- A. Herman Munster _____
- B. Christina Ricci _____
- C. Darth Maul _____
- D. Gorbachev _____

Send your form to:

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PLAY THE FOREHEAD GAME, WIN A PRIZE!

What is your favorite Christina Ricci film... and why?

Mark Clifford (Woodenspoon/Disjecta): Oooh, hum, "Buffalo 66" I guess. Just because Ms. Ricci looks like a startled robin throughout and she just plays the role with so little fuss or pretention. And it's just a cool film.

Yuka Honda of Cibo Matto: The Opposite Of Sex. It was kind of very controversial one where she gets pregnant. It was pretty bitching. I had a great time.

Unit: Buffalo 66. Because she tap dances in a bowling alley. It was just so random. That guy that wrote and starred in that movie was so ugly but she's got great tits. I'm gonna go get some cheerios and a hot dog.

Sarah Cracknell / St. Etienne: Buffalo 66. It was brilliant. I loved it. I'm not great on action packed films. I sort of like them to be about people and situations... quite linear.

Joey Beltram: Isn't that the Addams Family girl? I'm not really familiar with her stuff other than the Addams Family.

Nobukazu Takemura: I don't watch the movies at all, so I don't know this question.

MAF from the Rephlex label: Dont think I have seen any with her in it. Cant say I'm bothered.

Holger Czukay: I don't know her.

James of V/VM: Haven't seen any movies with Christina in, saw a picture of her in a magazine once and she looked better than any of the girls who work in my local butchers. So if she's struggling for work there's always a space behind the counter for her to sell liver and tripe in an edgeley butchers shop, she can call me anytime and I'll hook her up.

KK Null: Honestly, I've never seen any films where she's playing!! I intended to watch "Buffalo '66" but you have to wait on the line for 2-3 hours, which is ridiculous I think, so I haven't seen it yet. Is this a problem?????

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GEAR TALK

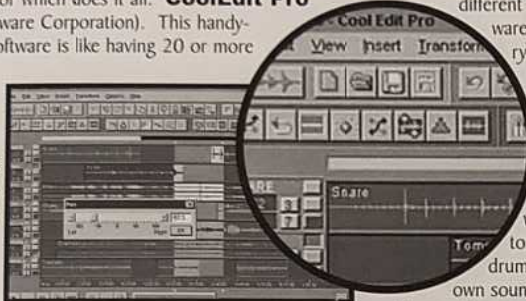
Software Part 2 by Ben Rabenold (preceptiv)

Leaving off from the last Gear Talk column, I would like to further discuss the use of PC software in the home studio. I am a firm believer that the Mac is an inferior computer, but that is just my personal opinion. Seeing as I have never used any Mac software to compose, edit or mix my own music, I will be speaking strictly from the PC vantage point.

As stated in the last column, memory and RAM are key elements to having your studio run smoothly. I tend to deal mostly in wav files rather than using MIDI. These will take up a tremendous amount of memory in a hurry. I have already run into trouble with 3 gigs of memory, which is a hell of a lot for most people. Make sure you've got at least this much if you plan on keeping your tracks/ noodlings in sound on your hard disk.

The first and most important piece of software an electronic musician will need is a good wav editor. In all my days of slicing, splicing and editing samples and loops, there is one omnipotent editor which does it all: **CoolEdit Pro**

(Syntrillium Software Corporation). This handy-dandy gem of software is like having 20 or more rack components all wrapped up in one tight little package. Loads of effects, multi-tracking capabilities (with or w/out a full duplex sound card), and a generally user-friendly interface make this wav editor/sequencer the best on the market. CoolEdit Pro allows a user to mix as



many channels of stereo or mono information as the PC can handle without glitches. Forget shelling out for that gargantuan 64-track sound board you just had to have...this 12MB or so program pisses over anything you're going to find at a small fraction of the cost. The latest shareware version of this program can be downloaded from www.syntrillium.com. I highly recommend you grab it and start tinkering.

Another program which I have found more than useful is **Fruityloops Pro** (www.fruityloops.com). This independently written program is a sequencer, drum machine, TB303-like synthesizer, and sampler all in one. Used mostly to create drum loops with perfect time, a user can assign different sounds to different channels - for instance: a kick drum, a snare plus open and closed hi-hats which cut each other off like a real drum kit. Using a step-sequencer interface much like the TB303, sounds are triggered where the user programs them to go off (like a drum machine). Once satisfied with the sequence, the user can then export the full loop to a wav file. For even more complex fun, the wav loop can then be plugged back into Fruityloops Pro and sequenced in different ways. This is a dream-come-true piece of software for programming complex drum 'n bass rhythms.



Well, that's all for this time. Next time around, perhaps I'll get more in-depth with these two programs and a myriad of others. In the mean time, download these two programs and get loose! You don't have to be a musical genius to play around. And if you're worried about having enough (or any) samples to play with, Fruityloops comes with a nifty little drumsynth program which allows you to create your own sounds, as well as a good bit of pre-sets. Don't like the way they sound? Edit 'em to your liking in CoolEdit Pro! Phase, flange, delay and reverberate to your heart's content! Preek, out.

Because you demanded it

The Ricci Interview

[groggy voice] Hello?
Hello. Is Christina there?
 Huh? Uhhh...No. There's no Christina that lives here. You've got the wrong...
My name is Laszlo Hortobagyi from the Associated Press and I'm doing a piece for a wire report. If you choose to participate, I'll need your full name for identification.
 [annoyed] Are you hearing me? I just told you, there's no one here by the name of Christi...
Your name sir. I'll need it for quoting purposes. This piece will be read all over the world. I need your name before we proceed...
 What the...? [sighs] Mark. Ricci.
Thank you. Now, how long have you been related to Christina?
 [moves receiver away from mouth, curses] I don't know anyone named Christina. I don't know anyone by that name, Laz-bo or whatever your name is.
It's Laszlo. So, you deny being of relation to Christina...
 [laughs loud and bitterly] Yes, I deny it. What's this all about...
You claim to not know anyone named Christina. Are you unfamiliar with the actress Christina Ricci?

Oh, I get it now. That's good. Real good.
Can you answer the question, sir? Do you know of Christina Ricci?
 Yeah, the Addams Family girl. So what? I'm not related to her, I don't know anyone related to her and I'm beginning to think you're an asshole.
So you do finally admit to knowing someone named Christina. Thank you, now we can get...
 Look. I'm hanging up. You aren't funny. Got it? I'm onto you.
 [chuckles] Go call someone else. Waste someone else's time.
Are you aware that Christina Ricci will be playing a bomb loving fanatic in her upcoming film, Desert Blue?
 [emphatically] No, and I don't really give a damn...
So you don't care about the fact that millions of kids will see this movie and emulate her? Don't you care about the kids? Don't you care about what happened in Colombine? This is what's wrong with America. This apathy. We need to learn from Colombine...
 [raises voice] I don't give a SHIT. Do you understand? Screw Colombine and screw your stupid ass questions!

You sorry redneck. I should come over and make you my bitch.
 [...long pause...heavy breathing]
 Just come and try. If yer a man you'll come to my house and try that one...
I'd better not come over. I'm pretty sure I'd waste you.
 [frothing at the mouth] Bring it on, BRING IT ON, MAN... I'm waiting! I'm going out to my yard right now to wait for your sorry ass! Come on over, my friend! Be a ma-a-a-an! I'll be RIGHT HERE!
You're silly. I don't know how I thought a silly inbred redneck like you could be related to Christina.
 [begging hysterically] Come over! Oh pleaseee come o v e r! I'll show you who's silly. Please come over. Please? I'll show you who's silly, you pussy!
[sing song voice] Mark's a silly r-e-dneck. Mark's a silly r-e-dneck. Mark's a -
 [hoarse screaming - excessive cursing]
-ly r-e-dneck. Mark's a sil-ly r-e-dneck. Mark's a sil-ly...
 [scud of someone trying to hang up the phone and missing - sound of phone hitting the floor]
[loudly] ...R-E-DNECK. MARK'S A SIL-LY R-E-DNECK. MARK'S A SIL-LY R-E-DNECK. MARK'S A...
 [loud shuffling noises] - CLICK! -

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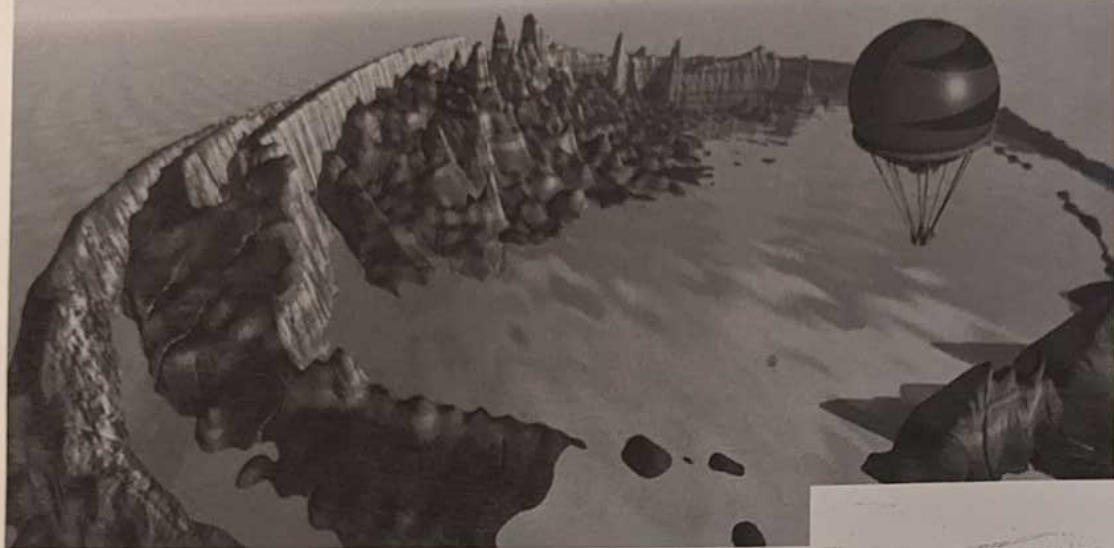
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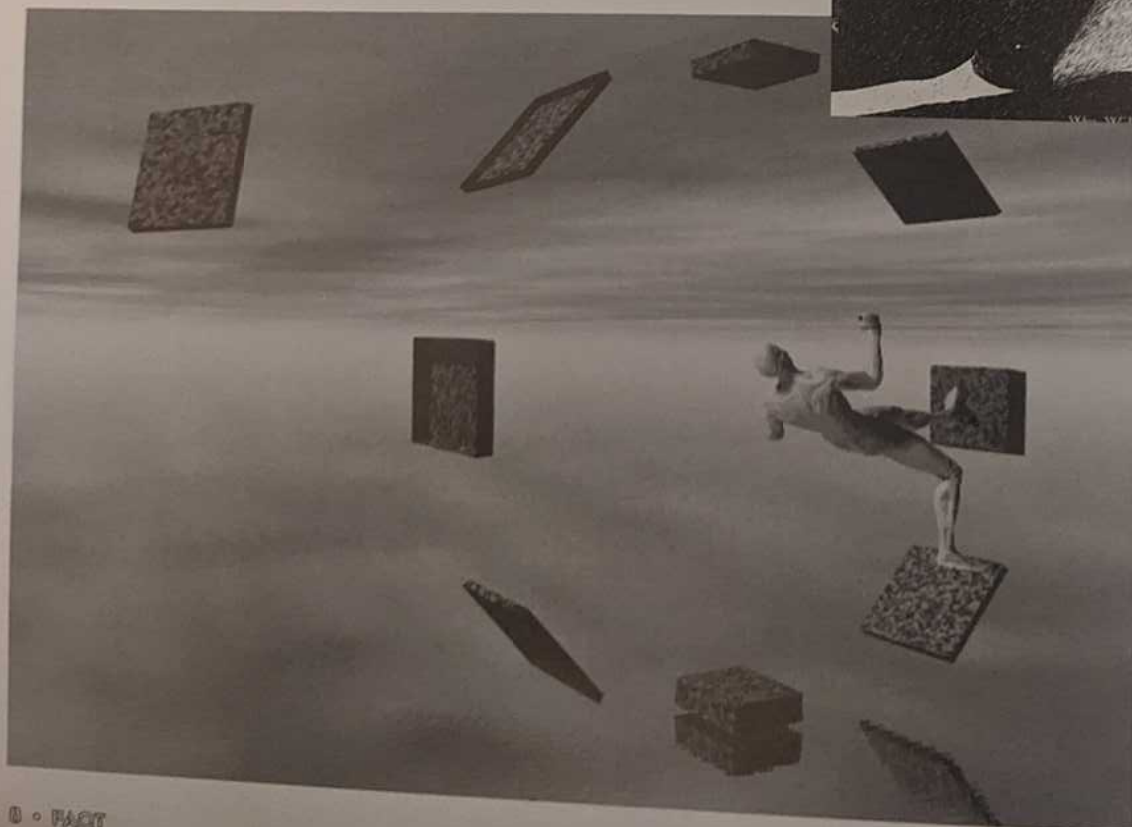
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C.R.A.M. saved my career - Rose McGowan

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A true multimedia artist will encompass many areas of their field. Bill Thompson fits that description. From pottery to jewelry to computer illustrations, he renders fine art for the next millenium.

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"Every artist I have known has appreciated the addition of a new brush to his or her collection of tools. This is how I see the computer. This particular tool has become one of the most versatile in my collection. It plays a supporting role when designing jewelry, pottery or sculpture, and has become my tool of choice when creating two-dimensional art. Beyond its versatility, I find it mind-expanding. The medium itself adds perspective to my work both figuratively and literally.

The opportunity to create in three dimensions, within the computer, in order to produce final works in the two-dimensions opens the door to a more complete understanding of the subject matter and at the same time frees me from the limitations of any particular reality. My brush strokes have become wider, bolder and more diverse. I can think of no better compliment to something as simple as a brush."

-Bill Thompson



At age 12, Joey Beltram had turntables. At 17, he'd recorded his first 12" single. And not so long after that, Joey became an in-demand international DJ and recording star with the help of a little ditty called "Energy Flash". Yes, it was that simple. No, really. This could be you. On the heels of his latest mixed comp "Joey Beltram: The Sound Of 2 AM" (on Moonshine), Mr. JB allowed us to inquire about his amazing path to the top of techno's cherry pile.

How did you get into DJing?

Right when I started junior high school, a friend of mine introduced me to it. He had turntables at his house, and I didn't know anything about DJing. He showed me his little set up, and I was like really impressed. He gave me a demonstration and it sounded awesome to me. I was like, "Yo. This is something I have to get into."

What type of records were you spinning early on?

Sugar Hill Gang, Fat Boys and Kurtis Blow. It had more of a 120 beat range. More like electro, which I was into for about a year.

By '85 I was totally into house music. I got into it instantaneously when Tony Humphreys started going on the radio. He'd play a lot of old disco records too. I wasn't even introduced to techno or any of that stuff until after I was already making records, by traveling. I didn't even know there was a Detroit scene, cause in New York all we were getting was the house stuff. From '85, house just came in and took over. It was like that and latin freestyle, and I had no ear for that stuff. It didn't impress me at all. I was just a house head at that time.

You made techno records without knowing what techno was.

What I was told later on, when I met alot of my teenage [house] heroes, was that they were into disco when they were teenagers and they were trying to recreate disco which was like a band - a lot of these disco records were made with like 7 or 8 [members] and sometimes orchestras doing the string parts. And they were doing it with electronic music - with a 909 and two keyboards. They were trying to recreate the disco feel. That became like house music. To me, when I heard the final package, it just sounded like some new kind of crazy electronic stuff. But it was house music. It wasn't techno. And I just tried to make my own groove with that. But then house evolved into more song oriented stuff - it became almost like R&B. And I kind of got side tracked. I never followed it that far through. When it just stayed kind of instrumental, dark and dub sounding, I got off the train at that stop and went on my own. When a lot of the early techno records came out, I wasn't really into that stuff. The Detroit thing - they went in their own direction. When I started making my own records, I kind of got lumped into that techno category because people didn't know what to make of it. There was no category that I fit nicely into. They were just like, 'Well, it's weird, and anything weird is techno.' So, he's a techno guy because it's kind of aggressive sounding. And I was never really happy with that because techno was this whole Detroit thing. I'm from New York. I didn't even know anything about techno. "What the hell's techno?"

Did you identify more with Europe.

Not really. I was making records in New York, and I was selling a lot of records in Europe. I didn't know nothing about what was going on over there, too

SO BRIGHT SO STRONG

An interview with Joey Beltram.
By Delilah

much. This was around '89 or '90. And then when "Energy Flash" came out, it just blew up so big over there. And that was one of the first records that started to gain popularity here in New York - and in Europe. At that point, I stopped doing records for New York. I was just like, 'Screw this. I'm making music here just to sell in the European market.' So R&S contacted me and I started doing stuff directly for them. They were licensing all my stuff. Everything I put out in New York, R&S would license and then I'd have to share money with the New York labels and they weren't even doing any of the work. They were only selling like 1000 or 2000 copies of these records, and R&S would license them and do like 20,000. And these companies would still get a chunk of that. I said 'Fuck that.' I started doing stuff directly with R&S, and everything just sort of blew up. "Energy Flash" was the first record I released strictly as an import and it just sold in the first year alone like 50,000 copies, and in the second year almost 100,000. And I put out "Mentasm" which did even more than that.

When did your success as an international DJ come along?

Around the same time I started [selling a lot of records, I started] getting offers. People were like, "Do you play live? Do you do this, do you do that?" And I'm like, "Well, I'm a DJ." Noone ever wanted to give me the time of day in New York because I was just a kid from Queens, and nothing set me apart. I thought I was a great DJ, but I guess good DJs were a dime a dozen back then. You needed something else. It's not what you know, it's who you know, and I didn't know nobody. I didn't have friends in the scene already, I didn't have connections. I guess talent doesn't mean anything. But once people started buying my records, and I started getting a wide audience, then everybody wanted to book me. And I was just like, "Whatever.", you know? I picked and chose my parties carefully, and I still do that today. I turn down probably more than I take.

Can you describe your evolution from the early '90s? Have you changed much in your style or taste?

Well, my taste... I mean obviously music has evolved a lot since then. That's been over ten years since I started, but my goals always the same. I'm always just trying to do cutting edge dance music, trying to be somewhat innovative. I usually don't jump on trains too much. When people hear a record from me, I just want them to say, 'I'm hearing something new.'

Every time I make a record, I just try to do what I think is the bomb, you know? And I don't put out a lot of records. I only put out maybe one or two records a year. Because I do a lot of stuff, but I only put out what I think is the best of what I do. A lot of producers put out everything they do. 'Oh, I did a track, I'll put it out on this label. I did something two weeks ago, I'll put it out on that label.' They put everything out, and 90 percent of it's shit because they just follow the formula. With me, I just put out what I think is innovative and that's it. Whatever else, I'll make dub plates and I'll play it out. And people will come up to me and say, 'Hey, what's that thing you played?' and I'll say, 'Oh, it's just something I made.', and they're like, 'Oh, you should put that out!' But if it doesn't pass my standard then I won't put it out. Everything I do has to have longevity. Records I made like 3 or 4 years ago, I still hear people playing them. Records I made 6 or 7 years ago, I still hear people playing them. I'm just going for longevity. Something that doesn't have samples, that's going to date. I try not to put little corny bits, or jump on trends.

What do you think of the crowds these days? Do you feel they're more educated?

Not really, because every time I go to a party I see a lot of young faces. When I play out now, the audience that I'm playing to - when I started making music they were probably 8 years old so they don't remember nothing. They might know something of this or that. But I don't think they care, and rightfully so, because when I was

HELLO MY NAME IS... UNIT

Newly signed to *Caipirinha*, Mr. S. Pants is the man behind Unit whose surprising album, "The Narcoleptic Symphony" might just be the best thing Lara Lee and crew have put out. The backbone of Unit's output is comprised of lush, melodic soul-cushions of warm chiller - a comforting, bittersweet fabric that sometimes glides and envelopes like *Global.Com* or *MMM* on a good day. (a retro-ambient sound? possibly...) A hipster rhythm n' grit that is very remotely *AE/Apex* (sprinkled at times with curious and appealing *electro/d&b* leanings) gives Unit its thrust. Electronic rhythm and melody... sounds like something strangely familiar, but don't fret. Unit never comes across as a cheap imitator.

by Walt Miller

How did you get into making electronic music? What is your background?

A friend whose father was a musician had this studio in disuse in the garage at his house. We started sifting through all sorts of junk out there and uncovered all these great analog keyboards and stuff. Things were plugged in, knobs twisted, buttons pushed and levers levered. The sounds coming out of these things were just fucking off the wall. I think that was the moment that I decided that this was definitely for me. The next day I bought a little drum machine (which I still have and use a great deal for its sounds) which seemed like the perfect place to start because I've always loved beats. That was about 8 years ago. I suppose it's just been an evolution since.

How did you get the deal with Caipirinha?

The way I got hooked up with *caipirinha* was totally roundabout. They were putting together their film "Modulations" at the time and my friend, *Friend 1*, knew someone named *Friend 2* who was working there and who asked *Friend 1* to do some design work for them on the movie promotion (I'm a designer in real life). *Friend 1* was too busy so he hooked *Friend 2* up with me. *Friend 2* told me that they also had a record label and gave me some stuff to listen to. I put it on and realized that it was totally my thing. I mentioned to *Friend 2* that I wrote music and she offered to pass some material on to the label people. Guess they liked it.

Who are some influences on your sound, and current faves?

"Peter and the Wolf". The sound of "Peter and the Wolf" still floats through my head today as if I listened to it 5 minutes ago. Classical music, to me, contains more strength in emotion and vibrance than anything else. That and the lushness of film soundtracks (especially *Vangelis*) influences the melodies I write a great deal. There are the

obvious suspects of course that influence me as well who I won't mention, but you can certainly pick out who they are just by listening I think. I'd like people to make opinions for themselves you know?

My current faves...lets see. well...whats in my cd player right now? Lets go see shall we? *Meatbeat Manifesto*, *Days of the New*, *Reload*, *Miles Davis*, *Nailbomb*. So not what one would think I guess but I think the best way to really write something fresh and interesting is to listen to everything you can get your hands on. I pick my favorite music not by genre so much as by production quality. A well produced record in any category can wrap itself around your head to an amazing degree. Ever though I cant stand country music there are some country records out there even that are fucking wicked sounding.

Was it a concern not to sound like Apex Twin or Autechre?

Yes. It is something I consciously worked at. When I started listening to those two artists in particular I really wanted to know how they did what they did. So I learned a version of the techniques they used, or the techniques I perceived them using. I think it's really helpful to know how to get a certain sound because then you can really know how much of that sound you want to add to your own material. And also how much of it you don't. Then throw it all away and try something completely new. Later on you start adding the two together and come up with your own thing. As I went along I added all sorts of new elements that were unrelated in any way to any artist in particular. I think that's how you get your own sound. It's about building on what you like, taking this and that from here and there and making something new out of it.

It's about what feels right to whoever's writing the music and fuck everyone else because there'll be people who like what you do regardless...as long as it really feels good to you. if it doesnt...it'll show.

Writing the perfect pop song is a difficult task. Reaching the lowest common denominator of mainstream culture is one thing - step one, turn on radio, step two, copy what you hear. - , but making infectious pop with integrity, all while avoiding cliché and high-brow masturbation... that's a tall order. But the trio called St. Etienne (vocalist Sarah Cracknell, producers Pete Wiggs and Bob Stanley) have done it, not only once, but repeatedly over the course of 4 albums, the latest being last year's "Good Humor". "Good Humor" was something of an anomaly for them, as it embraced live instrumentation more than their traditionally electronic, UK club sound. It turned out to be a great move, since the album was top notch and they'd proven mastery in another level of song writing. Now it's back to the roots. In between recording a new album in Berlin with the latest in kraut rock superstars, Ms. Cracknell put her lovely voice to good use to talk to me about the past and future of St. Etienne.

Well, the people there are really supportive, and they're all music lovers. They've been brilliant. I can't fault them, they've been wonderful. Because, before that we were on a big label [Warner Bros] and we just seemed to get lost in the quagmire. They weren't bad for us, they were just.... I don't think they understand what we were doing. It's much better being on a smaller label. They understand what we're trying to do.

How has "Good Humor" been doing in America?

Good, I think. Better than we imagined.

You guys are more of a cult band over here, as opposed to a chart act. How's your success in the rest of the world? Is it more like America, or more like the UK?

It depends really from country to country. In Japan, we're written about alot. We get written about more than we sell, if you know what I mean. And then in some other countries, like Greece, we have a sort of chart success which is really wierd. We don't do interviews, but we have sort of hits there.

What's going on with you guys right now?

We've been really busy. We've been away in Berlin a lot. We're recording our next album, and we're doing the early part of it in Berlin.

Is it going to have a similar direction as "Good Humor"?

Um... not as organic as "Good Humor". It's going to have more electronic stuff on it. More of a combination really.

What made you approach "Good Humor" the way you did?

It was something we hadn't done

before really - working purely with live instruments. And since we had not done an album proper for a long time, we wanted to do something different.

Do you still feel strong ties to the electronic scene?

Yeah, the people we've been working with on this album - have you heard To Rococo Rot? - they have a brilliant album out, whose name escapes me all of a sudden. [probably "The Amateur View"] But they're very, very good. Really melodic. They're not like Kreidler or anything like that, although one of them used to be in Kreidler. We've been working with them on the early stages of the album, and then we're going to add strings and vibes and guitars and stuff like that, and mix it and do vocals and things here. It really ought to be finished in the autumn, and we might try and have a single out this year. And we'll put the album out next year.

How did you first get involved with Pete and Bob?

A lucky accident. I'd been in bands since I was about 15, in Windsor where I lived. I went to drama school for a year - cause I'd had enough of being in bands. I put records out myself, but never actually got a deal. Then I did a couple of records with a friend of mine on a techno label, and Bob and Pete were looking for a singer. They'd already had two different singers on "Only Love Can Break Your Heart" and "Kiss And Make Up", before I joined. And they were looking for a singer for "Nothing Can Stop Us".

and we met up through a mutual friend - actually Bob's girlfriend at the time. So I just went in and did the song, and we three got on really well.

You all just sort of clicked...

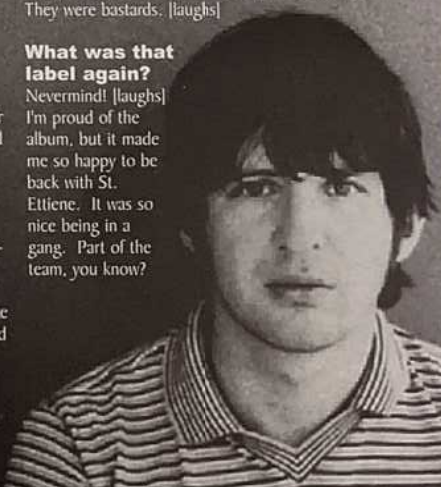
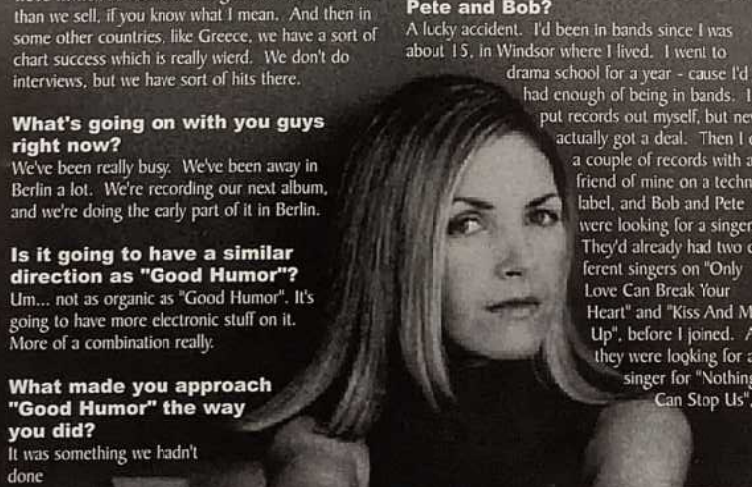
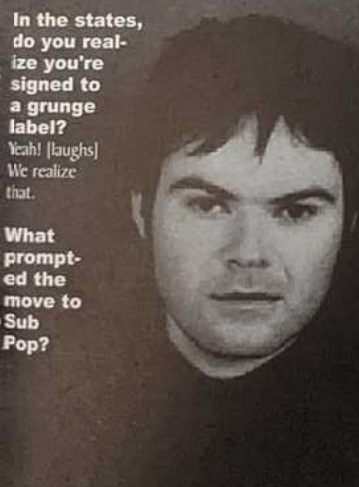
Yeah, their original plan was to have different singers on every single, but we did click - similar kind of upbringing, similar musical influences, similar tastes in film and clothes and, you know, the whole thing, just worked.

You put out a solo album a little while ago, during your tenure with St. Etienne. How was that experience?

Lonely. Very lonely. It was hard, the label I was going through made things quite difficult for me. Our relationship wasn't that great. They refused to release the second single and I fell out with them. And then they hardly put the album out. I mean, they put the album out but they didn't promote it. They were bastards. [laughs]

What was that label again?

Nevermind! [laughs] I'm proud of the album, but it made me so happy to be back with St. Etienne. It was so nice being in a gang. Part of the team, you know?



THE PERFECT POP

Sarah Cracknell of St. Etienne gives us the scoop. [by Delilah]

2 LONE SWORDSMEN

by Rene Passet

There are many reasons why the name Andrew Weatherall should ring bells, especially if you've followed the UK music scene of which he's pretty much a living legend for the 90's. His remix of Primal Scream's "Loaded" and subsequent production of "Screamadelica" brought him the spotlight and revitalized that band's career. As a part of label Junior Boys Own, as well as a member of Sabres Of Paradise (on Warp records), Weatherall helped tear up the UK top 40 with classic remixes and innovative sounds. And lastly, after Sabres split, he hung on with engineer Keith Tenniswood to form the Two Lone Swordsman, releasing an album and a series of singles on their own Emissions label before returning to Warp. What a career this man has had, and it doesn't look to slow down. The latest Two Lone Swordsman "Stay Down" is not only brilliant - it's been licensed by Matador and released in the states. How 'bout that? The following interview with Andy and Keith is reprinted with kind permission from friend Rene Passet and Forcefield, where it first appeared.

The album Stay Down sounds quite different from the recent Bag of Blue Sparks-ep, which focusses much more on electro.

Yeah. I would say it uses electro as a point of reference. The reason it sounds difference is because I like things to sound like a body of work, not just a random collection of tracks. If it has no real sound it has no real purpose. Even if that purpose is only to make loops, to make people dance. Even then it's gotta have some sort of purpose and some flow to it. So the tracks on the single work together, as do all the tracks that made it to the album. It was just a case of finding tracks that worked together, that made a constant piece of work.

The album tracks are seldom longer than three or four minutes

I wanted to keep the album really short. That was really important to me, once piece of vinyl. And I didn't want to edit the tracks that appeared on Blue Sparks. I quite liked them as they were. If they had gone on the album in that length of time we had to put it out as two bits of vinyl. So we decided to get the longer tracks together and balance that up with an album of shorter tracks. The album is probably not that much longer than the single.

Which is strange, because most dance-albums nowadays appear on two separate slices of vinyl.

Part of the reason for that is that you can cut the tracks much louder. But our album is not particularly aimed at the dancefloor, so it didn't have to be cut loud. I think though, that the man who cut our record (Frank) did an amazing job. To get that amount of tracks onto vinyl and still keep it sounding good. Ultimate respect to him.

Why Stay Down?

A few years ago I was talking with Andrew Innes, the guitarist of Primal Scream. We were talking about music and about how it became such a struggle and a fight. He just couldn't be bothered to argue anymore, he had enough. So he said to me: "Sometimes when you're in a fight it's best to stay down". That's almost three years ago now, and it stuck with me ever since. I never forgotten it. Nearly every day since some situation arose where I remembered what he said. It's got more than just one meaning too. Every feasible connotation of that phrase applies, wherever you want to take it.

Most tracks on the album sound very freeform, almost like they were



made underwater.

During the making of the album I was mainly influenced by library records, Italian B-movie soundtracks and early synthesizer records. Just basically anything that was funky and had early keyboards on top. A lot of those library records sound like the studio's have just invested in synthesizers. They're just jammin' away on those records. Most of the tracks on those albums are one or two minutes at the most. Those short records had a huge effect on me, more than longer records had. So that's why we decided that our album should be the same thing, one piece of vinyl with five or six tracks on the side. A short sharp shock. Just as you begin to work it out, it stops.

Unlike other artists, you stuck with the four/four beat for quite a long time.

The whole discussion about the four to the floor is entirely meaningless, if you ask me. Yeah. What's a four/four beat? It can mean so much, that term. There's boring ways to use any beat. OK, if you just use a kickdrum and non-imaginative percussion than yeah, you could talk about the fascism of the four to the floor beat, as they do in all the magazines. But if you use a four/four beat and hang some other crazy stuff over the top, percussionwise or otherwise, I don't find that fascistic at all. I find that equally creative as anyone doing drum 'n bass or any other programming form of music. Some of mister Tenniswood's drumprogramming takes my breath away.

Keith: We did not entirely drop the four/four. We did a straight-up technotrack for the Warp compilation album. And we have a lot of four/four tracks ready.

Andrew: But they did not fit the album. We did the housetracks pretty early on, when we set the studio up. And as we got on, the sound changed a little bit and only Red Light Stopping worked in the concept of the album. The other tracks are all strong tracks too and will appear some day. Basically I had to be ruthless, and not try to put out lots of stuff at once.

Hawaii, he buys everything! The man must be a music collector. Perhaps we will even set up a little production unit in the north and burn our own CDs or something. Where I live now is only 2 1/2 hours from London, but it's much cheaper there.

"I'm a lazy bastard" You once said in an interview.

"Yeah. I think I am. But Keith seems to think otherwise." Keith: "It's the way you look at it. He did a six-hour dj-set last week and was in the studio the following day, practising for his set that night. And Andrew is in the studio every day basically, working." Andrew: "I don't consider it work, what I do. So that's why I think I'm lazy. Compared to the proper jobs I had before it doesn't seem like hard work. It can be stressful but not like ordinary jobs."

What was one of your finest musical moments, if you look back on your musical career?

"My favorite was a B-side track I did with Primal Scream, called Carry Me Home. It's a Dennis Wilson song. He only did rough demo's for. I think he was doing it when he died. It's a beautiful song and Primal Cream really did justice to that song. We recorded it in Memphis. Another favorite is the Sabres-remix we did for Red Snapper. I still play it when I DJ, and it still works. Red Snapper even did a live version, based on that remix. I consider that a compliment. S-Express also did it."

And for you Keith?

"The remix we did for Sneaker Pimps, called Six Underground. And I also like the Sabres of Paradise-remix we did for Transglobal Underground."

Andrew, what was exactly your involvement with Junior Boys Own?

"To be honest with you, I really don't know myself, ha ha ha! I can't remember it. It was so bizarre at that time. We were just a bunch of blokes that lived in the west of London, and all of a sudden we've got record-companies throwing money at us. That started after people wrote about us and Junior Boys Own in magazines. I can't even remember what contracts I've signed and what my actual involvement was. It's that mad. Well, to be honest: I had a manager, I wasn't that stupid. But I never fully understood my involvement. Even today, when people try to explain it to me, I fail to understand it. I just snap out of it, until you hear 'twentyfour percent'. Then you suddenly yell, 'yeah!'. Basically I just stopped being Boys Own, one day and went somewhere else. No one seemed to bother. No one came up to me, waving with a contract. On the other hand, I might be owing half a million pounds! Originally I set up the label with Terry Farley, Simon Echol and a guy called Steve Mates. By the time I left there wasn't much going on. But then there came this guy who used to work at British Airways, called Steve Hall, who learned everything himself and signed a massive deal with Virgin Records, not so long ago. Which is really good, because he worked hard for it."

Originally Junior Boys Own was a fanzine, right?

"Yeah, yeah. We used to throw parties and publish a fanzine about them. That was it. It all went so quick. One month people told us to piss off with our stupid fanzine, but after a couple of issues acidhouse started to kick off. So we started writing about those acid houseclubs. From there it went very quick, the magazine exploded together with acidhouse. To the point people wanted to distribute it nationwide. We didn't understand that. There were jokes in the magazine, only understood by 200 people living in London. But people would buy it from everywhere. They didn't understand it but still thought it was funny. As soon as it got too big we all got nervous and stopped doing it. I don't have any copies of the magazine myself, which is a shame."

What's No Red Stopping about?

When we first started recording, at Keith's house, I lived in the other side of London. So I had to take a taxi back. And I kept sending a taxidriver that stopped at green lights and drove through red lights. It just reminds me of that time, driving back with that guy. Later I asked another taxidriver why his colleague did not stop at red lights. He turned out to be from Sarajevo, where you get shot by snipers if you stop at red lights.

[Is your label] Emissions... history?

Emissions is finished. It was run by a man who didn't know how to do business. Me. I was over ambitious in the early stage of my career. I did it once and didn't learn from it. So I made the same mistake. But it's all-right now, honestly. Maybe next year we will put some more records out. I the past I didn't put enough time in the label and consequently suffered musically and financially. It was time to stop. You can't do everything at once. People expect you to do work on their behalf, to make sure their records get to people. But I only had time once a week. It was a pity because I had bands like Conemelt, which are one of the most underestimated set of people making electronic music in England. I told them their music deserved more attention. There are no bands left on Emissions, except me. The last record that came out was by Keith, called Rude Sole.

You earlier said that it's very expensive to run a recordlabel.

Well, it's very expensive to run a recordlabel badly. That's what I did.

How will you run Emissions in the future then?

Without any overhead. So I will run it from home. Put out records sporadically and deal with everything myself or via my girlfriends office. She designs and maintains our website. We now sell a nice amount of records via the website. Not a lot, but people still buy stuff from years ago. There is this one guy from

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"Yeah, yeah. We used to throw parties and publish a fanzine about them. That was it. It all went so quick. One month people told us to piss off with our stupid fanzine, but after a couple of issues acidhouse started to kick off. So we started writing about those acid houseclubs. From there it went very quick, the magazine exploded together with acidhouse. To the point people wanted to distribute it nationwide. We didn't understand that. There were jokes in the magazine, only understood by 200 people living in London. But people would buy it from everywhere. They didn't understand it but still thought it was funny. As soon as it got too big we all got nervous and stopped doing it. I don't have any copies of the magazine myself, which is a shame."

How has Avant Hard been received so far?

I think the album has been received okay. We've got good reviews, and we've gotten a few shitty reviews, but it's always good to have shit reviews as well.

People are saying this one's more accessible, sounds more tuneful which is quite amusing. On the track we did, "The Machine Is Bored With Love" - when me a Barry did this thing on the mellotron, that whole thing that goes uh...dud...dududuh...dudududuhhhmm... It's all kind of gorgeous and very kind of melodic and breathing like a boys choir. But then we kind of twisted it. It's almost like an arial bombardment of noises. We open up a squelchy analog sound that comes in toward the end. A lot of people that listen to that would say "What have you done? That was a beautiful little tune and you've ruined it! You always

do this! You always have a nice song and then you ruin it!" And we're like, "Well that's the whole point!" <laughs> We wanted to put these two elements together, that shouldn't really go together, but see how they fit within that arena.

Me and Barry have this theory - you know the particle accelerator in Switzerland? - it's like we're throwing the Staukhausen particle in there, and the Black Sabbath, or Motorhead particle. And when these particles collide, you end up with a sort of mini big bang. You've got these opposing sonics, then you capture them on tape and put 'em on a fucking record. <laughs>

I heard that's your role in the band. To sort of screw everything up...

I try to, yeah. It depends. Sometimes, I might come up with something I think is really melodic, or Barry might, or Steve might. I think we all have that place in the way we work together. It's sometimes my job to put a filthy, horrible, girthy baseline over something, or it might be Barry's job to come up with a very kind of tuneful chord structure and then I would turn on one of the fucking machines and let it go randomly and try to obliterate what he's doing. It is

like having a sort of sonic fight, really. Not trying to completely destroy what the other person has done, but trying to juxtapose it with something. There's always that gray area - whether it does or doesn't work, when you're not quite sure. And that's what we're interested in. If it's not acceptable, why isn't it acceptable and why shouldn't it be? Let's do it anyway.

One of the curious things about Avant Hard is its rock & roll approach. Not just because of the live drumming, but because some of your synthetics mimic the raw quality of guitars at certain times.

I think that's what happens when we get a hold of a synthesizer - we turn it on and someone says, "Yeah, that's a brilliant noise.

PUNISH YOUR MACHINE

Ever since I saw the album cover of their debut, "On The Wires Of Our Nerves", (featuring Barry Smith and Steve Claydon in surgeon scrubs extracting a rather large analog keyboard from Ann Shenton's gaping gut) I knew this band was going to knock me out. Thier approach totally demolishes the traditional people-passively-pushing-buttons synth band aesthetic. Using an arsenal of antiquated, bulky, uncooperative gear - their first synth, they found in the trash! - Add N to X have interfaced with their machinery so well that their resulting sounds approach mad, noisy-yet-melodic post rock (it helps that they now use a live drummer), the antithesis of a sullen, perfectly-polished Depeche Mode. Ironically, the labelmates both started out using the same type of gear.

The band's latest, "Avant Hard", continues where their acclaimed debut left off - brash, ugly-beauty in the form of raw, in-your-face electronics. I was lucky to talk to Ann about the Add N To X mantra of s&m synthesis. Talking to her made me so avant hard, I was stuck in the bathroom for hours.



these wish fulfillment kind of objects where you wanna get preset numbers 1, 3, 5. I don't know. It seems like you're a sonic archeologist, and you're trying to find this sound and there's a million different variations. It's like a constant excavation, but it doesn't seem to bore you really. Other keyboards we've had - like we got a hold of a Nord - we had a go at it and we got rid of it after that week. Boring. We just love the hands on. Like you're in a sci fi film, and you're playing with these big dials trying to find out what's going to happen next.

It's interesting that you brought up the archeologist, analogy. It would seem to me that you approach music as more of a dominatrix...

<laughs> Now I feel like I'm wearing those thigh length, leather boots! I'm an archeologist, but instead of a shovel, I've got a fucking whip!

That's your next album cover. You can use it, don't worry about giving me credit.

I'll make a note of that.

In some of the reviews I've read,

Stereolab pops up quite a bit.

People have always put us in the same camp as Stereolab, but I think we have more in common with Iggy Pop. I love Stereolab, but I think it's too easy to put us in the same bracket. It's brilliant that we can steal their drummer every now and then. They've been quite tolerant with us using him now and then.

I thought that was wierd you decided to use a live drummer.

We used to use drum machines, but it seemed to have such a sterile... it almost seemed like you knew where the track was going before you even started it, unless you had someone there constantly changing the rhythms. [Drum machines] didn't seem to have much of a dynamic, or a personality - you

Add N To X - continued on page 34

Keep it! The beginning of "Metal Fingers In My Body" - it's an MS-20, but it actually sounds more like a wanky guitar. It really sounds guitarish, and the fact that it's not - it's a filthy, old, broken-down synthesizer... <laughs> I'm glad you said the rock and roll thing. We don't want to be in that bracket of a regular synthesizer group. All of it being kind of polite and being Man And Machine. We want our machines to be as schizophrenic and as sweaty and as rude as we are. And that's what I like about using all this analog stuff. That whole aesthetic of Man And Machine like Kraftwerk - we're not really into being. We're not kidding ourselves that we're as perfect as machines. We're not kidding ourselves that machines are ever going to be as sublime, or humorous or as stupid as humans.

You can put some of your personality on the machine. Barry might say that he can't

play my keyboards because mine smell funny! Thanks alot! And I say "I don't want you touching my fucking keyboards anyway!". I don't touch Barry's keyboards, he doesn't touch mine, I don't touch Steve's, vice-versa. It's almost like you're interfering with each other's lovers. One of Barry's keyboards is covered in dried blood. <laughs> When he gets overly excited on stage during a live performance, he comes off with a cut hand. The knobs come off and it leaves really sharp metal. And he forgets the knobs come off so when he's playing it, and getting all mental, he comes off with blood dripping down his arm.

You once told a journalist that your most intense relationship was with your Moog. Tongue in cheek, hopefully?

<laughs> No. It can create so much

Yakin' with Yuka of CIBO MATTO

by Wait Miller

Out of the blue in '96, Cibo Matto invaded America's hipster culture with cutesy, cut n' paste jams about birthday cakes and knowing your chicken. Who knew that "Vival La Woman!", combining Yuka's acumen for sampling with Miho's broken-english posturing would be recognized as a landmark, while getting rated by Time Magazine as one of the top 10 hip hop albums of all time.

Fast forward to 1999. After some time off with other projects, Cibo Matto is back with their sophomore album, "Stereotype A", a surprisingly mature effort that is much more traditional in sound and construction than the collage-hop of "Viva!". This latest album raises the stakes, showing off the duo's latent musicianship and doing a back flip that lands squarely on the solid ground of fine indie pop. Though they've changed things up a little, Cibo Matto is still the quirky, inventive twosome (make that foursome, with fellow sound crafters Sean Lennon and Timo Ellis in tow) that their fans have come to love.

I had a chance to talk to Yuka, and pick her brain about such things as the new album, producing her beau and appearing in Vampire TV shows. It was a lovely conversation.



Your songwriting has become a lot more sophisticated.

Thanks. Hopefully we grew a little bit. Bigger... larger... heheh... wider. I think we needed to have the first experience and learn what it's all about. Now that we have a good idea, we wanted to make a record that was stronger.

There seems to be less sampling...

Actually there are a lot more samples [on Stereotype A]. When I was writing for the first album, I wasn't writing for the record. And when we made the record, I learned about sampling law and - I kind of liked the art form of just straight sampling and combining a lot of sounds and trying to create new music, but I can't do it commercially. Cause, you know...

Yeah, the legal tangles... So are your samples more disguised this time around, or were you sampling your friends jamming around in the studio?

Both. Instead of using a long sample, maybe using like samples that were a half second long. I also have a lot of friends playing that I sampled, basically like you said.

I think I remember that you had problems clearing all those samples from the first album...

Yeah. [On "Vival La Woman"] I used a lot of foreign samples, and old records and some obscure records that you can't find anymore. And I didn't know that you don't have to declare samples. [laughs] I just told everything, so it took months and months and months to even find them. It was a big pain in the ass.

Did you have to pay a lot to clear them?

Yeah, and some people asked for a lot of money, and some people asked for a lot of publishing, and I just... didn't want it to be so vulnerable [on the new album].

So that was a big influence on your latest record, huh?

Yeah, definitely. I did think about that.

Ok, well you're also writing in a more traditional pop structure this time around. Did you feel you had anything to prove by writing this way?

Yeah, I think there was something of those thoughts in me. To think when we did the first album, it was maybe

a little too abstract for some people and they weren't really sure if they should trust us or not. So, this album we definitely wanted to show that side where, "yeah, we can do this too."

Cibo Matto's songwriting process itself... are you still basically the brains behind the music?

Yeah, I think on the foundation level, we haven't changed. There's always this way of Miho and I bringing in some things that we've been writing together and it always happens in a spontaneous manner and it's kind of easy the first stage of the songwriting for us. But this time we gave ourselves a lot more time to develop it and experiment and try different arrangements and having our friends playing on it or doing some spontaneous arrangements in the studio.

Timo is the new guy. What does he bring to the group?

Timo is a brilliant musician. He's a multi-instrumentalist, and he can sing. Both he and Sean can play all the instruments and sing as a lead. They both sing in their own bands as lead singers, so they're pretty good for us to have around. They just sit in the studio all day long, and I just keep the door open and say, "If you have any idea or opinion you can just speak and we can talk about it." And I wanted to create a free vibe where everybody's very involved, and I kind of do a little traffic control of the ideas. Timo's great because Timo just never gives up and sometimes I will say "There's no more tracks. I'm not going to put any more drum tracks because there are 8 drum tracks." And he'll say, "PLEASE, JUST LET ME TRY IT!! LET ME TRY!!" [laughs] He never gives up and I love him in that way.

So Timo covers all the drumming duties...

Yeah, for live he plays drums. On the record he played a lot of things, and Sean also played drums.

You and Miho are both from Japan. At what point did you first meet her?

I had been living [in New York] for seven years before I met Miho. We actually

discovered later that we had gone to the same high school [in Japan] but we didn't know each other. We went different times too and we discovered the same areas, but we had no contact in Japan.

What was your first group, Laito Lychee, like?

That was a total punk band, and I played guitar - a lot of noise guitar. [laughs] I can't really play guitar, so I made a lot of sound. And Miho played violin and she also sang. We had two singers, Miho and another girl who actually had to leave the band.

After that band ended, what drew you and Miho together to form Cibo Matto?

It was some kind of organic process. We never really sat down one day and said, "Let's start a band and make a record." or anything like that. We were just hanging around a lot together, and people had seen us being together a lot because we like to eat and we liked a lot of the same kind of music. And someone says, "Oh, why don't you do this improv night. Do some kind of improvisation just the two of you." And you know, it was one of nights where anyone could come in and do an improvisation. So we thought, "Oh, maybe we should do something a little more... planned." [laughs] We cheated! And we thought maybe we can have some concept and do some kind of interesting thing, and that was the basis of Cibo Matto. And when we played, people responded really well. And we had enormous fun, and we said, "Oh, we like this. Let's do it again." And then we started to book some shows, and the next thing we know we were playing at festivals and a company wanted to sign us. And at that point we didn't know what was going on.

Sounds like getting signed by a major label happened a little quickly for you... How did that come about? Were they scouting you?

Um, we weren't looking for record deals. One day, we noticed somebody offered us a record deal and then a lot of people came. We thought maybe because one person wanted us, all these other people came out of the woods or something. I really don't know how it happened. I guess we were lucky. Also, we played some show where there was a very famous producer who was happy to see us.

There've been quite a few horror stories about major labels. So you've got a good deal, and everything?

Well, I wouldn't really say that. Just the fact that they want to work with a band like us, I think it's pretty cool. I'm pretty grateful with the way they treat us.

When Viva La Woman came out, were you surprised by the media attention? Did you find that the success opened a lot of doors for you?

Yeah, it was surprising. We were pretty wide eyed. I don't really feel like we've had success yet. I feel like we're very fortunate to have so many opportunities.

How would you define success?

Well, being able to buy all the instruments I want. And have a comfortable tour bus.

Well, Viva La Woman was listed in Time Magazine's top ten hip hop

HOLGER CZUKAY

KID'S THE KISS CAN



He looks like Einstein.
Musically, he could be Einstein.
An interview with the Einstein of music.
By Walt Millerstein

Holger who? At this point in time, I hope you aren't asking yourself that but just in case you've missed yet another wave of kraut rock revivalism, let's recap. Holger Czukay was a founding member of the revolutionary German group Can that pushed the perception of rock music - and what could be done with it - into a crazy orbit. The world hasn't been the same since. So far reaching was the influence of Can that everyone from the Sex Pistols to Brian Eno to Sonic Youth have acknowledged some degree (direct or indirect) of influence. Their impact on music is unclear to those of us who "weren't there" or weren't paying attention, but aside from being great musicians in their own right, Can broke many barriers. For one, they were among the first to use field recordings, circumstantial sounds and musique concrete elements in rock music. During live performances, with band playing at full throttle, Czukay would think nothing of calling a random person on the phone and sending his confused comments through the mixing board. Can's recording techniques, owed in large part to Holger, the group's engineer as well as bass player, were also quite ground breaking. He explained it to us recently during a transatlantic phone conversation.

"The Can sound was the result of our circumstances. We didn't have much money to afford a professional studio. We had to do everything differently than it was done these days. When we started in 1968, the idea was that [everyone] have a very clean hi-fi sound. And the beginning of the multitrack recorders started. And we didn't have a sound proof room, we only had a very few microphones. So what we had to do was the singer [had] two microphones. And, besides him I stood two boxes [speaker stacks?] - left and right from him. And from the one box was a guitar, and the other box was the organ. And so I only needed two microphones for recording three sources. [laughs] This is how the Can sound actually existed, suddenly. It was of course there was this sort of room ambience, which it suddenly had. In the 80's, suddenly the room ambience became important. This is the reason

why suddenly our music was sounding up to date - apart from the fact that the music itself somehow didn't grow old so easily. But just talking about the sound - we were just obeying to the circumstances that we were involved in."

Recent times have seen Can getting their due. Maybe too much due than some people can handle. Mute has certainly done their part to educate/capitalize on the legacy, releasing a double disc remix project (with electronica greats like the Orb, System 7 and Air Liquide) and in 1999, a Can boxed set. Meanwhile you can now get the majority of the Can backcatalog from... uh, Mute.

But Can is then. Let's talk about now. Let's talk about Holger Czukay. His new album "Good Morning Story" (on avant garde label, Tone Casualties) is his first solo record since 1993's "Moving Pictures" and is very much a mirror of the Czukay persona. For one, he doesn't exactly try to escape his roots. Can samples, and samples of former Can members, abound.

Adventurous, inventive, quirky, clever, humorous, spirited - "Good Morning Story" is peppered with shifting arrangements, interesting narratives, oddball sounds and the vocals of wife and muse, U-She. It sounds like it was a fun record to make. It made me wonder how Czukay approached this particular album.

"I'm usually not so much interested in songs, actually. But, as it happens sometimes, my connection with U-She, the singer - she somehow brought me to a place where I was trying to make songs. And another thing is that in the beginning of the 90's, I was visiting a DJ in the studio to see how these people were working. And I saw the stuff - how they were doing [music] - and then he gave me a... vinyl? - with a Can sample on it! And I listened to it, and I said "Holger, I think you can make that better!" And that's how I started actually, to work on that. "Dancing In Wild Circles" is exactly my version of what he did."

The sample he speaks of is from the Can song, "Vitamin C" off the album Ege Bamyasi, and the sample actually appears twice - in "Dancing In Wild Circles" and the title track. From this we get a clearer picture of how the album was painstakingly pieced together. It wasn't an easy process, especially when live musicians - like uber-bassist Jah Wobble and Can ex-drummer Jaki Liebezit - were involved.

"For the first track, "Invisible Man", Jah Wobble came to my house and we had a cup of tea, and I said "Jah, I have here a bass. Could you try this here? Is it tuned perfectly?" And he took the bass, and we were just talking - with one hand, he was trying something out. Of course, the recorder was running. While he was busy testing that thing, I was also testing something else! And in 5 minutes, I said while he was playing, "Alright Jah! Here. Could you sign this for me?" [laughs heartily] And that's the way how it actually came into existence.

I was surprised how much work later it was involved in that special piece, for example. Months to do that.

And Jaki refused to play drums on this because he said the rhythm is not stable and he was really fed up with it. He didn't want to play with it. But it worked out fine in the end.

He played everywhere [on the album]. The samples are more or less his drumming. But on "Invisible Man", that is where he really played drums. Most of the time I was working alone. I just went to the Can studio and Jaki was there. And I said "Jaki, can you try this? I'm trying to make something out of Jah Wobble, but I don't know how it fits." And he said, "I tried, but I have real difficulties with what you have done." And then I said, "Nevermind. You can play as you want. You can make mistakes. I don't care. I just want to find out how you are doing this."

This [recording process] is always the same, which is always rough recordings and taking some time until everything is getting perfect."

I asked Holger about working musically with his wife, U-She who sang on the albums first three tracks.

"[subdued tone] Yes, she's my wife. You shouldn't say that." FAQT: Why not?

"[laughs] Usually people say she's my wife, and that she can't sing. [laughs] Which is a big error. Yes, I'm especially concentrating on her at the moment. She gets now a single release at EMI here. I doubt how that will work. But, I know of course her talent and ability of her voice. And the 90's was a time when the concentration of singers was pretty weak. That means on the dancefloor, with electronic music - the singers would disturb more than they would help to get the rhythm flow. This is why [dance music producers] only work with them in a separate way. And that is something I found out with the scene here. And that is one of the mistakes of electronic music. So I was really concentrating on making a CD for U-She, which is not yet released, where I was really concentrating on the electronic parts of the music but actually as well - on a real sort of song character."

Perhaps one of the more startling projects he's done this decade was a collaboration with Cologne techno savant, Doc Walker, which featured Walker's pummeling acid grooves layered by Czukay's trademark sound arsenal. The two toured America and recorded the sessions as they went, resulting in the superb "Clash", also on Tone Casualties. How did he get involved with the electronic dance scene and what did he think of it?

"Yeah! This was the underground scene here in Cologne. Someone was coming from a pop magazine, and he was mak-



A conversation with...

ATOM HEART

The Atom Heart (aka Uwe Schmidt) has produced dozens of CDs and 12-inch singles during the last decade or so. He has created a large catalog of electronic music in diverse styles, working alone under numerous aliases (Lassigue Bendthaus, 'I', Señor Coconut...), and in collaboration with other composers, including Tetsu Inoue, Victor Sol, and Bernd Friedmann. His aesthetics have developed from minimalist techno and electro-industrial, through pleasing, abstract ambience, to fine cheese, highly individual techno-pop, and digital patterns.

DIGITAL COMMUNICATION

The following candid conversations between Atom Heart and Mark Kolmar (AKA recording artist Burning Rome) were extracted from an email exchange, edited slightly and presented in this continuous format with the permission of both parties. We believe this is one of the most in depth interviews with Atom Heart to exist on paper.

Atom Heart: Nice to hear from you! Thanks for updating me about your activities. Good that things are moving on your side. About paying dues. Actually I never thought about it like that. When I was doing the first records I did not think about moving away from the sound the record companies were accepting.

Mark Kolmar: I assume that when you say "first records", you mean the discs on POD and tracks from that time. You must admit that they are structured in a more conventional way than the more individual sound of the R.I. discs.

AH: Yes, indeed they are structured in a very conventional way, but at that time, at least to me, it was something very new and exciting, even a realm you could explore. Techno was a new thing in 1990 and this kind of minimal abstractness (which today seems not very challenging to me anymore) was really thrilling...for a time I had the philosophy that generic sound is the solution...overloading the system...well, philosophies change...

MK: If you mean sensory overload or maximalism, that has been a common thread in my music for a long while. For some reason I enjoy repetition mainly in other people's music. I like music with too many sounds, and music with too few sounds.

AH: No, not like that. To me, the techno movement, with probably a couple of thousand new releases a week, is a perfect example of saturation. I am not talking about a sensual overload, actually the music itself doesn't matter. It is about an overload of the system, in this case the music market as a part of the capitalist system. Consumer society per definition means growth. This growth is self-consuming, a cultural and monetary feedback. Releasing more and more music, theoretically a natural process of capitalism, 'cause no increase is equivalent to decrease, at a certain point is destroying the music market itself by dissolving its structures.

MK: Yes, I see this happening to some degree. However, I see more "scenes" and "styles", more segregated and separated. As we have discussed before, every new combination, every different rhythmic nuance, seems to develop its own, enclosed, self-limited "scene". You and I may not care much about the stylistic boundaries. But for many people, it is a way to feel better about themselves, to be part of the "in crowd" in smaller and smaller "scenes". I hope this is a transitional phase which will lead to no boundaries.

AH: Unfortunately I don't think it will change. Music has a very important social value which actually has nothing to do with the music itself, but rather, as you said, with belonging to something or somebody (mostly groups). I recently thought, that probably the only person who really likes music only for the sake of music, is the musician himself...all the others...labels, distributors, sellers, promoters and even in big parts the listeners or consumers are following another trace...with exceptions I guess (I hope).

MK: I am not sure you could have jumped into the sound of Brown or Mono TM etc. right away.

AH: But to go directly to stuff like Brown, etc. at this time would have been impossible anyway. I guess I was not able to do that kind of stuff at that time. You have to develop and leave certain things behind. I even think that this sound would not have interested me in 1990...Of course after a while, most of the time after 2 weeks, I cannot connect to the material anymore, but I guess that's normal and I accepted this as a natural process.

MK: When you say "connect" -- do you mean that the material turns into just music, as if someone else recorded it, or that you have

moved on to other material and it is no longer relevant to your mind?

AH: In every piece I try to realize an idea, or an image, or a technique, or a style, or a fusion...etc. These ideas, images, etc. are in my head for a long time. Once the thing is done I can go to the next step which means altering the idea, image, concept, etc. to another level. This automatically means that you are always looking back on your music and consider it something done, knowing that you are into a different level now. I realize all the things I would do different today (not because they are good or bad, but simply because I am different...) and simply cannot connect with the former idea anymore...very often old stuff sounds very exciting, because I don't know how I have done it...and why? Yes, it is no longer relevant to my mind...very often listening to old stuff, I wish I could reproduce that particular feeling or concept I had at that time, but my senses are somewhere else and finally this is even better.

MK: I find that when I do some music, and it sticks in my mind and I listen to it, that is a good sign. Also when I listen to it, and forget in the middle that I was the person who recorded it, that is a good sign too. It means I am hearing the music for what it is, and not wanting to change it because I hear anything "wrong".

AH: Right now I have the feeling (much more than in the past) to move away from the things I did in the past. I am more and more interested in a pop approach of music than into pure abstract music (or even minimal sound which I think is pretty outdated).

MK: Minimal in what sense? I think in many ways everyone has merely scratched the surface.

AH: Like a 909-beat and a 303...that kind of stuff, anything that repeats more than it should.

MK: I have limited patience for that kind of music because it can offer only so many surprises. I like it best when the patterns are ambiguous, so you can follow the very same pattern from one bar to the next, but your mind has different paths to follow. As I suggested earlier, though, when I work on anything like this hardly two bars in a row are the same -- it is more like if you mixed and cut a half-dozen of those tracks together. Except the sounds are not like DJ fodder. I have said for years that one can get away with anything on top of a straight 4/4 beat.

Minimalism is not based on repetition and change, but rather on elegant ways to use and develop very simple patterns. Morton Feldman said, it is similar to the "crippled symmetry" (his term) in rugs and tapestries. But I think this is a direction which demands further exploration.

AH: I perfectly remember listening to the first acid song. The song was infinite without any changes but the 303 modulation and the visual background was only a strobe. This kind of abstractness was the total kick in this moment. Each product since then was something like a soundtrack of the times to me, even a very personal thing... When you take this conceptual abstractness very serious (like I did), the pure musical point seems not too important. It's all a question of perspective. With R.I. this changed, or even before. The R.I. stuff has nothing to do with discos or the approach I described before.

The whole scene connected to the last convulsions of techno, including drum and bass, intelligent, etc. seems not very attractive to

me. I think a fusion out of a technological sound and pop is very challenging. I will start (and continue) with a couple of projects this year.

MK: I have to admit! I don't enjoy much of the recent "techno" or "intelligent" (aka IDM) either, although the edgier D'n'B gives me a good rush of energy. Some aspects are a big influence on me, but I don't think anyone would think of any of my music as pure techno or IDM or whatever else -- similar in some ways but hard to classify.

I think of certain techno producers. It is very adventurous as dancefloor music, but now when I get a new 12" it's just "Oh, another very well done 4 tracks of strictly repetitive, complex rhythms over straight 4/4 kick." Pretty much like the last dozen. And still ahead of the pack...

AH: This movement started with the terms futuristic and progressive in its early pamphlets, but honestly the entire movement are as stuck in their own past as Paul McCartney. This would not be too bad...if you hadn't the word progressive on your forehead. I don't mind musicians doing the same stuff over and over, even admire this in some cases, but not if this is a contradiction to what you claim your philosophy. A rocker playing his guitar can't be blamed, he never claimed that the future was his, but with techno and it's heroes I am a bit more rigid in this point. There are still people doing the 303/909 stuff and think that this is really progressive. I find the discrepancy between the actual aesthetic output and the overall philosophy the problem here.

MK: Many times I would listen to what was coming out of the mixer, and I would ask myself, "If this were a record by someone else, would you like it?" And I would say yes. Then I would ask, "Are you happy with this for what you want to make?" And mostly the answer would be "no".

Real-time manipulations are not a priority for me. I know some electronic musicians set up their gear to be able to have as much real-time control as possible. To some degree or another, you have clearly been doing that. Maybe not quite as much lately.

AH: I am not sure what you mean with "real time control". If meaning "turning knobs while a composition is running", I agree that I am not doing this too much.

MK: I mean "turning knobs" only in part. Most of the time I don't play on the keyboard, or other controller, but rather punch in the notes and other events one at a time, like writing on paper. But unlike paper, I can copy, cut, paste, alter... In some of the earlier R.I., it sounds like you did more playing and programming in real time. More recent material does not sound that way.

AH: Ah, understand...that's true.

On R.I. I usually like to investigate the language and technique of music, rather than expecting to reach the final goal. Don't know if I can make that clear...Parts from what I have tried on the last R.I. releases will finally reappear in the full picture...This doesn't mean that the productions before the final picture are less important or less complete, they are simply different angles on the final picture so to say.

MK: Like sketchbooks? or fully-realized pictures which may indicate a direction without finally going to the place where you finally want to go?

AH: The last one. Sketchbooks, not really.

Rather than a sketch which turns into a full picture, but still is just a complete sketch...able to stand for itself.

MK: I think intention in art is a very slippery thing.

AH: I agree 100%. This is why I think your opinion is yours (and right), and my intention is mine (and right). There is simply no compatibility. Questions like "What was your intention" simply don't match the game, because my intention is self-centered. I am not sending decodable messages to people, but rather triggers or images.

MK: Even so, effective communication is possible.

AH: What is effective communication then?

MK: It is possible when I put the object on the ground, and you pick it up and interpret it, that you may take from it something very close (or close enough) to what I put in, so that we can call it effective communication.

AH: I simply think that with doing the music I said enough. I also think in 100% of my work that it is not that much about giving answers to things but rather to ask questions. Most works simply exist because the entire complex is a big question mark to me.

MK: I think so also. And I think this is true for me as well -- trying to put together a puzzle. As you said, part of the purpose is to make sense out of nonsense, or nonsense out of sense.

AH: Machines. I am still not using a computer...except for doing DSP processing. I find the sequencing software very inconvenient and not musical at all. They give you a strange feeling and are bad musical interfaces. Also I dislike visualizing the programming. It distracts from sound.

MK: I think the visual and the audio parts of my brain are tied together. I think about sounds and music as colors and shapes anyway, so for me it helps. When the music plays, I "see" motion like choreography, but the abstract motion of sounds instead of a person dancing. Sometimes I even have a small "leak" of sound into my vision. I find that things which have a good flow musically mostly look good, and vice-versa.

AH: I do not visualize any music that way.

Difficult to explain, but my images don't have pictures, rather feelings in a very abstract way...also, especially in Cubase, you always have your entire song or arrangement connected to this time axis. you see your breaks and cuts and fills and permanently are confronted with the time of your song (at least when I was working in studios where they were using it). It really distracts from music. I think you develop a much sharper hearing, not looking on your music.

MK: Do you mean the way you always see the duration?

AH: Yes.

MK: Mostly I have a duration in mind before I start, but that is subject to change depending what I hear...

AH: Same with me...

MK: ...with eyes closed, or not looking at the screen at least.

AH: That seems to be the difference...I have no visual seduction, therefore my eyes are always open...

MK: But can you look at your whole piece at once, if you want to? Or maybe you never want to...

AH: No I couldn't...and I don't know why I

should want to, since I have the structure in my head...I trust my musical sense here... the visualization of music is offering these obsessions and many musicians I know lose their hearing because seeing is spoiling it.

MK: But the thing is, music is one type of art which is time-based, so you cannot hear it all at once. The sequencer can let you see a representation, though.

AH: Most producers which are using Cubase and related visual sequencing software do not have a strong enough image of what they want.

MK: OK. So then it seems you locate your target and shoot directly at it. I go around in a spiral, going around and getting closer until I reach a place I want to be. I might start with one sound, or one rhythm, or an overall feeling, then add flesh to the skeleton so to speak. Sometimes that is very quick, and sometimes it takes a while.

I saw an author on a talk show once -- wish I could remember his name. But he said "quality costs"...as a writer (composer, etc.) you show your respect and appreciation for the audience by giving them quality, and you have to pay for this.

Obviously, technology can make this less costly (in terms of time at least).

I even like the aesthetic of someone like Masami Akita (Merzbow), in which content becomes very arbitrary -- but his chaos/overload resonates with me, and I have patience for it. However, I see from various discussions that many people consider the amount of material he released during '95-'96 (give or take) as a sign of disrespect.

I wanted to ask about the R.I. release schedule, which has been much slower than in the past -- not entirely a bad thing, but I wanted to ask if your move to Chile caused problems or a disruption, if you made a choice to approach things in a different way, or?

AH: Well, the R.I. schedule change had a couple of reasons. First of all the new situation here in Chile changed the work flow quite a bit. I had to install all the stuff, get the communication flowing, etc. Also, after 6 months I was moving again, to another house and this interrupted again. Another thing was, that Pop Artificielle took a lot of time too. Pop Artificielle had priority the last year, and this of course meant less time for other things...and R.I. had to suffer.

MK: Concerning your move to Chile, part of me would like that type of isolation. Another part could let me become isolated in a bad way. On the other hand it could be just the opposite, so that some things that I can take for granted here (such as television) could become trivial -- and maybe lead to a better way to live. I don't know. Unfortunately the inertia is strong.

AH: In my case, the isolation was well decided. I think being disconnected from certain things (especially the music scene you are classified in) is helping a lot. To me it is a chance to develop something unique.

MK: I feel somewhat disconnected from things as it is. In particular, I have noticed that I do not see boundaries in the music scene(s) where others do. Or I disregard boundaries that have more to do with social divisions than musical divisions.

AH: I think it is a difference if you feel disconnected...but still receive all kinds of messages you don't want to receive, or if you really cut the line. I feel better here since the average

scene talk and the typical discourse does not reach me.

MK: I feel comfortable in many ways being an outsider on the inside, so to speak. I can avoid the media outlets I don't want to watch or hear. But I do have access to some programs I enjoy. I also have access to complete trash, which can be inspiring as something to react against. I don't read music magazines, except Rolling Stone. I have subscribed to that for years, and I suppose I must enjoy it enough to keep renewing. I used to skim NME and Melody Maker, but haven't for a while. Somehow I hear about everything anyway.

AH: Funny isn't it? I don't read any magazines...neither music nor computer biz...etc., and for some reason I always know what's going on...if I want to. Guess I can live without it.

MK: Concerning Pop Artificielle, would you say you have done the covers in a radically revisionist way?

AH: My perspective on the covers is more like doing an update which of course means doing it different (not better...this is relative). Of course there are songs which are almost impossible to do better (like many Beatles songs for example). My selection is made out of songs which triggered something in me...they triggered another version. I could hear the new arrangement perfectly. Sometimes while working or analyzing the songs, they unveiled a new face to me and I started to re-define my ideas and modify the song into something more ambivalent...like James Brown's "Superbad" where his soul sounds completely mechanical and gives (hopefully) the song a new meaning...I think that's what's a cover is about...

MK: What was the method of working for some "jam"-like recordings like H.A.T., Jet Chamber, Lisa Carbon, maybe Roger Tubesound or others? One problem I had with these (less with H.A.T. though) was the different parts didn't seem to change in reaction to each other. So it was maybe a little stiff. I will guess that this method with Bernd makes the result feel looser.

AH: All of them had different approaches and different ways to compose. Some are intended to be stiff and even use this stiffness as an aesthetic parameter, while others were simply done like that without actually thinking too much about it...if different parts change in reaction to each other is a very specific thing you sometimes simply don't care about because the focus is another thing.

The record I did for example with Bernd Friedmann was done in a very different way. It was a kind of experiment too and it worked. We had the idea of non-repetitive structures. This means avoiding any kind of loop or similar composing technique.

Finally each song had hundreds of cuts, as I said sometimes each 10 seconds or less. The result was quite surprising. We both had never worked like that before and were a bit afraid to get lost in this process, but the opposite was the case. In none of the songs you hear the cuts.

We wanted to diffuse the line between real and synthetic and in some parts the naturally sounding structures are breaking into completely convulsive absurdities and vice versa. One song which starts up with clicks and digital dropouts from a broken dat tape slowly transforms into a pure jazz-trio piece until the DAT

dropouts are taking it apart again.

Jet Chamber for example are all done in Pete's studio and I have no access to his system, means I don't know how to use most of his equipment (it is too much of equipment anyway). This means I give him elements or we jam them together, but it is 100% up to him what to do with it...Roger Tubesound sounds like jamming in parts but actually is all editing (a little bit like the production with Bernd but focused on different things...). Anyway, I like stiffness...

MK: I played the first track of Señor Coconut for a friend of mine. He said some portions were pleasing, and others were like nails on a chalkboard because of the stiff timing.

AH: Exactly...

MK: I can hardly stop myself from laughing when that ridiculous drum solo comes in.

AH: Me too...

MK: I can't quite tell if that is played with maybe 10-20 drum samples.

AH: Nope...

MK: Or different "phrases"/"gestures" from records.

AH: Nope...

MK: Or even one long sample with some processing.

AH: Yes...some 40's Latin bebop record...sampled on 8 bit...

MK: Something in my thinking would not allow me to use such a long sample. It is still effective, and the sample would be anonymous to just about anyone.

AH: Usually I am not using long samples at all, but this one was actually calling me...Also Señor Coconut to me is something like a latin revenge record...You know the South American music industry gives a shit about copyrights, etc. and they are basically releasing whatever they want without asking permission to anybody. This affects Latin artists as well as western artists the same way.

MK: Have you heard Gondwanaland by Steroid Maximus (aka Foetus)? Much of Señor Coconut reminds me a bit of that. But Foetus sounds more aggressive, and also more like big-band American jazz. In any case, you might look into it.

AH: Yes, I guess I heard it at a friend's place one day, but didn't like it too much, actually exactly for the parameters you described...too aggressive...too full and not funny enough...

MK: I don't really think about making a product.

AH: I always do.

MK: Maybe the classical education for me... I might have to think about product more in the future.

I think one significant difference in our personalities seems to be that in a given situation I will almost always take the route which provides me with more options later.

AH: I am definitely not that type. Once I have chosen a direction I take it until the end, if this means only having one route and no options, it be so. I will not alter the route for obtaining the wanted. The route (in this case limitation) is a part of the process and a part of the result as well.

MK: Is that to say you choose certain equipment, and then you are content to allow that gear to influence or determine the direction you take? I do that to some degree, I'm sure, but I frequently change directions in mid-stream. In that sense, the process is very



μ-Ziq

easy on the ears

Here we go again. If you are a long time reader of this rag, you'll remember seeing a spot on Mike Paradinas early last year. At the time he was doing press for "Lunatic Harness", a breakthrough album and a standard setter for the chopped up and processed break-fast some refer to as *drill n' bass*. At that period in his life, Mike had some major things going on. For one, his 7 month old son Caleb was running him ragged. Fatherhood appeared to encroach on his time, making touring, writing music and starting up a new label an even more cumbersome experience. Also on his mind was his new label (Virgin UK) who was resistant to footing the bill for a video unless he added vocals to the mix. Alas, the struggle between artistry and the desire to reach more people - It seems Mike concerned himself with these things a bit more than we thought he did. His latest offering, the melodious "Royal Astronomy", is his most commercial work to date, and notable for the vocal tracks featuring singer, Kazumi. He called us from the UK to fill us in on the new album among other things.

Your melodies have always been easy on the ears, but on Royal Astronomy... were you trying to go for something a more accessible?

Yeah, I reckon, on a few tracks I was consciously going for something a little more accessible. I mean I didn't put hard drums on it. But on a lot of it, I just put more accessible tracks on it. I left a lot of the more ear-bashing stuff off it. There were a few which I was thinking of putting on - a few harder and faster tracks which had disjointed breakbeats going up to 200 BPM, but it would have spoiled the feeling of it. It would have made a nice underground album, but I've already done that I think. I wanted to see if I could get through to more people.

Are you reacting against the drill n' bass tag, when you do that?

No, not really. I'm still really into a lot of the music, which you might call that. I suppose all artists do something and then come to a point where they can't do any more with it. But, I'm still doing stuff like that. It's just, I didn't choose to release it on this album. I think the last Lunatic Harness one was sort of, I think, a really good album for "drill n' bass", if you want to call it that.

Do you think of your music in those terms, yourself?

Well, I can't help it sometimes, yeah. So I might as well call it that. It's better than "fungle". I'm sort of getting into drill n' gabber, if you want to call it that, at the moment. Which is four to the floor with breakbeats. But still 200 BPM. It's very hard to make, I find. Not even my friends, who are into pretty hardcore stuff, like it. Half of them do and half of them don't - you can't please everyone.

But, I've just tried to release stuff which was easier on the ear but still packed an emotional punch. It still had sort of momentum and changes just as much as previous stuff. But it wasn't necessarily drum and bass filled that function. I tried to make them just as good as

Did Virgin have any influence on the way the music turned out?

We did have a couple of meetings where they came in with a bunch of stuff to play to me and they sort of pointed me in the direction that they wanted to take, which was sort of 90% the same as what I wanted to go. So I wanted to be sure that they were pointing in the direction I wanted to go as well. But they were a bit too

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keen on some of the harder stuff. And there was one vocal track that I wasn't sure about, that they really liked.

Speaking of vocals, the last time we talked - the first thing on your wish list was to work with a vocalist, and you finally got to. Her name is Kazumi?

Yeah, that's her stage name. I won't divulge her real name. She's a Japanese girl who lives in London. She's really nice. She's a novelist, but I can't read her stuff because it's in Japanese, and she said that westerners can't understand it anyway. She used to sing in bands and stuff, and she gets lots of requests to work with people, like Peter Gabriel and people like that. And she says no to them, because she only likes stuff like Aphex and me. She sent me a tape which is how I got in contact with her. And I gave her a ring, and it's sort of come from there, really. She's sort of known in the scene of this music, cause she goes to all the clubs, like Rephlex nights and that sort of thing. So she knows Grant from Rephlex, and Ed DMX...

She sings on the tracks "The Fear" and "Goodbye"...

And a few other ones that we haven't released yet. I did a whole load of stuff with her, and I think they were the two tracks that fit best on the album. But, yeah, there might be some more stuff in the future. What happened is, I started sending her tracks and asked her to sing on them. That wasn't working at all, in fact it was turning out awfully. And I had this idea where she could just sing onto a DAT or something - just singing on her own with no backing - maybe a click track. So, she did that and I took little bits and made tracks around the vocals, which is much more how I like to work anyway - usually having some sort of melody and then counterpointing it, and getting a bassline that works.

I guess "The Fear" was the obvious choice as a single.

Yeah, it's a single here in the UK. I don't know about anywhere else. It hasn't come out yet - it comes out on Monday (July 19th). It's doing well in presales. The video is being shown quite a lot on TV, and it got play listed on a couple of radio stations, and on a lot of specialist shows as well. Yeah, I get played on the radio a hell of a lot more - maybe 200% more than I ever have. But presales are three times more than I've ever sold for a single.

I remember the video was the second thing on your wish list.

Yeah, Virgin had said to me they wouldn't do me a video unless I did vocals, so they kept their promise there.

How do you like the way the video turned out?

It's alright. I really like it. It's a bit cheesy - the story line - but the visuals are great.

I heard it was about a boyfriend girlfriend thing or something.

Yeah, that part of it's being cheesy, isn't it? But it's all sort of arty looking. The girl has one of those peasant scarfs on, kind of trendy. She's kind of pretty.

So it wasn't Kazumi in there, or anything.

No, none of us are in it. It was filmed in LA. It was done by Doug Aitken who did Fatboy Slim's video ["Rockefeller Skank"]. We did this collaboration together - "The Art of the Brooklyn Bridge" or something a few years ago. It had a bunch of art installations, and

me and him collaborated where he dressed up as 'space' and I did music for it. And it was the most successful thing there according to [the magazine] Time Out.

Are you still keeping your other aliases alive?

No, I'm not. I haven't killed them yet. They're just dormant. I think Kid Spatula might spring up on Planet Mu sometime next year. I don't like to sort of plan things until I'm sure. There's a Kid Spatula single which is out now actually... just released last week. But only on export, so you should get some copies soon... through Forced Exposure.

You usually work from a backlog of DATs - which your new material is drawn from...

Yeah, I still do it like that. Sometimes I'm working on things which take a long time, now. There are certain things and I sort of continue working on them to make it one track.

That's sort of a switch from your old ways isn't it?

Yeah, but I'm still into long term ideas - and keep developing it. And sometimes I'll go back and edit things together or add new things. With new technology, you can do a lot more of which you couldn't before. You can match things up - two different things - change their keys and speeds until they sound similar and then put em together and have one song. Whereas before you might have had two half-songs.

Your remix of Dean Elliot just came out over here. (On the V/A remix comp "Electro Lounge - Electronic Excursions in Hi-Fidelity")

Oh yeah, man. That hasn't come out for ages! That was before I did "Lunatic Harness", you know? I sent that to them in '96, and they've finally finished in getting it all out. [laughs]

What do you think of the whole project, now that it's out?

Oh, I think the whole load of it's fucking crap! [laughs] They faded my track out man. Why? The end [of the original] finishes the same time as it finishes [on the comp], but they faded it out instead of just letting it stop. It hasn't saved them any time, you know. Why didn't they just leave it?

Was it worth the money to do it?

Oh, yeah. Yeah, probably. It was alright. It was only about a thousand dollars I think.

Are you a big lounge fan, then?

Not particularly, no. It was the money. [laughs] That Dean Elliot [track, "Lonesome Road"] sounds pretty good though. And there was a musique concrete bit in it, which was the bit I sampled. Percussion noises and footsteps and all that. All the other [remixers] seemed to take horns and singing and stuff, and I'm not particularly into things like that.

A friend of mine, we were talking about your music and he thought some of your earlier stuff - you know, your "cheesy" melodies - they reminded him of lounge composer Martin Denny.

The thing is I'd never heard of these people until I put the Jake Slazenger album out, and then people started sending me stuff. The only person I'd heard of like that was Cal Tjader, which is like vibraphone kind of stuff.

Cause I found his records in a shop, and I grew up where there weren't many record shops really. I had to invent my own music, which is probably why it's like it is and that I've got an imagination. All I've been exposed to is pop and rock, which includes electronic stuff. But no, I haven't heard of lounge stuff really. Except for Cal Tjader, but that was more like jazz to me. Or jazz funk. I think Jake Slazenger was meant to be electronic funk. Basically somewhere between electro and my own, and James Brown and my own thing. And that's all it was, and people interpreted it more cheesily maybe because some of my melodies might have been a little bit more cheesy. But I think James Brown is pretty cheesy as well. And it's just in that spirit.

You worked with Speedy J on the Slog Boom Van Loon album, released on Planet Mu.

Yeah. It's been out since last October (1998). It didn't sell very many - er, I suppose it sold alright. But it's one of my favorite things that I've ever done. I prefer it to Mike & Rich.

Really? Why is that?

Because I can listen to it without getting embarrassed. I like it as a piece of music better, and it's growing on me all the time, you know? It's a piece of music where the more you listen to it, the more you like it. It's quite mature as well, you know? It's pretty much mostly ambient, which surprised a lot of people and pissed off people who were expecting Speedy J and me to do something harder. That's the space in which we both occupied - met - we both tried to something hard or with a bit more energy, but it wasn't working. We couldn't work together to do something like that. The only way we could work together is if we did something ambient, it turned out - a lot better. And it surprised both of us. Yeah, that's one of my favorites, but not many people like it. Boards Of Canada are the only people who liked it. They've done two remixes of it. Pole has done a remix, as well. Hopefully I'll do a little remix project of it. I've got half of them in. I'm waiting on Mogwai and a few other people on my label - Horse Opera. Capital K - a new band that's just released a record on Planet Mu.

Speaking of Capital K, you'll be doing a show with them coming up - Except you'll be DJing. I didn't know you were a DJ. Have you been DJing long?

Yeah, I used to DJ at college, every Thursday night. I DJed a lot in England, but I never DJed abroad though. I get asked to DJ quite a lot, because there are a lot of chaps that like my music but I charge a lot for playing live and they can't afford it because they're too small. I DJ quite a lot. Drum & Bass and other stuff. But usually drum & bass is the climax of the set. That or gabber.

So your DJing style is bit more straightforward...

Well, yeah. I suppose. I listen to pretty straightforward stuff, you know? [laughs] Well, not totally. When you DJ you have to make a bit of concession to the audience, most of whom aren't going to want to hear Aphex Twin all night long. Which is probably the only sort of experimental stuff you could play because it's the only stuff that's got funky beats.

I'd think that anyone who came to see you spin would probably expect something a little wierder.

In England, noone's heard of me anyway, so I get a normal crowd. That's not all I have, but [my fans] are going to be a smaller portion of that crowd.

I had a chance to talk to Dylan Nathan [AKA Jega] several months ago, and he had plenty of good things to say about your influence on him. How is his second album coming along by the way?

I haven't heard all of it, but I've heard about half of it and I'm very pleased. I think it's brilliant. It's a lot more mature, much more breathy, yeah - but he's older. [laughs] It's a bit more introspective in certain ways. More technologically oriented - more electro, I think you'd call it. There are not really any breaks.

No breaks?

Right. But then still it's very interesting. It's fucking intense, some of it. Have you heard his early Skam stuff? His first EP, it was more like that. Drum machines and melodies...

You guys went to college together. What were the craziest things you ever did in college?

What did Nathan say? [laughs] I think the craziest things I ever did was when he wasn't there, you know? I remember breakdancing in a... lake of beer with my friend Nick, cause we had techno parties every Thursday night - underground stuff [of the time] like Carl Craig, Derrick May, the early R&S stuff... and yeah, I just remember getting really pissed and stoned a lot. I don't remember a lot, but yeah we had a lot of fun. What did Nathan tell you?

He didn't have any wild stories, but he did mention the strange music blasting out of Aphex Twin's dorm room. [Note: Richard James was a classmate at the school as well]

Richard's room had this window - [to get to] the party you had to walk past his window, and you did occasionally hear something that sounded like a washing machine. Which could have been his washing machine, I suppose - come to think of it now. But we thought it was experimental techno.

How do you like running your own label?

It's fun. Quite hard work sometimes. Especially when you have other things to do, but yeah - money's a problem. Apart from that, it's good. I'm putting stuff out that I really like and believe in.

I remember last time we talked, you complained a little bit about Rephlex. Now that you've started Planet Mu, do you have a little more understanding, or sympathy for them?

Yeah, a little bit, in that there's only one person running it. But then I manage to pay my artists. I can see why they don't because you need to have injections of money in order to press records - which you don't necessarily have all the time. But I manage to have a good distributor [SRD in the UK] that gives me money, but then takes it back, obviously, when the record comes out. Advances, you know.

RePHLeX

www.rephlex.com

As one of the best known labels of its kind - aside from Warp -, what can be written about Rephlex that you either don't know already, or that you won't find in better detail on Gonz's excellent website (see above)? Well, a lot in my opinion. Unfortunately, Grant was too busy to complete the interview [which is becoming something of a trend with these profiles], so I turned to Grant's right hand man, MAF, who did his best to fill me in. Kudos to MAF for stepping up, but it would have been nice to hear from Grant. Anyway, enough of my whining. Rephlex is an awesome label, one that the so-called IDM flock pays the utmost attention to as Grant & Rich have hit so many musical home runs, and a&r coups. It would be nice if they could hang on to their artists, but such is their fate that everyone eventually jumps to Warp or Virgin. But maybe that's a good thing, as it means more time to find the next mad genius in that ever teetering pile of demos.

Founded: In 1991, by Cornwall residents Richard James and Grant Wilson Claridge

Musical Focus: From an early press release: "Innovation in the dynamics of the much loved and misunderstood acid music. To highlight the increasingly popular style of electric listening music. To counter the all-too-common breakbeat and show the rest of the world that superb beat can be made without the help of the TR-909."

Roster:

- Richard D. James
- AKA: AFX, Caustic Window, Q-Chastic, Soit-PP, Blue Calx, Rich of Mike And Rich
- Grant Wilson Claridge AKA:IG-88
- Chris Jeffs AKA:Cylob, Kinesthesia
- Mike Paradinas
- AKA: μ-Ziq, Mike of Mike and Rich
- Tom Jenkinson AKA: Squarepusher
- Bochum Welt
- The Gentle People
- Luke Vibert
- Mike Dred
- AKA: Kosmik Kommando, Chimera
- Global Goon
- Ed Upton AKA: DMX Krew
- Sam & Valley
- Leila
- Matt Jones
- Leo Anibaldi
- X-ASP
- Kiyoshi Izumi
- Lisa Carbon Trio
- Bradley Stryder
- D'Arcangelo
- Vulva
- Synectics
- Seefeel
- Drexciya

THE ORIGIN OF REPHLEX

The story behind the start of Rephlex is a simple but legendary sequence of events. As it goes, Richard approached Grant with a demo, and after one listen Grant did a spit take, fell to the ground, had a seizure, died for exactly 4 and a half minutes during which he had an out of body experience and met his great grandfather's spirit who told him Aphex Twin would change music forever. When he returned to his body, he sat up and exclaimed something like, "We've got to get this on record!" Or something like that. You know how stories get embellished. Anyway, it didn't matter that Grant had never run a label, nor did he know the first thing about pressing records. They would learn. And there you have it. The origin of Rephlex. Got anything to add, MAF?

MAF: "Richard had the music. Grant had some money. They were mates united through acid house. They took the next step."

Thanks, MAF. Actually, after some digging around I found an interview with Grant that explains it like this. Grant met Rich at a Cornwall house club where they were both DJs, only most of the time Rich played tapes instead of records. One day, Rich popped in a tape of his own and it caused Grant to ask who it was. That was the first time they had ever talked.

After that, Rich gave Grant some advice about what equipment to buy to start making his own sounds, and for a time the two made music and recorded the material onto cassette. It wasn't until Grant turned 19 and received a small inheritance that he decided to press their music onto record. The initial idea was not to sell it commercially, but just to have their sounds on vinyl. But somehow, the records ended up in a few shops and it took off from there. The phone calls came. People wanted Grant to release their music as well. As it happened, Grant and Rich had a large pool of friends and friends of friends who were artists, and this has been a main source of material for Rephlex from the beginning.

On the next page is a little email chat with MAF, who has been at Rephlex since April of '97 and helps out with everything from making tea to A&R.

Recent titles on Rephlex...



D'ARCANGELO • Shipwreck

Italian twin brothers Fabrizio and Marco D'Arcangelo have come full circle from putting out their first EP on Rephlex in '96, then going on to release much of their hard to define electronica on Italian labels like Hot Trax, Disturbance and ACV. On Shipwreck, melodies - early AFX style ranging from tango to stark to beautiful, sometimes all of the above - are coupled with a variety of wayward home grown rhythms - NOT breakbeats. And bucking the chopped-up, FX over-driven processing trend, D'Arcangelo's MIDI methods tend to let the sequencer run - repeating their perfect electronpop patterns until they sink in deliciously. The result is immediate intelligoove that you can hum, without the aftertaste. Now, how does it get any better?



**BOGDAN RACZYNSKI • Boku Mo Wakaran
BOGDAN RACZYNSKI • Samarai Math Beats**

There's a childlike compartment in Raczynski's mind that mirrors Richard James, one with a similar love of playful pop melody and stuttering grooves. The likeness doesn't stop there... Raczynski likes to sing, sometimes using the ol helium effect (ala Come To Daddy RDJ!), while on "Samarai Math Beats" he can come off like Ween or Dinosaur Jr's vocally challenged twin. Bogdan's debut "Boku Mo Wakaran" is heavy with the drum & bass licks but far from convention. It's a meeting of complex silliness and serious breakbeat chops that tend to get harder and noisier as the album progresses. It's amazing, it's armageddon, and it's a damn fun time. "Samarai Math Beats" is a kinder and gentler (wackier if that's possible) Bogdan Raczynski. He certainly sings more, (whether or not you find it distracting depends on your threshold) and he tends to sing about wacky things (like lightsabers and karate moves) over more delightful samarai math beats (a term he coined that covers everything from experi-dancable breakbeat to drill variety d&b to avant hip-hop). Bogdan Raczynski is another great find for Rephlex. Excellent stuff, brainy yet tempered with light hearted approach and what appears to be humor (or mental retardation). Both albums are great fun, and highly recommended.



JP BUCKLE • Flyin Lo-Fi

As the title suggests, Jason Buckle is a champion of making shitty equipment sing - or in this case growl in a whiskey drawl. The more material I hear from artists touting the use of sub standard equipment, the more I wonder what the big deal is. It's obviously entirely possible to make some great music with a 486 and choice shareware - maybe even desirable to do so? That said, JP's proudly unpolished electronics (casio tones and frequency grit coupled with surprisingly varied rhythms ranging from spastic breakbeat to teutonic electro/techno) doesn't make him the most compelling artist on Rephlex, but he doesn't suck. There happen to be some nice ideas in the occasionally rough presentation. Buckle just seems to be lacking the strong sonic personality (something of a Rephlex trademark) needed to stand out in a very distinguished crowd.



CHAOS A.D. • Buzz Caner

In case you don't know by now, CHAOS A.D. is Tom Jenkinson (AKA Squarepusher). This here is from Tom's rave/acid period, and because Warp wouldn't let him use his usual moniker for copywrite reasons, he made a new one up for the sake of this release. Hmm. Why he would want anyone to hear this is a real mystery. It's a curious mix of classic Aphex basement noise and retro-style acid house. Some cuts even feature rudimentary 303 tweaks, but I'm assuming that's kitsch. Of course it sounds very dated, but I don't know if I'd be too interested unless I knew who was behind it. There are humorous moments - he breaks into one track to periodically chide drugged out ravers (you know who you are) with hilariously harsh put downs. As a piece of music it's a good peek into a time when Tom was less than a god. So, if you watch NASCAR for the crashes, you might want to pick this up.



LEILA • Like Weather

By playing keyboards for Bjork and recording with Plaid, Leila has a nice resume going for her. But nothing she's done can measure up to this nifty little album that is actually quite a departure for a label like Rephlex. Recruiting a number of friends to lend instrumental and vocal talents, Leila has made one of those breakthrough "pop" albums. The mood of the music and the delivery of the lyrics can be bluesy, or come across as something like Tricky, with slow shimmering loopage, lo fi synthesis, thick dubbish FX and melancholy crooning on a track like "Space Love, Knew". At the same time, Leila can be quite provocative. The raw but beautiful "Melodicore" resembles its name while the brash ugliness of "So low, Amen" is highly erotic. And what of "Won't You Be My Baby" tough blues/electronrock and one of the most exciting pop tracks I've ever heard? The production is purposely less than pristine - a most excellent move on Leila's part. What a goddamn masterpiece.



A CONVERSATION WITH MAF of RePHLeX:

How well did the label operate in the beginning?

I am not too sure as I have only been here for the last 2 years since then we have been much more organised. The problem is that now we have too much stuff to release but are not allowed to put it out that fast. It confuses people apparently, but they just get confused by mediocre music. Rephlex has never operated along the usual expected route but at the end of the day it's not profit driven which is an anomaly in itself.

Do you feel Rephlex fits in with the ideas of IDM?

I haven't really delved into IDM but there certainly are some keen followers for this type of music, maybe because so much of it is made on computers. IDM is intelligent dance music right? It's a bit pompous to say I like intelligent stuff and that other stuff is 'dumb'. I suppose it came about as a backlash against silly rave tunes, but what's the harm in them? People take things too seriously. Everyone needs fun! Anyway, all you need is Briandance.

Rephlex, along with Warp, seems to be in a class by itself. In fact the coupling of "Rephlex and Warp" seems to have taken on a genre-ish status when used to describe music. Do you see it this way, and what do YOU tell people when describing the music you release?

We call all our music BRAINDANCE. We got bored of all the genres that were favorable for 2 months till the next big thing pops up.

We are good friends with the warp crew. Maybe people come to the coupling of "Rephlex and Warp" idea cos a few of our artists have gone on to Warp cos they are more 'business' than us and they can sell more records.

After all they had a number one single before Rephlex even existed. They have got a solid history as far as sales go. We rely on people knowing what we are about, and respecting us enough to send us demos.

Rephlex has a good reputation of discovering new talent, while Warp has been criticized for sticking with known quantities. Agree or disagree?

It's marketing. They do have a very finely tuned marketing machine.

How did the recent rise of MP3 files impact Rephlex?

It's one of those things, there's pros and cons. I think that artists will suffer a bit but it's still cool to have a record, a bit of plastic in your hand. But with the mp3 mixers that are getting better (so I hear), it won't be long before we might have to change the way we operate.

Can you shed some light on the nature of your relationship with Mike Paradinas? He's claimed on record that you were angered by his departure from the label, and this contributed to Bluff Limbo being delayed. Can you set the record straight on what happened on your end?

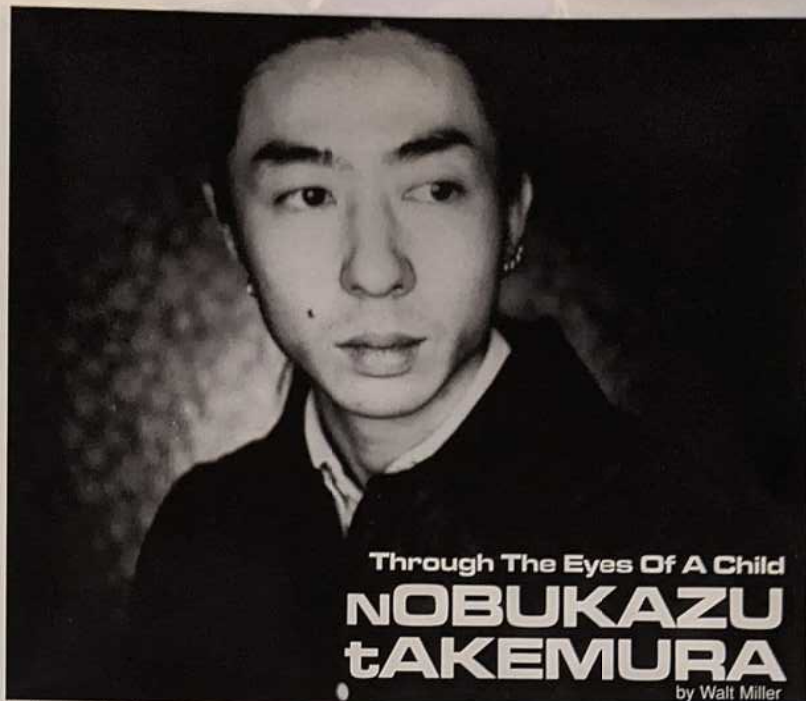
I wasn't here then so it wouldn't be right for me to comment but it's a shame, cos that was a good question! One thing I will say is this. We can only release maybe 20 records a year. Otherwise we get accused of putting too many things out. "The public cannot buy all of them" WHY NOT? STOP buying other shitty records. Ours will last you forever and dont all sound the same!

As a consequence we have our release schedule pretty much sorted for the next 6 months. We have a record out in October that has been around on test pressing for about a year. We are working as fast as we can!

What's the future of electronic music? Judging from the demos you receive, do you think there is a proliferation of Aphex/Autechre sound-a-likes, and if so, is that a good or bad thing?

Aphex is the pioneer. His sounds are new. Obviously people are copying his style. People are going to make sounds and have them compared to him, cos he was there first. So just cos they sound similar is not necessarily a bad thing. But anything original is a bonus.

But what is the point in making something that sounds like a poor imitation? You might as well listen to the original.



Through The Eyes Of A Child NOBUKAZU TAKEMURA

by Walt Miller

I often wonder where the creative spark originates when it comes to certain weirdly fascinating, prodigious Japanese artists. I guess it makes sense - an industrial, technologically advanced, modern culture, whose only exposure to our mysterious western civilization trickles in drop by drop through their media. Perhaps it's as much a naive but studied attempt to copy these incomplete glances, as it is the urge to create something new?

Take Nobukazu Takemura, who has released a stunning album on Thrill Jockey called "Scope". To the ear, it sounds like a yummy take on avant garde minimalism. Beautiful Reich-esque tones and baffling note progressions meet with musique concrete, random-scounding digitized excretion and R2D2ish gobbletygook. It's a fantastic listen - beatless, but too complex and provocative to pass as ambient. I was thus surprised to learn that Takemura's roots are in hip-hop, a scene in which he was once quite in demand as a DJ, and only to later become disillusioned with it. How does he feel about the Japanese club scene these days?

"It's the worst.", Takemura explains. "At least, I enjoyed it until 10 years ago or so, because I was able to enjoy it through trial and error. It was quite different from now. At that point, there were no rules and information. But, all that Japanese DJs are thinking about now is to get more information from abroad and use it only for themselves. I'm disgusted to see those who change the records in their bag one after another. I think that a good record is not made for the convenience of magazine deadlines and record company release dates."

"Probably, the reason I left the DJ scene is because the meaning of hip hop has changed quite a bit over 10 years. In other words, I misunderstood hip hop."

To know Takemura's former DJing style is to know his motivations.

"I had been playing the mix style of 4 beat Jazz, hip hop, and progressive rock for more than 10 years. For me, the best reason to DJ was to know hip hop and I was really shocked to find out I could manipulate the time by scratching."

Through the course of his career, Takemura has been involved in a myriad of projects. An early one was a hip hop group called Audio Sports, which he formed with Eye Yamatsuka of the Boredoms in '88.

"Eye rapped and I scratched on the turn table. We did many live performances and enjoyed the experience in spite of it being looked upon as heresy."

In 1992, he founded Spiritual Vibes, a 10-piece band that became well-known both in Japan and abroad for their unique DJ techniques. Their music was considered a club music/jazz hybrid - somewhat influenced by John Coltrane, and possessing a natural sense of hip-pop. It was then that Takemura became annoyed by labels.

"In those days, I was fed up with being called "Acid Jazz". The records I released were about the pure fun of Jazz. I had good experiences through the treating of live instruments."

He later went solo, in '94 releasing the acclaimed "Child's View" album - a mix of loungey pop and hip-hop - on Bellissima Records. I wondered how he looked back on that first, very important breakthrough album.

"On my first album, I liked the sound very much but regretted that I used too many people in the process of recording. The goal? I believed I've been doing my own hip hop from start - from DJing to the release of my latest work."

"After I released that album, I was approached to remix works from all over the world, and attracted many young artists who listened to that album and started making music for my own label, Childisc. So, I was encouraged very much."

A '97 follow up album was entitled "Child & Magic". Child. Always "Child" in the name! Why? It would seem Takemura considers naivety a virtue.

"The significance of "Child" for me is to put a face on the sound, while getting rid of the preconception and experience. And also it means to create by intuition and inspiration, what most musicians forget through habits and studying music theory. In other words, the sense of the DJ in 80's hip hop."

So the question I was dying to ask was, how did he go from hip-hop to this album, "Scope"? Where's the connection and what inspired it?

"Because I was able to have my own studio. Since I founded my studio in Kyoto, I have been able to do and try various things, and not care about the time [ie, the expense of paying for studio time]. I think that my sound, itself, has not been changed at all - it's more free than before. But, now by using the hard disc and the computer, I can do more sensitive and complicated work to control the current of time that I used to do by scratching on a turn table."

[To create the music on "Scope"] "I randomized the audio file of music I played myself in real time. In short, I made the

Nobukazu Takemura - cont on page 34

EARWAX

Requisite music reviews for the hard of hearing.

5 syllables
+ 7 syllables
+ 5 syllables
=

HAIKU REVIEWS

AUTECHRE

EP7

(Warp/Nothing)

As a follow up and companion of sorts to LP5, it's probably fitting to compare EP7 (a misnomer of a title as there are 11 tracks clocking in at over 60 minutes) with its predecessor. Only, at this stage of their existence, Autechre albums are as diametrically removed from homogeneity as they are increasingly abstract, making putting their music into words a lesson in futility. With EP7, we get no track names. Just an 8 panel sleeve covered in random looking line art, art that reflects the music perfectly. First, I'll say that between Autechre's last two releases (both of which have linear roots to past output), EP7 is the sludgier of the two, filled with more digital grit and, while rhythmic, possessing less in the way of crisp percussion. Generally, it's more abstract, less punchy than LP5 and in that respect I'll go out on a limb and say EP7 has the edge in complexity. As far as accessibility goes, I felt an immediate connection with it - this is a far easier album than "Chiastic Slide" - and while it's still among Autechre's more out there material, EP7 is very strong. It has enough of the old autechre sound to cling to, but when it comes to an evolving sound, the frontiers these two are now exploring are pretty exciting. My pick of the litter is track 5, a pretty, minimalist composition featuring simple drone-ish tones, digital washes and a metronomic pulse. Excellent. [Maveriq]

DER DRITTE RAUM

Spaceglider

(Ultra)

German technoid Andreas Kruger is bouncing back from an ill fated stint with Harthouse (the late label folded but not before paying him a paltry 90 UK pounds for a full length album and two 12's). Newly signed to Ultra, Kruger continues down the path of hard-driven tech-house with "Der Dritte Raum" (or "The Third Room" en ingles). His approach is smooth but angular according to teutonic tradition, vaguely funky on some tracks, trancy in others - nothing that breaks the mold, but interesting, fun and energetic nonetheless. I would have no problem dancing to this in clubs, and I'm pretty picky these days. [Maveriq]

COYOTE OLDMAN

House Made Of Dawn

(Hearts Of Space)

The duo of Michael Graham Allen and Barry Stramp explore Native Americana, combining new age synthesis and ethereal flute playing. Allen is the principal instrumentalist, blowing out breathy tones on a large variety of flutes that range from hundreds of years to a couple of days in age. Stramp is the studio wiz who manipulates Allen's raw material into the vivid soundscapes heard on House Made Of Dawn. The music of Coyote Oldman has not one beat in sight, painting its purely ambient pictures with long, sometimes minimal notes, solid lows and shimmering highs. The very meaty, very tangible quality of this disc is a big plus and when the album takes a heavy electro-acoustic turn, the resulting effect is transcendent and reminds me of Steve Roach. As far as their approach to the Native American flute

goes, these two are regarded as pioneers so if you've got any interest in this area of world music, you'll want to start here. [Maveriq]

EL STEW

El Stew

(Om Records)

El Stew is a supergroup of sorts, including *DJ Disk* (turntablist, and Invisibl Skratch Piklz clan member), *Brain* (drummer for Primus, session player for Tom Waits, and George Clinton) and *Buckethead* (skilled guitarist who has worked with John Zorn, Bill Laswell and Bootsie Collins). As you might guess, El Stew is based around hip hop foundations courtesy of Disk, but beyond that it's anything goes. This trio has a massive sound - dark, wicked, dirty rhythms, interesting loopage, kitchen sink samples and a seamless, out-there construction that can get tastefully in your face. While Disk drops in his abstrakt scratch attack at choice moments and Buckethead's sparse, atmospheric gee-tar work shines (on "Dim Slim" and the mid-eastern flavored "Arab Mafia"), it isn't clear where Brain's trap set ends and the samples begin - which is cool. At times I was reminded of a more complex DJ Shadow or a more coherent Mix Master Mike, so props to El Stew whose album lives up to the talent of those involved. Maybe America will get over their big beat love affair and sample the real deal.

FANTASTIC PLASTIC MACHINE

International Standard

[Luxury Remixes - US version]

(Emporer Norton)

TAKAKO MINEKAWA

Ximer [Cloudy Cloud Calculator

remix EP]

(Emporer Norton)

Things are going well for Fantastic Plastic Machine (AKA Japanese DJ Tomoyuki Tanaka). An FPM track appears in the new Austin Powers flick, and the demand for his skills took off this summer with tours planned or already completed through Europe, Japan and North America. On top of it all, Tomoyuki pulled a coup of sorts by getting each of his three labels to release a four song remix record, pooling talent indigenous to the label's country. A cool idea! The US mixes on Emporer Norton feature reworkings by The Angel (dark intelligent drum & bass), Los Amigos Invisibles (disco house), DJ Swamp (big beat kitsch) and DJ Me DJ You (psychedelic lounge hop). I'm not too familiar with FPM, but the vocal tracks seem to have provided some fun fodder for the remixers. By far the best mix was The Angel's smart reworking of "Honolulu Calcutta", followed by the fun, bouncier anthemized version of "You Must Learn All Night Long" by DJ Swamp. There is also a Japanese version on *****records (that's not a typo) and a European version on Bungalow Records. Collect em all!

Read the title of her latest backwards and you'll see that Japanese chanteuse *Takako Minekawa* has the itch as well. On Ximer, handpicked artists rework Minekawa's pretty pop exploits from "Cloudy Cloud Calculator" and the results are pretty much outstanding. I'd even venture to say that the mixes are superior to the originals, but then I'd be a fraud cause I haven't heard the origi-

nals. Ok, you caught me, but I don't see how they'd be better. From unconventional d&b by Cornelius (adding some fitting drill breaks to "Milk Rock") and Mark Borthwick/hollAnd (featuring a minimalist drone on "Telstar") to Kid Loco's fluttering organhop mix of "Black Forest" to Oval's skipping ambi-noise transformation of "Internation Velvet" to Nobukazu Takemura's shibuyakei-style-turned-abstract version of "Phonoballoon Song" - whew - this is one diverse and excellent mix collection. For pop that surpasses convention, look no further. As a bonus to us yanks, a couple of mixes by Junior Varsity and Sweet Trip appear on US versions only. [Maveriq]

JEFF GREINKE & ANISA ROMERO

Hana

(First World)

JEFF GREINKE

Ride

(First World)

When it comes to effervescent, electro-acoustic worlds, Jeff Greinke's skill and proliferation is on par with the likes of Steve Roach and Robert Rich. Dozens of albums, film soundtracks, and miscellaneous commissions have notched his belt since 1984, over which time he's built an enviable reputation in the creation of deep, ambient environments. Where Greinke's earlier work bordered on abstraction and elusive textures, his latest material reveals a desire to reach a wider audience.

In 1997, a Greinke and *Anisa Romero* one off multimedia collaboration led to a fruitful partnership and ultimately their haunting album "*Hana*". Romero (better known as singer for Sky Cries Mary) contributes a classic operatic vocal, a morose companion to Greinke's drifting, ethereal multilayers that draw from the spheres of world music, rhythm and dark ambience. A flirtation with traditional song structure can be found on the 4ADish "Smoke", but the majority of "*Hana*" takes on a Greinke quality wherein mood, environment, timbre and rhythm are everything and through which Romero's emotive soprano intertwines. The result is a darkly beautiful, profoundly immersive album. Thankfully, it's not the last as they are said to be working on their next release together.

In an even further departure from his norm, Greinke embraces traditional rock instruments - bass, guitar, drums as well as a little clarinet and cello - on "Ride", a creative expansion of his last album, "Swimming". The results are spectacular coming from a rock standpoint, as any conventional 3 piece band would be lucky to have his magical touch on their music. Once you get used to the idea of Greinke confining himself to jazz/funk basslines and trap kit grooves, "Ride" is a pretty snazzy listen though it gets a bit new agey at times. Ambient textures meshed with fusion rock... I think it's been done before, but I'd bet Jeff's brand is probably among the cream of that crop. Maybe this will expand his audience in the way he desires. [Maveriq]

MUSLIMGAUZE

Hussein Mahmood Jeeb Tehar

Gass

(Soleilmoon)

Bryan Jones was reaching the peak of his popular-

BASEMENT JAXX

Remedy

(XL/Astralwerks)

this is house music as you've never heard before super inventive

DAMASS

Formfreaks

(Dust2Dust)

funk breakbeat masters Mr. Dan and Massimo rockin' the party

JASON RUBENSTEIN

Cathedral

(Gearhead)

moody pianos atmospheric new age/rock of high quality

BILL RIEFLIN

Birth Of A Giant

(FWD)

"messy pop" record Fripp, Walk and Gunn contribute not too shabby, Bill

THE ECHO ORBITER

A Moment In Life That's Right

(self release)

Strange bits of bizarre Alternative rock trio Moment passed me by

DEADSTOCK

Kaned

(TCM)

alterna big beat 3 identical mixes wake me up later

CORNELIUS

Cornelius reMixes

(Matador)

gets remodeled by Coldcut, High Llamas, UNKLE an intriguing batch

CORNELIUS

Fantasma reMixes

(Matador)

Coldcut, High Llamas UNKLE get remodeled as an intriguing batch

AMEN

Sunglow

(Primal)

just what we needed more arena techno/rock will we ever learn?

The Now Sound Of

URSULA 1000

(Eighteenth Street Lounge Music)

"now sound"? how ironic Theivery signing goes bust a misuse of kitsch

ICARUS

Fijaka

(Recordings Of Substance)

smarty drum n' bass up there with Photek n' shit muy excelente

ity when this album was being prepared for release. The limited edition "fan-club" releases were selling briskly and he was making plans to do yet another tour of the far-east as well as a brief stint in the US. It seems like forever, but it's only been a matter of months (January to be exact) since he passed away, leaving a legacy of over 100 releases. Some magazines have been known to criticize Muslimgaze much in the same way they criticize AC/DC: every album sounds the same. As this may be true, it's that they do it so well that makes you want more. Each album has its own spin on the sound of Muslimgaze, much like the same way children of the same parents share common characteristics. The exception with the "gifted & talented" of the children. The bass lines work like a steady chant while other sounds whirl around distorted (as in mutated) middle-eastern melodies... borrowing harmonically from Islamic tonal structure. Even after death, Bryan continues to be prolific. Judging from the amount of material yet to be released, he will continue to do so for as long as the sun sets in the west. Moral: Grandpa died and was resurrected after three days, but no one called him the son of God; they just said, "Hey, that's Gramps!" [Paul]

LOW Secret Name (Kranky)

Ever wonder why certain groups keep rehashing their sound to capture the faded glory of hits long past? Not the case with Secret Name. Here the band has taken the maxim of "thinking out of the box" and come away redefining who they are and what they are about. I've listened to this album six... maybe seven times and with each I've been successful in falling into a deep, deep sleep by around song four, Weight of Water. A powerful trick which has made me proud to say that I should be afraid to play this album while operating heavy machinery or swimming in the pool. The band was once an admirer of Red House Painters and that's well and good. But this album takes their borrowed sound and flips the script. It's a beautiful exercise in ambient music via indie experimentation. I received the promo version, but loved it so much that I purchased the album to show my support. [Paul]

FLAMING LIPS The Soft Bulletin (Warner Brothers)

While other bands are pushing the envelope, Flaming Lips seem to not know what to do with it. They were doing so well with a slew of non-AOR releases (especially that almighty four CD set they put out last year). Yet this platter displays a waste of talent which I haven't seen since JFK, Jr. died. Note to members of Flaming Lips: please try harder to justify your existence. [Paul]

NURSE WITH WOUND An Awkward Pause (United Dairies)

Awkward might be a good way to describe the sound of NWW to those who just don't "get it". Not to sound like some sort of elitist, but I always enjoy finding a new NWW release under my tree; waiting to hear the surprises inside. I can't explain why I am so fond of NWW. The music can be jagged, sharp, loud, mellow, soothing all at the same time. I find it difficult justifying the reason to my friends. I just know that when I listen to one of their albums, there is something inside that makes me feel good. NWW's sound has gotten mellower, more subsversive to the effect that it's completing a larger,

intricate puzzle. The sounds, the mood, the rhythms. It makes sense. Kinda like how last night, a group of renegade cows stood around my bed and watched me sleep... much the same way my potatoes do. A classic addition to the NWW oeuvre. [Paul]

AZUZA PLANE Result Dies With The Worker (CCfA/Little Army)

Recorded over the course of eight shows, this sparsely packaged album delivers a lot of punch in a raw, almost pagan view of the Azuza Plane live. This is a setting not common with ambient rock bands and I have to admire the guts it takes to perform this style of music in front of paying customers. I can just see the audience looking at each other wondering "have they started yet?" The mellow repose that haunts The Azuza Plane in the studio is replaced by the loud hum of over-heated tube amps and thundering drums. This has the most desert-island potentialities of any Azuza Plane album (which is saying something) - each listening reveals new layers of subliminal drone. I'd like to see how they plan to top this one. [Paul]

SCHNEIDER TM Moist (Mute)

The press release states that Schneider TM evokes the spell of Aphex Twin's best work. I've got news for you honey, Aphex Twin you are not. Yes, the music has its share of eccentricities in that it's not a million miles away from the bleeps-and-bloops-happiness of his fellow countrymen Mouse on Mars. The music has a light, almost childlike view of the world... innocent yet purposely deceptive that doesn't venture into world funk or acid-breaks. He's riding on the wave of innovative teutonic electronica artists, and doing a fine job of it. Besides, many of you have not heard of Schneider TM which makes it all good. The more obscure this stuff gets, the better. However, I will let you in on the secret that Schneider TM's real name is Dirk Dresselhaus. Maybe you've heard of Dirk while he jammed with Kiss, or even seen him in Goldmine, Melody Maker, or Penthouse. I've read that he enjoys talking to MTV and streaking at festivals. He's also proclaimed that he is an orange teddy bear. Those Germans can be so nutty. [Paul]

JARBOE Anhedoniac (self)

Yes, it was released a year ago, but have you seen any reviews on it? OK, a few... but not enough to give it justice. The music is a combination of experimental ambient sound to almost heavy nightmarish quality soundtrack material. If you played this during Eyes Wide Shut it wouldn't be too far off the mark. I've been a fan of the Swans (and related projects) for years and this one does not disappoint. The accompanying booklet reveals some uhhhh, revealing shots of the missus which I'm not so sure I wanted to see. Go ahead, call me a conservative romantic. Very limited so grab a few while you can and sell them on Ebay for twice what you paid for. Otherwise, point your browser to <http://www.swans.pair.com> to hear samples and place an order. [Paul]

HAFNER TRIO Intoutof CD (Soleilmoon)

I've only recently become an adoring fan of the Hafner Trio. It all started with this album and has pretty much gone downhill from there. Recently re-issued on Soleilmoon in a standard

package, this album is an exercise in steady, non-beat oriented sounds. Part one is more quiet and reserved while part two ventures into louder textures which later subside into the quieter moments again. A brilliant work which reminds me of what it would feel like to float in space. I recommend starting off with this release and moving anywhere in their catalogue from there because these guys haven't made a wrong move yet. [Paul]

DJ RAP Learning Curve (Columbia)

Here's another one that will be ancient news at press time. With a passable set of pipes, Rap plays diva, growing over some pretty average mid tempo breaks and uninspired hooks. I have to say... I was expecting more from the Queen of the Jungle. She's obviously going for that edgy pop aesthetic - a club oriented one that caters to American tastes, and an unexpected shift from the drum & bass standards that she is known to push in her DJ sets. That's not a big deal I guess, but with her latest direction she just doesn't have what it takes to stand out in a crowd. Of course, being that she's DJ Rap and fucking gorgeous will weigh heavily in her favor when it comes to sales. But musically speaking, "Learning Curve" is ok at best. [Maveriq]

CHEMICAL BROTHERS Surrender (Astralwerks)

By the time this issue hits the stands you will have read 1000 opinions about this album, but I feel like I should throw in my 2 cents just for the hell of it. The Chems don't reinvent the wheel, but they do come out with an inspired offering - a combination of techno, breaks, funk and pop worth losing yourself in. Add to this some well utilized guest vocalists - Hope Sandoval (Mazzy Star), Bernard Sumner and Noel Gallagher - and you've got a pretty good album, one that doesn't kiss the ass of dance culture and at times lays more on the fringes. It's a credit to Tom and Ed that they've rebounded from a depressing period of media clumsiness to emerge reacting against all things trite in the homogenous electronic dance movement. [Junebug]

PIZZICATO FIVE Playboy & Playgirl (Matador)

The duo of Yasuharu Konishi and Nomiya Maki turn in US release number four, exploring their bubbly brand of kitschy pop and retro-sensibility - a style known in Japan as Shibuya-kei. As usual, P5 borrows elements of 60's, 70's & 80's western music and offers a distorted reflection. Where their last album, "Happy End Of The World" centered around the pulse of drum & bass, P&P is a return to earlier blends of lounge camp and high-brow comedy. However, the jokes sail right over the head: The lyrics of diva Maki are almost entirely Japanese, but the songs are so friggin' tuneful and catchy, you'll catch yourself humming the hooks in the shower. Pizzicato Five are students of the perfect pop song, and their sound is not nearly as naive as it seems. [Maveriq]

QUAZAR 21 Hours (Superstition)

76 minutes and 12 seconds of well crafted techno/house. Moving from trancelike deep house grooves to retro influences and almost everything in between, "21 Hours" mixes it all up with some fresh sounds and shows us that there is still life out there in danceland. This CD is a comfortable easy listen but it still moves it in all

DEE-EYE-WHY

THE INDEPENDENT AND DEMO-LICIOUS

Maryland's **Fingerpaint** (patrick@his.com) has progressed quite a bit since we last reviewed their material (In Vol 2, No 4). On "Primary Colors: Blue" they proved their expertise in expansive electro-ambient territories, live intuitive looping and improv, but their latest "In The Loop" (a CDR release) channels that skill into the next creative level. One new addition is the breakbeats used in the track "Becoming Visible" which, along with meaty analog, gives the track a startling edge. Other departures include samples of footsteps, brass instrumentation (Is that a trombone in track 27), and bizarre circus-like discord in a couple of tracks. Aside from this, Fingerpaint explore more dark, sometimes unsettling textures that measure up to their usual high quality. "In The Loop" is their best work to date.

More interesting stuff, this time from Dave Bellard and J Mundok's **Jesters Longevity Personnel** (jettlerecords@hotmail.com). A CDR packaged in a neat green little box with silk screened (?) logo, "The Analog Dub Report" kicks things off with a tasty wall of drone then jumps to electronic dub within the same track. On "Masada" we hear almost a dub rock approach (with programmed drums) and "Voodoo Crew", a highlight, sees JLP lean toward Muslimgaze with tranced out, double time, tribal fare. With its verbed out snarers, "Dancehall Monitor" ventures into the ambient dub spectrum, while "Benediction" ends everything with hazy psychedelic hip-hop. Not a bad outing at all, with the choice moments outweighing the underwhelming stuff. Eclectic and a boundary pusher for the most part.

Mount Analog's self titled release on the Pehr imprint (Pehriabel@aol.com) is one that marries processed field recordings (including those culled from his travels to Russia, Turkey and Morocco) with ambient noisescapes, and electronic/acoustic instrumentation. The closest he comes to an actual song construction is the track "Not Trying, Flying", held together by a meandering bass line and scraping percussion, or maybe "All Misty Eyed", a psycho jam of mid-eastern guitars, violins and backward pings. More often than not, MA is shapeless & abstract, discovering new paths in desolation, upping the ante with his takes on minimalist isolationism and musique concrete. With plenty of diversity & chance taking, these 10 experimental tracks make a solid, interesting listen. Try Mount Analog if you like Nurse With Wound.

Hailing from NYC, **Sisko** has a masters in music technology from New York University. His album "Min Max" on EMP (emp@sisko.com) shows that technical training does not make up for cheesy ideas or -most importantly- SENSIBILITY. What is Sisko listening to in his spare time? That would shed some light onto this naive collection of electronic dance. He lists Underworld and Josh Wink as reference points, but he is not even close. Sorry man, your productions are definitely polished, but your tracks sound like sequencer demos and soundtracks to truck driving school commercials. Ugh. If you want to be taken seriously in the underground, please scrap this album or maybe use it as a demo for your engineering skills. Only, take a year off to listen to some current music. And lose the presets. Word to the wise.

Antifade (wkhorse@aol.com) is a drone project built on Travis Hartnett's processed guitar and Jon Coats' unconventional beats to move things along. On their self released "Black Panel Mix", their atmospherics are dark and austere, and if the beats were beefed up and more regimented Antifade would come close to Scorn territory. There are some really nice things to be heard on this disc - the hypnotic grooves and harmonic drones of "Rusted Hinge", the pulse-driven allenscapes of "Oil Drum" - but as a whole "BPM" is a bit uneven as certain tracks cannot sustain a complete listen. Nonetheless, this is a good effort and their technique should improve over time.

HIP HOP AND YOU DONT STOP!

By Rod Miller

With their first release **"2000 Fold"**, **Styles of Beyond** (Hi-Ho Records) set out to restore credibility and love to hip-hop music as they recognize the lack of depth and intellect that disenfranchised many true-hip-hop-appreciatin'-heads. Don't let the cheesy overdone millennium reference fool you. These nubes know what time it is as the foursome of Ryu, Takbir (Lyricists), DJ Cheapshot, and 40 (the human beat box) come out with a genuinely fresh style that doesn't try to cater to the bullshit pop market. Ryu and Takbir have solid, witty flow-styles that buck the annoyin' trend of the broken and sloppy flows of the late nineties. Of course there's maestro DJ Cheapshot, who lays down tight, inventive basslines with skillz on the decks. So if you are in the market for new hip-hop and you don't want to buy an album that typically boasts overdone samples and plain lyrics - Styles of Beyond delivers.

Now to a man who continues to pioneer after countless releases. **"Kool" Keith Thornton** (aka Dr. Octagon/Ultramagnetic MC's) drops **"Black Elvis/Lost In Space"** from Columbia's hip-hop label Ruffhouse. Kool Keith remains the confident and credible visionary that he has been since the early Ultramagnetic days when he and other old skoolers didn't have the convenient media outlets like BET and hip-hop based radio stations to circulate their music to the people. They survived on true skillz. But unlike many old-skool headz who succumbed and faded to newer hooks, Keith maintains timeless and unmatched deliveries. I was particularly impressed with his bold, rhythmic verses on "Rockets on the Battlefield" and "Master of the Game". And not to be overlooked are his produc'n' talents. A self-touting "bassline freak", his unique sinister and spaced-out scores grant emphasis to his vocals. **Black Elvis/Lost In Space** is more than worth the purchase.

For a change in origin let's switch vibes from the US to the UK That's right, folks - the UK is stacked with studio talents that I'd go as far to say - surpasses many of our complacent-tired-trend-followin' producers. Without question, the US will always prevail on the verbal aspect, but the UK, whose emphasis on organically produced beats have drawn many of our overlooked but more than capable M.C.'s to collaborate with avant-gardish approaches and concepts.

That bein' said, **The Herbaliser's** 3rd release **"Very Mercenary"** from Ninja Tune back's up my bold statements with a smile. The duo of funky-jazzhead Jake Wherry and multifaceted DJ Ollie Teeba put out yet another vibed-out, affectionate composition. Organic instrumentation, old skool beats, and inventive samples laced with thick flows by What What, Latryx, Dream Warriors, Rooks Manuva, and Bahamadia define **Very Mercenary**. Highlights are "When I Shine", "Moon Sequence", and "Shattered Soul" although there aren't any bad tracks. I'm sure if they pushed themselves with Freestylers-like PR The Herbaliser would grow on the "true" hip-hop masses. However, it's a shame that bein' from the UK reduces their exposure. Oh Well. Hip-hop fans are missin' out.

Another European-based artist whose future looks bright is **Touche' of The Wiseguys**. Mergin' the hip-hop and dance (breaks) scenes on **"The Antidote"** has given Touche's Wiseguys (Hi-Ho Records) some dubious commercial recognition in the UK as the first single "Oo la la" is now a Budweiser commercial (how american of them). However, the track debuted in the top 5 on UK charts and The Wiseguys are an overseas success. The Antidote is generally a decent album due to their up-tempo breaks but their hip-hop style is very similar to that of an old Beatnuts release, therefore, I feel like I've heard it before. So if you haven't heard anything from the beatnuts, you'll probably be satisfied with **The Antidote**.

And finally **SON Records's** first CD release, **"Year One"**, represents the strength and diversity of UK-hop to the fullest. Featured are potent linguistics from fresh faces and old skool undergrounders, who take a common perspective with typically aggressive, self-boastin' verses of those who want to turn headz as they announce their presence. But no matter as the lyrics effectively enhance some masterful basslines that will raise eyebrows. Highlight tracks are "Deejays and Emcees" by label front man Mad Doctor X and Def Tex's "Poetic Speech Techniques". This album definitely possesses crossover appeal and could compete in US pop/underground markets with the Redmans and the Lord Tariq/Peter Gunz's.

the right places. From the Lil Louis "French Kiss" influenced "Hello," to the smooth pump of "Nu Treasure," 21 Hours keeps a solid pace throughout. If you like the sounds of 808 State and Underworld, you'll definitely enjoy Quazarr. [Clarence]

WAVE WORKERS FOUNDATION In The Whirlpool (Pendragon)

This is experimental electronic music without the ostracism that happens way too often when an artist wants to be different. It's different enough to stand out from the rest but still listenable over and over again. For the most part it's fairly dark but not in anyway depressing. The beats are everything from trip hop to funky breaks to standard trance techno to d&b, but WWF have slightly skewed the rest of the mix. Sitar, trumpets and real drums add to a soundscape laced with all the things we've become familiar with in this genre of music. A definite pleasant change without shoving it down your throat. [Clarence]

NAKED FUNK Evolution Ending (Palm Pictures)

This is some mean ass shit here. Not too many people are layin' down grooves this funky these days. Everyone seems to be depending on the beat to set the groove, but Naked Funk are workin' synth riffs like nobodies business. Lots of other stuff goin' on too. Little bits of contemporary jazz shine through in songs like "The Fan" while "Trango," "Gilly Priest" and "Sour Angelica" offer up some wicked big beats. "Sumatra Road" sets some new standards for moving from ambient like grooves to heaviosity and back again. Acoustic guitar drives the beautiful but funky "Sana Lay." Did I mention that this was a funky CD? [Clarence]

ORBITAL The Middle of Nowhere (FFRR)

I had read a few mediocre reviews on this album before I had a chance to listen to it. I'm happy to say that they didn't influence me in the least bit. I don't want to offend anyone out there but it seems that in this day of basement studios and 1 hit wonders, people who truly compose music tend to get overlooked in favor of the flavor of the month. While La Douche and N Suck are charting singles, bands like Orbital and a handful of others are putting out unparalleled music that should be raising the bar for everyone. This CD is a superb collection of songs that sound and move like nothing else. Orbital puts more into 1 song than some artists put into an entire CD (or catalog for that matter). The Middle of Nowhere kicks off with "Way Out" and "Spare Parts Express" both which have the gorgeous layering of instruments that Orbital have become masters of. There is so much to hear in these 2 songs alone. The inclusion of female vocals on the tracks "Ontono," "Nothing Left 1" and "Nothing Left 2" only heightens the already spectacular mix. I can't imagine anyone not liking this CD. Perhaps there are a few reviewers out there that need to take another listen. [Clarence]

MOBY Play (V2)

A while back I downloaded "Honey" off the Internet. Interesting but it didn't move me like I had expected. So when I was finally handed a copy of "Play" I was excited but a little apprehensive. What would my hero be up to now, I

wondered? I had played to death everything I could previously get my hands on of his. I had embraced and enjoyed "Animal Rights" knowing that it was a need to branch out and escape the limits that the techno arena was imposing on him. But I was longing for the grandiosity of another "Go." Well, the beat is a little different on Play but the grandiosity is still there, albeit in a different way. With only one up-tempo track (Machete), Play is a whole new vibe. Several songs are built around samples of early 1900s black folk music. A feat that few artists could have pulled off but Moby did it effortlessly. There are some beautiful instrumentals here and Moby has probably written his finest piece of work with "Rushing." Rarely am I moved emotionally by a song like I am with this one. It is truly one of the most beautiful songs I've ever heard. I can't say enough good about Play. While the "Everytime You Touch Me" fans might be a little disappointed, those of us who appreciate him for his constantly ever changing musical contributions will enjoy this as the gem that it surely is. [Clarence]

HATE DEPT. Technical Difficulties (Restless)

According to their press release for the single "Release It" which was released late last year, Hate Dept. recorded everything from bare bones using real drums, guitars, bass, and keyboards which were then run through a computer. The end result is an overall electronic sound which retains small organic touches throughout. What stands out the most on this CD however, is the pop sensibilities of melody and song structure. Most songs are very typically verse-chorus-verse which isn't necessarily a bad thing.....just unusual for a band with industrial/techno musical stylings. It doesn't always work though. There are a few songs that come off sounding a little bit like the fake rock heard in bad teen B movies which I would have to blame on the style of vocal harmonizing they use. But when it does work it works very well. The overall sound of the music is above average utilizing all the right beats and synths. Guitars are used well and aren't corny or overdone. The groove is always funky and tailor made for dance, with the exceptions being the slow songs, or in this case, the ballads. Definitely a good CD in general and much more deserving of obtaining recognition and charting singles than bands like Gravity Kills. [Clarence]

SWANS Public Castration Is A Good Idea CD (Thirsty Ear)

Let's talk about the music since the packaging is completely terrible. Some things are sacred; like the cross. My particular cross to bear as of late has been this live album from the Swans which was recorded during their 1986 tour of the UK. It was released by the band and has been out of print since I don't know when. Now that it has been re-issued, this little gem of a release has been BLASTING at my office to the complete dis-comprehension of many (ie- what the FUCK are you listening to NOW???) to the total respect of those few that "get it". The very title of this album gives the purpose away: this music delivers a religious, as opposed to spiritual, experience. God created the world, but she/he/it/whatever left it unfinished. It's the job of the humans do what God either CAN-NOT do or WILL NOT do. Making this music is one of those jobs. And it's not like the Swans wrote this music any more than I wrote this review. The Swans were some Goddamn

HAIKU REVIEWS

NALIN & KANE
Beach Ball (DJ Icey mixes)
(Ultra)
floor fillin' mixes
3 Icey. 1 from Tall Paul
lowest common D

EXPLODING THUMBS
The Beginning Of Blue
(Holistic Recordings)
mind boggling sounds
lo fo mix of indie funk
and post rock tech-pop

SLICK SIXTY
nibs and nabs
(Mute)
mute is branching out
breakbeat playground's kinda fun
but not fun enough

u-ziq
Royal Astronomy
(Astralwerks)
more great melodies
plus lighter beats and vocals
Mikey is da man

MR. SCRUFF
Keep It Unreal
(Ninja Tune)
Ninja's strangest disc
quirky hip hop makes me laugh
hear me laugh and laugh

ANIMUS AMOUR
Don't Run Unless God Says
(Ellipsis Arts)
Mr. C's return
boring organica to
avoid at all costs

KING KOBA
Enter The Throne Room
(Second Skin)
some silky sonics
souful hip hop / drum n' bass
lounginess for the hips

JOY ELECTRIC
Christiansongs
(BEC Recordings)
Christian synthpop fluff
sickly upbeat melodies
makes my stomach ache

HERE
Brooklyn Bank
(Invisible)
sulen cyber grit
not bad, hardly groundbreaking
where are you, King Trent?

TOTAL ECLIPSE
Access Denied
(Blue Room)
breakbeat/trance hybrids
some cool moments in there but...
not interested

SUBROSA VS SHI-RANUI
(Sub Rosa)
experimental
Japan breaks n' beats label
gets Rosa treatment

NUPHONIC PRESENTS
Rootdown 99' compiled by Rainer Trüb
(Nuphonic)
finest future jazz
downtempo lounge to sweat to
choice artist mixture

Motherfucking Thing that needed to express itself. The irony is that this album effectively updates both the "epic" and "heavy" strategies of music, which makes me wonder if this is in fact what the future of rock music was supposed to be in the first place. [Paul]

PLAID Rest Proof Clockwork (Nothing/Warp)

Through their work on a heavily praised sophomore effort, 1998's "Not For Threes", Ed Handley and Andy Turner reestablished themselves as electronic heavyweights following a not exactly amicable departure from the seminal trio. The Black Dog. A tall tale construction that shows the pair was responsible for quite a bit in their former group continues in "Rest Proof Clockwork", a charming third album that works well without a lot of clichéd techniques. Their signature sound is built on complex melodies and counter melodies - emotive voice pads and bell tones that work as a cohesive whole rather than something entirely hummable. Rhythmically there is more going on than meets the eye (or ear). They don't bash us over the head with "crunchy" beats or rapid-fire breaks. Instead, tracks tend to develop their own intrinsic groove - sometimes flavored by a latin touch and sometimes with the help of only the slightest percussion (on RPC specifically, even guitar comes into play). The result is subtle excellence - think of it as very cool easy listening. Fans of "aimless" ambient-electronikers like Boards Of Canada might give this a try. [Maveriq]

SOUL ECSTASY Music From The Original Motion Picture (Emperor Norton)

This ain't your typical movie soundtrack. When "Soul Ecstasy" opened in the summer of '72, the wacky subject matter - Black Panthers teaming up with Chinese commies, the kidnapping and sale of young girls to Hong Kong brothels, young men chemically transformed into drag queens - engendered a fear of violent repercussions, so the film was shut down soon after and only a lucky few have viewed this film. To this day there isn't a complete print known to exist. The Inner Thumb - a band led by the late Ricardo Tubbs - composed the entire score, and the idea was to merge the sounds of New York City and Hong Kong, the two locales where the movie was shot. The result is a 70's style, cannabis-funk/rock (some of it interlaced with bits of eastern elements) that takes the Blaxpotation sound in a couple of "new" directions. Classic and kitschy, Soul Ecstasy is no Shaft but the interesting historical footnotes increase this release's novelty value. [Maveriq]

MILES DAVIS / VARIOUS DJS Panthalassa - The Remixes (Columbia)

Much has been made of Bill Laswell's reconstructions of Miles Davis' early 70's electric period, and here Laswell & Columbia milk it just a bit more - and how typical in this day and age, but we'll forgive 'cause the mixes aint too shabby. The first happens to be my fav - "Shhh" reworked by King Britt & Phillip Charles - and stays true to the essence of Davis, starting off with chaotic, brass-laden atmospheres while slowly fading in some totally appropriate kicks to add to its otherworldly qualities. Brilliant. Laswell and DJ Krush each turn in some mixes of "On The Corner" - Krush, the better of the two, with tougher beats and loose

IMPORTS

By MAVERIQ w/special thanks to
ARTHUR AN DUTCHLEAST

Belgian label **Silver Recordings** is making some big waves in the minimal techno arena with a roster that has label boss, Koen Lybaert, spinning around like a top with production credits and collaborations. With the project **Minion**, Lybaert and Dutch producer Jan Duivenvoorden represent one of the stronger outings on Silver. On full length **"The Crash Session"**, Minion's brand of stalwart thump and sublime funk is at once compelling and endlessly hypnotic. While minimal, the duo chuck plenty of stuff - intricate polyrhythms, FX, dynamics - into the productions, keeping the ideas fresh and the feet moving. This is very, very GOOD - someplace in the middle of Basic Channel and maybe Surgeon.

Also excellent is **Holon**, involving Lybaert and Japan's Riou Tomita. On the album **"The Total Fucking Revolution Edits"** the two explore the breakbeat, starting off with a few tracks that range from Scorn-esque pseudo hip-hop to uptempo dronish assaults. Their approach tends to possess the erotic qualities of the minimal style - just without a constant kick. Later on the album the duo switches gears, laying out some fierce, mind bending d&b experimentation and finally some tracks that are purely noise/drone - all good stuff and the latter probably Tomita's influence. With good variety and novel directions, Holon's a winner.

Ironically, Koen Lybaert's solo project **Starfish Pool** is the least extraordinary of Silver's output, judging from **"Dante's Carnival"** released on Silver USA (actually based in Canada). Starfish Pool is all about being minimal, but in this case it's taken too far. The ideas are so flat and boring, the sounds so uninteresting, that there's nothing that compels one to keep listening unless the objective is drowsiness. What's up with that, Koen? More compelling is **"Starfish Pool (Remixed)"** a release featuring the likes of **Unit Moebius, Mark Broom, Dogon Soundsystem** and Holon who revisit the SP material with much juicier results.

Also worth a mention is **Rude 66**, one of the few non-Lybaert releases on Silver and a guy who's recorded for Crammed Discs, Instinct, Djaz-Up-Beats and Bunker/Acid Planet in the past. Rude's **"Safety On Highway R66"** is not quite in sync with the rest of the label's minimal bent. Though there are similarities buried in some of the album's more techno oriented tracks, his style is quite varied and ranges from P-909esque hard square wave noodlings to shuffling chilly beats to industrialish hip-hop equations. Rude 66 is well meaning and a decent ballgame, but nothing I would call too essential.

Lastly, you can sample Silver's roster on **"Real Music For Abstract People"** which is a pretty nice compilation considering it's a label collection. Curious people will find Silver strong and fairly reliable when it comes to releasing quality music.

What kind of music would you expect from 3 guys calling themselves **Deepfried Toguma**? On **"The Hi Fi Companion"** their 2nd album for Plasma Records, the stellar first track "Aquarius" gives you a taste of what's in store: Atmospheric breakbeat paradigms that rest upon gorgeous melodies, processed loops, light guitar work and edgy sonics. The layers of sound are thick and complex, the tonal combinations are utterly organic and moving. A variety of rhythms flow underneath it all, keeping the digitized emotion trickling evenly while dragging the listener along with its current. Maybe it's just the mood I'm in, but the music this Danish trio makes is simply stunning. One of my favorite releases of 1999.

If you're up on your Belgian disco pop circa late 70's/early 80's, you might remember a group called **Telex**, two guys many years ahead of their time when you consider their use of synths, vocoders and electronic beats. Their pioneering sound was a sort of Kraftwerk/Moroder hybrid and

influenced many techno and house producers, particularly those of Detroit. Well, it's time to pay homage. The likes of Morgan Geist, Buckfunk 3000, Carl Craig, Eddie Fowlkes, Stacey Pullen, Juan Atkins, and Ian Pooley have turned in a slew of Telex remixes for two volumes (on SSR/Crammed) entitled respectively **"I Don't Like Music (remixes)"** and **"I (Still) Don't Like Music (remixes Vol 2)"**. If you like your dance music vocoder-heavy and sensibly cheesy (Daft Punk anyone?), these updated pop classics will seem heaven sent, the 2nd volume being particularly good. The nice thing about projects like this is that it reveals another piece in the dance music puzzle of which Telex was a large part. Fun stuff and irresistibly danceable.

Also on SSR/Crammed Discs is **Auto Repeat's** debut, **"The Unbearable Lightness Of Autorepeating"**, and the man behind the madness, Vienna's DJ Elin, makes some tasty-ass four on the floor. The album, which includes material from four highly regarded 12's from the past two years, seems to draw from hard chigago-y house on the surface. But after a lengthy listen, you'll realize 2 things. One, Elin has a seriously warped mind, and two, warped spells fun if you look at the word from the right angle. A perfect example is the track, "Mad Cow" which brings new life into diva house by incorporating well placed "skips" into the relentless loopage. Elin tends to add an experimental touch to most of his tracks and it's pretty delightful if you're open to it, though I could see some of these tracks causing a dancefloor riot for all the wrong reasons. For something more straight up, check out the bonus mixes by DJ Sneak, Paul Johnson and Carl Craig.

You may have seen a lot of coverage on London's **ROTHKO** recently and with good reason. The 3 piece band uses only bass guitars but they make the utmost use of them on their Lo Recordings debut, **"A Negative For Francis"**. The trio's sound is a selective combination of atmospheric, melodic songish introspection and minimal drones of which a reference point might be Labradford. The moods range from violent to plaintive to beautiful. No beats. No samples. Just bass, bass, bass and how sweet it is. At first, an all bass combo might come off as some sort of gimmick. But when you think about it, an approach like that forces one to innovate or fail. This is excellent music - ambient stuff that bites with fresh sounds and process.

On a similar tip is **Stars Of The Lid** whose album **"Avec Laudemum"** (on Sub Rosa) I can't recommend highly enough. Using just the latest in analog four track "technology", the duo - Adam Wiltzie who's based in Austin, Texas and Brian McBride who now resides in Chicago - collaborated via mail to make absolutely jaw dropping soundscapes based around droning guitar, thus demonstrating the virtues of simplicity and lo-tech methodology. The album's 5 long, satisfying tracks of pristine ambient texture strike an emotional chord while lulling you into a transcendent zen state of mind. All I can say is Awesome. SOTL breath magic into a tired instrument and are worthy of your attention.

Also on Sub Rosa, **Tone Rec** clocks in with their third album, **"Cocuy Pack"**, wherein we see the foursome vying for the crown of digital error kings. CD skips, DAT manipulation, angular drone and electronic grit are all part of Tone Rec's efforts in deconstructing electronica in the way Tortoise deconstructs rock. Geez, do we have to start calling it "math techno" now? Listening to Tone Rec, I'm reminded of Vinyl Communication's Disc project or something like Farmers Manual. The difference is that Tone Rec tend to be more structured, their geiger clicks, giga-drones and hiccups accompanied by some regimented percussion. If this quartet was more minimal & subdued, a little more spartan, they might approach Pan Sonic territory. As it is, they are somewhere in the middle - a genre yet fully untapped, but still strangely familiar - like if the Mego label used more drum machines.

They may make dead composers turn in their graves, but **Instrumental's "Acoustek"**

(on the Factor 1 label) takes on techno/electronica by juxtaposing two sonically opposite approaches. This 6 pieces ensemble - 3 violins, a viola, a cello and a double bass - in essence, makes it a point to interpret classic techno tracks like Moby's "Hymn" and The Orb's "Little Fluffy Clouds" (a reworking that got Alex Paterson's attention and instrumental a spot opening for The Orb's 1995 dates in London). Huh? I guess this is revenge for Wendy Carlos and Switched On Bach. "Acoustek" is sort of fun in a way, and ballsy - they actually cover Plastikman's "Consumed". But while the musicians are very talented and they play their hearts out on these covers, in the end it's a corny thing to do. A novelty. How often would one listen to it?

Sneaker is a side project of Mark Clifford who is better known for his stellar work in various electronic mediums with projects like Seefeel, Disjecta and Woodenspoon. If you approach **"Pseudo Nouveau"** (on Cocteau Twin label, Bella Union) expecting the same sort of sounds, you'll most likely be disappointed. Joined this time by a jazz vocalist, Clifford lays down some darkish, rather unimpressive lounge/backing tracks that, when combined with the sultry crooning of Sophie Hinkley, gives off a vaguely gothic electronica vibe that seems a little too familiar. Hinkley is a decent singer, sounding a little like Sarah MacLaughlin on the opener. But to me the music comes off rigid and unsurprising, especially when you consider the times and the territory other artists of his ilk are covering. I know Mark can do better than this.

Taking the prize for most difficult moniker in '99 is **Si-(CUT).DB** (pronounced Syc Kut Dee Bee), but we'll call him Douglas Benford if you don't mind. Doug has some impressive credentials. He worked with Scanner on last year's Bovine Revolver EP, and has collaborated/remixed/produced with Andrew Weatherall, Momus, Sarah Cracknell and Add N To X. His debut for the Sprawl label is called **"Rate Of Living"** and it's thick full of melodies (none of which I'd call gorgeous) and complex, off kilter grooves that keep-a-going. The first track sounds like Autechre, but thereafter Doug retreats into his own world incorporating such elements as bossa nova, drum & bass, steel drum music, electro, jazz & other things that aren't so obvious. As far as IDM goes, Si-(Cut).DB is inventive and original, but there was something about it that prevented me from fully warming up to it. The percussion, maybe, which was skillfully done but intrusive at times. Oh well, at least his rhythms aren't *crunchy*.

Phil Klein's **Bass Junkie** project is yet another soldier of the electro rank & file, workin' it on the front lines. On the Breakin' Records label, Klein collects 8 unreleased tracks and 4 from previous EPs to form the meat of **"Bass Time Continuum"**. It's what you might expect - vocoders, samples, tough breakbeats... a mixture heavy on the authentic old skool soundz, with some modern methodologies thrown in for good measure. There are some standouts: "A New Order Of Intelligence" is a pretty epic track. But what can I say? I like electro as much as the next guy. No, really. Some of my best friends are electro. It's just that when you have a guy like Ed DMX around, that's all you really need to keep a cliché alive, isn't it?

Richard H Kirk never stops. On his own label, Alphaphone, he's put out another nice one under the moniker **Al Jabr**, that when translated means algebra in Arabic. Pret-ty clever, Rich. **"One Million And Three"**, explores the math side of world music, an approach that echoes eerily of ethno techno but don't you worry. When Kirk has his hands in the process, you can be assured it won't come from the assembly line. With breakbeats & interwoven melodies, this is pleasant, immediate, tranced out fare that really doesn't join in the big culture raid for new sounds, considering the approach. Some of the rhythms are a little world-esque, and dub rears its head a few times, but other than that Al Jabr is another fresh, groovy release from the elder statesman. Oh yeah, there's a politico message in this that was entirely lost on me.

freeflow around the Miles hook - while Jamie Myerson and Doc Scott reduce "Rated X" to a more mathematical d&b (Scott especially so). DJ Cam's lighter-than-air remix of "In A Silent Way" rounds out the collection with a soulful trip into hop. If you like remixes, go for it. [Delilah]

LOOP GURU

The Fountains Of Paradise (Hypnotic)

BANCO DE GAIA

The Magical Sounds Of Banco De Gaia (Six Degrees Records)

In a post-Enigma world, two veterans of ethno-electronica continue to plug away...

For "The Fountain Of Paradise", Loop Guru reaches once more into the Catalogue Of Desires, their own cassette-only, pre-Nation-Records material. Here, as they revisit the first two volumes -- they rereleased the third volume fairly recently -- we find the group surprisingly strong in its youth. In those days, their attention to the dancefloor was slight and coincidental judging from these 14 continuous tracks (which range from retro-ambient chiller to ritualistic breakbeat to eastern zen minimalism, all sitarized and digitized for your enjoyment). The flow is seamless and the material, which rides on the current of higher enlightenment, stands tall next to their latest work.

Banco De Gaia's Toby Marks has been mining world beat sounds as long as anyone, and he's recognized for being a pioneer in the genre. But after the cool inventions of last album, "Big Men Cry", his latest "Magical Sounds" offer little to bite into except fluffy sweetness - a musical cotton candy. It's an expertly crafted production, no doubt about it, full of lively ethnoting melodies and world-esque rhythms merged with the club floor experience. But while it's immediately pleasing to the ear, nothing sticks. (kind of like progressive house) There are moments of inspiration, but not enough to keep this one from the middle of the road. [Delilah]

NINE INCH NAILS

The Day The World Went Way CD single (Nothing/Interscope Records)

Finally! Something from the highly anticipated and long awaited (and still waiting) new NIN release. If this 3 song single is a sample of what is to come then bring it on. Like this year, please? First and third songs are the title track. I won't even try to dissect this one as far as lyrics go. It could be about anything. All I can say is that maybe Trent is still feeling a little down. While it has touches of "Reptile" style guitars and the painful vocal stylings of "Hurt" it manages to be somewhat melancholy. This song is minimalism at it's finest. All that and a Beatlesque na na na finale. Track 3 is a beautiful, darker remix of the title track without the guitars. This one definitely shines among the 2 versions. That brings us to the second song. What can I say about "Starfuckers, Inc.?" This is a blistering tour de force that seems to have picked up where Trent left off with Marilyn Manson's Antichrist Superstar. Using a Kiss "Shout It Out Loud" sample and lines from Carly Simon's "Your So Vain" as well as lines like "and when I suck you off not a drop will go to waste....it's really not so bad you know once you get past the taste" Could he be trying to shock and offend us? Nah. Whatever the intention is, it's fucking blistering and guarantees to

VOID X-Factor 12" (Matador Records)

"What we've got here is failure to communicate", to say the least. I'm really hoping that these were experimental pieces because if they weren't Void is gonna become Void where prohibited and that's going to be just about everywhere. While I was trying to listen to this

I felt like I was stuck in a demonic factory. There was a bunch of industrial type noises and an overabundance of distorted bass. The distortion on the bass was so overwhelming you couldn't hear the rest of the crap that was playing and I kept on checking my speakers, cartridges, and mixer because I honestly thought something was set wrong or broken. The only good thing about this 12", other than the end, was every now and then there would be an occasional section of decent beats rather than some clutter of distortion. [Mike D.]

ELECTRO LOUNGE

Electronic Excursions in Hi-Fi Stereo 12" (The Right Stuff)

Your a raver Charlie Brown!! That's what I thought of while listening to this. I especially liked the songs "Watermelon Man" and "Gopher". This 12" sounds like something straight out of Peanuts. It starts out slow and soft with just a piano playing a melody. Then the bass kicks in and then soon enough so does the soulful saxophone. All these elements collide to form an awesome, jazzy, Latin beat with a twist of techno and a splash of tango. [Mike D.]

SCHOOLY D.

Mr. Big Dick 12" - remixed by Pimp Juice - (EK [Eat Knowledge])

The song "Mr. Big Dick", even though remixed by Pimp Juice, still contains Schooly D's old skool rhyme skillz. Accompanying the rhymes is a juiced up jungle beat making for a strong collaborative mix. There are also 2 other songs on this 12". One is "Dub" which is just the instrumental part of "Mr. Big Dick" which doesn't really work on its own. The other song is "Bonus Beats" which is also instrumental. Either way both these songs are not that great for the fact that they are real repetitious and become somewhat monotonous. [Mike D.]

KID 606

Dubplate Style EP (Vinyl Communications)

The infamous Kid 606, who has gleefully built his name on noisy gabba breakbeat fuckery, mines some of his best tracks from the delightfully juvenile album "Don't Sweat The Technics". Dub Plate '99, sounding quite identical to the CD version, kicks things off with its massively tweaked and twisted break attack - think Alec Empire with a lobotomy. Next comes his magnum opus, "Don't Sweat The Technics", lifted right off the album and pumping out a relentless gabba kick behind adrenal snare-driven madness. If this 12" had a DJ track, this would be it. On the flip, you'll hear a Lexaunculpt mix of "Don't Sweat" that is the antithesis of the original - quite mellow and melodic with slight IDM rhythms. It's a nice mix, but I wouldn't have guessed the source had I not read it. More successful is Matmos' mix of Dubplate Style which chews up the track's original breakbeats and spills them over a kind of conventional four-on-the-floor-ish beat. Eventually the whole track disintegrates into a wounded husk and ends its own life with a dying shriek. 2 other tracks of extreme noise round out an EP only a mother could love. [Maveriq]

SAGE / DJ ABSTRACT split Downcast / Aura 1 EP (Green Label)

DJ Sage is a Belfast-born, San Fran resident releasing here her first track, "Downcast" which is drum & bass with a nice twist in the rhythm - it has to do with where the kicks are

placed. Not what I'm used to hearing, but it works well, and she's not apeing the UK (a big plus). The track is kind of dark and minimal - almost tech stepish - with growling sub bass and nice peripheral sounds. It sizzles, and I like it. The DJ Abstract cut, "Aura 1" is harder and a bit more typical in the presentation: dark, tech-basslines and minimal, stutter step rhythms under a blanket of sinister synth plings and washes. Starts out nicely, but by the end I'm pretty darn bored. Overall this 12" is a nice peek into the San Fran scene. [Junebug]

FOUR TET / ROTHKO Rivers Become Oceans (Lo Recordings)

Four Tet (AKA Kieran Hebden of Fridge) and Rothko (the band of the three bass playing amigos) collaborate with some damn fine results. "Rivers Become Oceans" is on the avant rock tip, where side A features an ever changing variety of mid tempo postrock rhythms, experimental sounds and interwoven bass guitar melodies and counter melodies that are in no rush to get anywhere. Side B - a continuation/2nd version of the title track - keeps the studied melodies of Side A and gradually buries them under glorious, screaming noise only to fade into ambient/concrete musings. Excellent meeting of the minds, but stick with Side B for the juice. [Maveriq]

ANDREW COLEMAN Blame It On Adam 12" (Thrill Jockey)

This 12" was quite a surprise because the last thing I heard from Mr. Coleman was his very beat oriented, drill 'n bass project, Animals On Wheels. I have to say that I find his new directions, which are much more on the meandering ambient side of things, more interesting presently than formerly. Moody pianos, plaintive drones, and the occasional understated, erratic rhythm gel together to create a very unique sound. His drifting swatches of tone warp in and out of key ever so slightly, making a first time listener check his player for a loose belt. With wafting tides of nu-lounge, subtle melody and understated rhythm, Coleman casts a pensive glance to the future. [Delilah]

ECHO PARK Needed EP (Lo Recordings)

Echo Park seamlessly mix post rock and funky groove, wherein programmed/sampled loops typically anchor down atmospheric noise and experimental noodling. While their rhythms make you want to dance, their layered barages of nervous sonics make you want to inhale paint thinner. Opener, "Mocosa" is a tangle of bootie breaks, swelling brass and tension building discord in the traditions of Third Eye Foundation, while "30ft Jelly" kicks the tempo down a notch for some sinister loungehop fuckery. On the flip we get two tracks off of Echo Park's highly touted album "The Revolution Of Everyday Life". "Needed" is hypnotic funk rock with layers of shimmering noise courtesy of Thurston Moore and a haunting sound bite - the best track on the EP. To close things out, we've got "The Sound Of Money", a remix that adds some scratching into the equation and ends up with something a little more suited for clubs, for better or worse. [Maveriq]

LEXAUNCULPT Double Density EP (Orange)

Gonzi Merchan's fledgling Orange label wisely launches with 19 year old Alex Graham, AKA Lexaunculpt, one of the latest U.S. teen prodigies to rise to IDM superfar status. With a resume that includes a 12" on Isophlux, he will remind you of a couple of other also-strangely-named electronica savants, but that's okay. Lex seeks to perfect certain already proven techniques, and he's

VINYL

getting closer than a lot of others. "Double Density" favors light floating melodies, percolating clicks, pops and digital dirt, DSP FX and the occasional urbane sample - all laid over mid tempo IDM style hiphop. The futuregruv of "cold drawing the beat dots" the heart tugging "then she said", the avant-funkish "my peach and my pear" are all examples of superlative track production with emotional impact. "Ilevi" - a favorite and somewhat of a centerpiece - sputters rhythmically before going mad with a barrage of big laconic beats. And the sublime rhythms of "Feruarie" are built around a Matmos-style, ballon-friction type sound that adds quite a punch during a clever middle breakdown. This is an excellent EP. It's nice to see America is holding its own with the rest of the world, even if it means all of our upper class artists are snout nosed kids. [Maveriq]

NOBUKAZU TAKEMURA Meteor 12" (Thrill Jockey)

Takemura's stance - that his latest output (specifically his recent full length, "Scope") is a direct extension of hiphop and his DJ experiences - will befuddle most, though I think he was talking about approach rather than sound. To the average ear, his new work has more in common with minimalist composers like La Monte Young or Steve Reich (for whom Takemura did a remix earlier in the year). Title track "Meteor" is a swirling mash of melodic tonal loops, digital clips, and female vocals - sampled, processed and assimilated back into the stew. This track builds slowly, in time becoming more dense and developing its own inherent groove without the aid of noticeable percussion. It's wierd, and it's really good. While "Meteor" is on the ambient tip, the flip contains "Wax And Wane", a track with plenty of rhythm & hooks - thus more structure and a better (still-stretching-it) argument for hip hop. "W&W" shares the freeform qualities of the A side, but its wayward sine waves are anchored with a sort of experimental bossa nova. The annals of music history will look back on Nobukazu Takemura most favorably. [Maveriq]

SPEEDY J Ieee Mitten Menu 12" (Novamute)

"Ieee Mitten Menu" doesn't resemble anything we've heard from Jochem Paap thus far. Side A's Nutt Mix of the title track is pseudo-industrial robo-discofunk, replete with a heavy rigid beat and an electric Cafe-ish vocal bite. While the Nutt Mix is sinister and minimal, the Mint Mix on side B is tamer, kicking things off with a vaguely conventional breakbeat and the scent of lounge funk - a benign stew that explodes into welcome techno babble at the end. Both mixes are pretty good, the former obviously having more of a dance-floor appeal. But where Paap excels is on "Fart Essen", the last track on the B: a noisy splatter founded on hard, minimal kicks which Paap fucks with to his heart's content. DJs, play at own risk. - [Maveriq]

STARFISH POOL Rituals For The Dying 10" (Conspiracy Records)

Dark, minimal techno of the superb variety saturates this Belgian release. Side A, a piece entitled "Rituals For Dying 5 AM - Liquid for females" takes us on a disturbing ride of 4 on the floor, immersed in gloriously thick & perverted noisy pulsation. On the flip, we're met with "Rituals For Dying 3PM - Walk on high" a claustrophobic thump driven by aquatic, anomalous percussion. Hell yes. - [Delilah]

move the mosh pits to new levels. Frat boys take note. [Clarence]

SKY CRIES MARY **"Until The Grinders Cease"** **(World Domination)**

This is a reissue of the band's debut which never got a proper release stateside. Back then in 1989, SCM was a three piece of Jonathan Auer, Roderick and Ken Stringfellow and their sound was - for the times - pretty cutting edge. The early goth and industrial scenes were around their peaks, and this album is in one sense a nice reflection of what was going on: Programmed beats, dark Bauhaus-y guitars, brooding lyrics. In another sense, Sky Cries Mary danced to their own drummer. They sounded like noone else at the time, utilizing stripped down rhythms, tape manipulation and noise to give their songs an extra edge. They were definitely innovators and it's too bad that this album didn't get more attention, but luckily we have this extra chance to check the band out in the days prior to vocalist Anisa Romero joining. [Maveriq]

BREAKBEAT ERA **Ultra Obscene** **(A&M/1500 Records/XL)**

This d&b supergroup will perk ears because of the involvement of Roni Size and DJ Die, but I'd say the true star has to be Leonie Laws, a Bristol based vocalist who has the best pipes I've heard within a drum & bass framework. The snarling, unblemished quality and jazzy style of her voice gives me goosebumps, it's so regal and confident. I usually hate diva vocals, but she I can listen to all day. And, ok, let's give Roni and Die some credit for laying down some excellent jazz step funk for Leonie to strut down like the runway queen that she is. They've already released a single, imaginatively titled "Breakbeat Era" (an

excellent track which also appears here). Let's see if this album can break open America's fetal position when it comes to anything that's not dance friendly to a retarded monkey. I have nothing against retarded monkeys by the way. [Maveriq]

OMAR FARUK TEKBILEK **One Truth** **(World Class)**

One world, one God, one Truth. World music is a catch-all category that seems to be the depository for anything originating outside the USA - UK/Euro sphere. There are as many styles and sounds as there are countries and cultures. If anyone truly belongs in the World category, it is Omar Faruk Tekbilek, as demonstrated by his new CD, "One Truth".

Tekbilek, a Turkish composer, presents the listener with a full range of Middle Eastern music that reflects his spiritual nature. Powerful, intense yet somehow soothing and sensual, the music undulates through and around the sensory inputs like an ephemeral blanket, touching softly but not intruding rudely.

"One Truth" is a reminder that Turkey was once a major world empire. There are sounds that remind one of current Greek and Eastern European music, plus guitars that sound "flamenco", perhaps reminiscent of Spain's Moorish influences. Intelligent listening music, "One Truth" is highly recommended. [FBU]

SQUAREPUSHER **Maximum Priest EP** **(Warp/Nothing)**

It's now clear that Tom Jenkinson left the psycho drill n' bass at the front office and will not be returning for it anytime soon, as "Maximum Priest" is somewhat of a continuation of his last two releases, the avant jazz of "Music Is Rotted

One Note" and the moody fringe tailoring of "Budakhan Mindphone". There are but four new tracks (three if you discount the 30 seconds of throwaway "Cranium Oxide"). Aside from his accomplished rhythm sections, Tom seems to be concentrating on tonal ambience. Effected sounds, reverberations, light feedback/ drones - all met with vague references to jazz and exotica. It seems awfully subdued until the middle of "You're Going Down" when Jenkinson's pop bass demonstrates a yearning for the crazy rhythms of a former life. These new directions are generally pleasing, so shut up and get used to them.

The man who vowed never to do another remix lets three artists take a shot at his own stuff. Autechre deconstructs "Two Bass Hit", digitally crunching the bass line and ending up with a glitch driven IDM minimalism, while Yee-King - adding some experimental squelch, drill beats 'n' drone - does little to improve upon the chaotic musings of "Circular Flexing". Wagon Christ irons a few rough edges out of "Shin Tied" with the flat end of steady hip-hop, all while leaving a noisy chocolate center.

Once again, Warp gives Nothing a step over Matador in the rush to license popular European avant guardists. [Delilah]

CUL DE SAC **Crashes To Light** **(Thirsty Ear)**

My first taste of Cul De Sac was "Epiphany Of Glenn Jones" (also on Thirsty Ear), their excellent collaboration with living americana legend, John Fahey, and the nature of that release had me expecting something a little more experimental on this fifth album "Crashes To Light". Their actual sound looks to be a blurry mix of uptempo post rock (whatever that means), spaghetti western, & psychedelia with a tinge of mid eastern flavorings to give it an exotic edge. It took

me a couple of listens, but I really dig it. The songs - which are very free-flow jam oriented - wax and wane through melodic rockers to spacey breakdowns full of atmospheric sampling & synthesis, and avant-guitar drones. Led by guitarist Glenn Jones, The band is quite tight, as they seem to follow each other well in spaces that require blind intuition. And the way this was recorded, it has a very live feel to it. Everytime I play "Crashes To Light", it sounds like Glenn and the boys are in the room. [Maveriq]

TO ROCOCO ROT **The Amateur View** **(Mute)**

As part of the barrage of german bands that Mute has been signing of late - a distinguished group that includes Kriedler, Tarwater and Shneider TM - To Rococo Rot leads the pack when it comes to both ear friendliness and critical acclaim - two elements that don't always go hand in hand. Their outlook is at once a Teutonic juxtaposition of sterility and emotion, but the constant comparisons to Mouse On Mars are a bit dubious. TRR are less on the techno/ambientdub tip, but yeah, their use of polymorphic melody is similar - let's just give Kraftwerk some props while we're at it. Some tracks are quite chillified, drifting aimlessly and beautifully on a wave of lush ambience and minimal percussion, while others have a sort of avant-electro rhythm surrounded by dueling melodic and sonic garnish. On "A Little Asphalt Here And There", TRR enlisted New York turntablist I-Sound to add some juicy noise to their construction, showing that even the kraut rock lexicon is getting hip to the scratch. This is a fine listening album, one that deserves the hype and passes the foot tapping acid test with the faintest of grooves. [Maveriq]

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COMPILATIONS

HAIKU REVIEWS

DJ OMAR SANTANA'S Battle For Planet of the Breaks (Moonshine)

First Glance: DJ Omar Santana with a continuous mix of some nasty big beats.

Standouts: Tales From The Hardside "Chemical Meltdown" - Tsunami One "Dawn of the Standing Wave"

Overall Impression: Some real heavy hitters here. This kicks it from start to finish. Selections seem to be on the darker side with a nice hard edge throughout and great mixing to boot. Most of the tracks are doin' the big beat thing but you can hear touches of other styles here and there. Tsunami One even dishes out a wee bit of industrial flavorings in "Dawn of the Standing Wave" and Mild-Mannered Janitors "Q-Babs" is just plain wicked. No pop fluff here whatsoever. [Clarence]

DJ MICRO PRESENTS Micro-Tech-Mix Version 2.0 (Moonshine)

First Glance: East Coast Caffeine party DJ Micro spins some top notch tunes

Standouts: The whole damned thing. Not a bad apple in the bunch

Overall Impression: More heavy hitters here. Moving from trance laced beats to hard and progressive house cuts this CD is a class act. Tracks include everyone from Cirrus (remixed by Micro) to BT to Boston Bruins to Steve Thomas. Lots of variety without really changing styles and sound. Great continuity throughout and the mixes are excellent. Anthem like, feel good tunes run amok here. Excellent CD. [Clarence]

DR. SPEEDLOVE PRESENTS CHEMICAL WARFARE - mix mix bang bang - (Invisible)

First Glance: A two disc, all star remix session - and a very eclectic one at that.

Standouts & Notables: Everyone from Psychic TV & KMFDM to Jah Wobble & The Prodigy (both remixing themselves) gets in on the action. Scorn VS Autechre and Sow VS Pig are the cream of the bunch.

Overall Impression: Invisible's love affair with remixes continues with this indirect follow up to the short lived Drug Test series. Only, at this point Invisible's concept of artist VS artist is wearing thin for me. Who cares if Ashtrayhead remixes Sheep On Drugs? Not I. Personally it's projects like this that diminish the intrigue in the art of reworking other art. It would be one thing if there was some theme to it, or if this was a showcase of invisible artists. But there is no coherence to the presentation, and what we end up with is merely a seemingly random collection of mostly unremarkable tracks ranging from big beat techno to industrial atmospherics. This isn't a total failure as there are some good tracks to be heard, but I'd rather just tape those few instead of breaking out Chemical Warfare in the future. [Delilah]

DJ DAN Funk The System [djdandjmix2] (Moonshine)

First Glance: Moonshine offers up another continuous DJ mix from DJ Dan Standout and

Standouts: Stacy Kidd "Do What You Feel" - Neon Lights "House of Funk" - DJ Dan "Needle Damage"

Overall Impression: As the title suggests, this compilation is truly funk and yes, even disco induced. I felt like I was having mirror ball flashbacks a few times. And that isn't a bad thing. There are some great tunes throughout. I'm hearing some definite late 70's and early 80's samples scattered about here and there. I just can't pinpoint them yet. Guess I have to start dragging some of the old vinyl out or it'll drive me nuts. Great party CD. You can't go wrong. [Clarence]

GROOVE RADIO PRESENTS Global House (Priority Records)

First Glance: Mostly mainstream continuous house mix but pretty much cream of the crop

Standouts: Armand Van Helden's Samplesaya "Ultrafunkula", David Morales presents The Face "Needin' U", Ralph Rosario "You Use To Hold Me", Camira "Let Me Show You", Perpetual Motion "Keep On Dancin' (Let's Go)", JS-16 "Stomp To My Beat"

Overall Impression: If you want a great collection of house tracks this is the one. From the dance floor divadom of "The Word Is Love" and Club 69's "Alright" to Van Helden's massive "Ultrafunkula" this CD just pumps right along without missing a beat. This is a better set than you'll hear in most clubs. Some of the tracks are from 1997 and some from 1998 but they still blow a lot of the newer stuff away. Don't let the big names scare ya away. If you like feel good house you can't beat this one. Guaranteed to have you throwin' your hands in the air in no time at all. [Clarence]

NEWER SKOOL ELECTRO BREAKS Track: Further Funk (Hydrogen Dukebox)

First Glance: A compilation of new skool breaks and beats, number 3 in a series by Funk Electric the Hardware Subsidiary of Track.

Standouts: Bionic Dog, "Time Bomb (Fuse Mix)", Girl Eats Boy, "Napalm In Bohemia (Twelve Dozen Tomatoes) Remix"

Overall Impression: The style might be new skool but the sound is definitely old skool based. This cd starts off sounding somewhat industrial then gradually slides into a more dance type genre with a bit of trance thrown in here and there. Laser effects, flanged bass, and funky bass lines played a big part in this cd. While listening to some of these songs I started to feel like I was stuck in an upbeat Atari game. My only complaint was that for only having ten songs, about half the songs were very repetitious, not with each other but within themselves. I found myself zoning out at times but if your into that sort of thing, more power to ya! [Mike D.]

EXPLICIT BEATS Thursday Club (a Rennie Pilgrem mix) (City of Angels)

First Glance: A compilation of work by various artists mixed by Rennie Pilgrem

Standouts: Couldn't tell ya!

Overall Impression: This is a 65 minute, 15 song, continuous mega mix. It's almost impossible to tell where one song ends and another begins, which is good. This cd has a fairly upbeat start and maintains a constant momentum until about halfway through. The beat then starts to pick up speed and the mix peaks with about 15 minutes of tribal dance beats. Then it gradually slows down, while bits and pieces of trance are thrown in to calm the mood and the music eventually just fades out. So if you're into nonstop dancing then this cd's a prime choice but don't bother trying to listen to your favorite songs at random because this cd only registers as having one track on a cd player. So I guess you'll either have to listen to the cd all the way through or do a lot of fast forwarding.

Etcetera: Why the hell would you want to turn 15 songs into 1 playable track? What the fuck is wit that?! Nobody wants to fastforward to find a song, it's too much trouble. It's not a bad cd just a bad idea. [Mike D.]

FUNK ESSENTIALS The 12" Collection And More (Mercury Records)

[Collections by Kool & The Gang, Gap Band, Parliament, Cameo, V/A]

Mercury's Funk Essentials series is more than a watered down ride on the wave of retro fetishism. With their intelligent and informative liner notes, photo-filled sleeves - and let's not forget the music - the Funk Essentials are a thorough document of 70's and 80's funk music that function as both history lesson and party jump starter. The question is where to start, as there are dozens of releases in the series to choose from. A good place would be Mercury's 12" Collection series, a focus on rare vintage 12" recordings of various funk greats, digitally remastered in one package.

Serious funksters might skip the Kool & The Gang collection; while the first few tracks (including "Open Sesame" & "Mighty Mighty High") embody a raw

funk vibe, subsequent cuts show the band in their later guise, transformed into a polished pop act.

Nevertheless, "Celebremos", the spanish version of "Celebration" is a high point worth hearing.

Parliament's collection is more satisfying. Of course it is. George Clinton classics like "Flash Light" and "Agony Of DeFeet" scorch the dancefloor with 9 minutes plus worth of brassy, beefy partay groove. And unreleased tracks like the original mix of "Oh I" and a version of "Up for the Down Stroke" (where Clinton waxes poetic about Nixon) make this attractive for P-funk completists. So pop on some Parliament and boogie as George commands, or break out your sampler and steal beats like everyone else.

There are also some good collections by The Gap Band (of "You Dropped The Bomb On Me" fame) and Cameo (packed with mid 80's electronified rave ups like "Word Up"), but perhaps you dont want to stick with just one artist... Check out "Full-Length Funk" to get a variety of 12" gems like Kurtis Blow's "If I Ruled The World" and the oft sampled "Daisy Lady" by 7th Wonder. [Maveriq]

ALTERNATIVE MIX Compiled & Mixed by Swedish Gil (Groove Radio)

First Glance: A who's who of techno and alt-rock dance faves.

Notables: Propellerheads, Fatboy Slim, Lionrock, Love And Rockets, Moby, BT, Freestyler, Headrillaz, Garbage, Crystal Method, Gus Gus, Etc.

Overall Impression: No surprises. Just a solid mixture of the more popular artists you'll hear in the clubs. Popular does not equal bad (necessarily), but let's get serious. Three Norman Cook tracks (one of them the overplayed remix of Wildchild's "Renegade Master") is a bit overkill. This is a party album, and every college fraternity needs to hunt this down and have it ready for the next mixer with the Omega Moos. Now where's that keg? [Junebug]

MONOLITHIC MINDS 1 & 2 A Collection Of Drum & Bass (Primal Music)

First Glance: Swedish label, Primal Music releases their breakbeat concoctions in North America

Standouts: [Disc One:] Secret Operations' uber-intelligent "Too Many Secrets", industrial atmoc-breaks on Society's "Riding Her" [Disc Two:] The trance-step of Eclectic Bob's "Love Is So Confusing", Baxter's dark "I Can't See Why"

Overall Impression: Those darn Swedes. They've learned how to retool drum & bass into styles all their own, while us Yanks struggle with an identity built upon apeing the UK. The artists on this pair of comps are all over the map, but if they had a common thread I'd say it was the avoidance of cliché - think of all the subgenres you can and then throw em out the window. Some artists are more successful than others, but the important thing is the act of trying. Ok, so you dont give a shit that they tried. You want good tunes, and there are plenty here, but... alot of this might be a little intelligent for the cancelloor, and some might even balk at calling this true drum & bass as Swedes tend to take a few liberties. Personally, those qualities will attract me every time. [Junebug]

THIEVY CORPORATION DJ Kicks (Studio K7)

First Glance: The DC twosome gets some airtime on K7's popular DJ vehicle.

Standouts: The conga hop of DJ Cam's "Success" (Thievy Corp mix), the eastern blunt-beats of The Karminsky Experience Inc's "Exploration", Pronolia's ethnotrancechopper "Janine"

Overall Impression: Four plus years ago, Eric Hilton manned the decks at his future jazz spot, Eighteenth Street Lounge. His style - a mix of bossa nova and downtempo groove - kindled a hook up with Rob Garza, a partnership that would become known as Thievy Corporation. Loved throughout the world. Considering the history there, it only makes sense that the two revisit the steel wheels, a medium that in essence brought them together. In the tradition of the DJ Kicks series, this release is very much on the money (quality control is high at

UNKNOWNWERKS The New Crop Of American Electronic Artists (Astralwerks)

mining the US hard to believe that this is the best they could find

DIESELBOY A Soldier's Story (Moonshine)

dark meat tech-y beats some people rate him highly and they'll like this mix

CARL COX Phuture 2000 (6 song pre-release) (Moonshine)

Not what you'd expect from the techno/house master Nike, new direction

HAPPY2BHARDCORE Chapter Three (Moonshine)

you WILL be happy... we will MAKE you be happy... are you HAPPY yet?

FORSAKEN: THE MUSIC The Swarm (No Bones Records)

Orb & T-Power remix video game tracks mostly successful

MOVING HOUSE AT FOOD CLUB compiled & mixed by Geoffrey (SSR/Crammed Discs)

from the Belgium club the house stays deep and funky where's my plane ticket?

THE NEW TESTAMENT OF FUNK Volume 1-3 (Unique)

three 10 inches of sensible breakbeats galore chemical tech-funk

ELECTRO LOUNGE Electronic Excursions In Hi Fi Stereo

(The Right Stuff) remixing lounge songs good idea, great artists one lousy ass disc

GLOBAL UNDERGROUND w/ Paul Okenfold (Thrive)

all hail the trance god! why don't I love the trance god? forgive me trance god...

JOEY BELTRAM The Sound Of 2AM [A DJ Mix] (Moonshine)

hard house can be nice when Beltram mans the steel wheels cut yourself a slice

LIQUID TODD ACTION (Ultra Records)

K-Rock jock mix disc big beat, but in a good way slamming mental fun

RICCI'S PIECES The Christina Ricci Tribute Album (Mindfield/FAQT)

it's better than sex the most fucking awesome comp you'll ever hear

(K7), as the two spin heady tales with their handpicked cuts - tracks wherein influences intertwine, psychedelia is a virtue and genres like dub, hip hop, world beat and jazz blur together in the most delicious of ways. Be cautious if you're weary of downtempo chiller, but if you're open to the style buy this immediately. Eric and Rob have no equal in America, and their nearest contenders - Kruder & Dorfmeister - live in Vienna. [Junebug]

LTJ BUKEM Featuring MC Conrad PROGRESSION SESSIONS 4 (Good Looking Records)

First Glance: Bukem-woven label highlights. **Standouts:** Seba's "Soul 2000", Bukem's "Ruffin". **Overall Impression:** Enjoying this release all depends on your appreciation of the Good Looking sound. Sometimes tagged *Intelligent drum & bass*, Bukem & company favor spacey, jazz tinged accompaniment with their breakbeats which engenders a soulful, lighter-than-air quality. And that is what you get on this fourth installment of the series. "Progression" always appears in the title of these things, but I don't see any great leaps from release to release. With a few exceptions, the LG roster is homogenous and MC Conrad's constant appearance doesn't help things. I like Conrad though, and I feel that PS 4 is decent, brick solid stuff. It's just not exactly bulldozing

VARIOUS ARTISTS A Cat-Shaped Hole in My Heart (Projekt)

It's hard to knock a compilation with a noble cause. When [Projekt label owner] Sam Rosenthal's cat died from feline leukemia, it left a cat-shaped hole in his heart (I am presuming this hole is metaphorical), so he gathered 14 "ethereal, gothic, and darkwave artists" together to sing songs about cats and devote their royalties to a cat shelter in Chicago. It's hard to knock a compilation with a noble cause, but how noble is this? There is more money made in the sale of CDs than just artist royalties...I wonder if Projekt is donating THEIR profits from the compilation as well? Or did Projekt effectively get the artists to sacrifice any income while retaining profits for Projekt? The three pages of promo information doesn't tell us either way. Anyone who knocks such a noble compilation surely has no heart through which a cat-shaped aperture might be worn, right? Perhaps. On the other hand, anyone who releases a compilation full of such trite and maudlin material as this is heartless if they expect people to keep a straight face. I love animals as much as the next person, but I'm brought to my knees with laughter at all the sampled "meows" and "deep" musings about cat thoughts. Skip the CD and just donate what you would have paid to an animal shelter/charity of your choice. [Rork]

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PSYCHEDELIA,
AND MORE..

The Process Church was a unique, fascinating and complicated cult, which had its heyday in the late 1960's and early 1970's. An offshoot from Scientology, started in England, and exported to the U.S. via Xtul, Mexico, its arms were far reaching in the dark corners of the underground. From Charles Manson to Parliament / Funkadelic, to Genesis P. Orridge and Skinny Puppy trying to revive it (or at least the name and symbolism) a few years back, The Process has held inspiration and influence in the underground for decades. Much of what you read is sensationalism, rumors, or outright lies. It is a rare treat then, to hear from someone who was actually there.

R.N. Taylor and his band, **Changes**, were there. They played at Process coffee houses and counted Process members among their following. Their CD, **"Fire of Life"**, on Storm Records, PO Box 3527,



Portland OR 97208, USA) is culled from tapes made from 1969-74. Author, musician, and artist, Taylor, had the tapes in a box under his bed until he offhandedly mentioned them to Michael Moynihan. Thankfully, Moynihan had the sense to see that they were properly cleaned-up, and released on his Storm label in CD format. Taylor is joined here by Karen, his wife, and Nicholas Tesluk. While the music isn't specifically about The Process, it does carry the mood and influence. While other 60's cults were preaching about peace and love, The Process was teaching an apocalyptic Christ/Jehova/Lucifer/Satan fourfold theology (a bit

too complex to explore here). Similarly, while other 60's bands were singing about flowers and beads, Changes were acknowledging both the dark and light side of life. The music can be both beautiful and foreboding, sometimes both at once. It's amazing just how far ahead of their time Changes were. Decades later, bands like Current 93 and Sol Invictus would take up these same themes of mythology, spiritual seeking, and the downfall of the West and put them to similar dark acoustic music. They would also take influence from The Process. Changes music then takes on a timeless air, and becomes more than just another reissue of just another psych-folk band. Storm also has available a limited edition Changes 7" which includes a track not on the CD.

Michael Moynihan's own band, **Blood Axis**, recently released a CD/double LP entitled **"Blot: Sacrifice in Sweden"** (on Cold Meat Industry, PO Box 1881, 581 17 Linkoping, Sweden). I had never heard Blood Axis, and I was afraid a live album might not be the best introduction. I was wrong. With only sparse instrumentation, dominated by ominous organ, Blood Axis play a show, which must have been stunning to witness. Lost warriors chant runesongs from another age, wolves howl, storms rage, Irish fiddle tunes rise like banshees from the mist, and it all fits together in a POWERFUL combination which definitely works.



It's always a celebration when a **Ghost** record is released. Having two Ghost records released at once calls for a national holiday. I've

known Ghost frontman, **Batoh**, for the better part of a decade and a nicer person you're not likely to meet. He has a presence that shines. One could see him as a guru of great renown. Besides that, he's an amazing musician. I've witnessed him pick up a guitar, play some breathtaking music, and then proceed to ask the guitar's owner what tuning he had it in! I think this brilliance shines through Ghost's music, as everyone love's Ghost...and with good reason! Each record finds Batoh and company journeying into new realms. **"Snuffbox Immanence"** (gotta love those Japanese titles!), their fifth full-length finds them exploring what was deemed "chamber folk" on the cover. I suppose that's as good a description as any. This is elegant, highly textured music which falls into the "psychedelic folk" category only because it is both psychedelic and folk

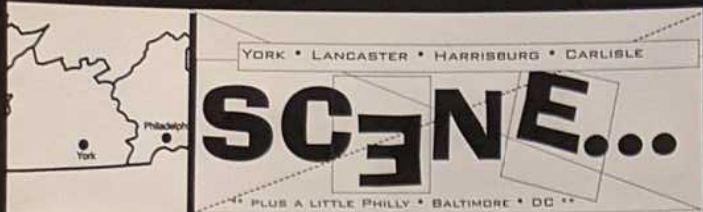


music. Ghost have created yet another record which is stamped with a unique sound which I don't believe any band in the world could duplicate. Words aren't going to do "Snuffbox Immanence" justice, so just go purchase this CD now. (On Drag City, PO Box 476867, Chicago IL 60647)

"Tune in, Turn on, Free Tibet", the other new Ghost full-length (also on Drag City) is rawer and stranger than "Snuffbox Immanence," but it is the CD of the two that I will listen to more. It contains more of a jamming/freakout vibe and is perhaps psych-folk in the more traditional sense (except for the last song, an experimental audio collage of great

length). Perhaps after the Krautrockin' "Lamarabirabi" (the CD which proceeded the two discussed here), I am just happy to hear Ghost return to the wordfolk fold. I enjoy their more rock oriented moments, but I find them most touching and charming when they are in their gentler mode.

The **Swans** are dead. After years of making some of the most striking and desperate music ever recorded, **Michael Gira** finally killed the project for which he is known best. Dead swans must make great fertilizer, for no less than three sonic entities have sprung from its corpse. There are the **Body Lovers** and the **Body Haters**, two ambient soundcollage projects, and then there's **The Angels of Light**. The Angels of Light's first CD, **"New Mother,"** finds Gira firmly in the territory which I always felt he did best. The closest comparison would be Swans' "White Light from the Mouth of Infinity"- their best work in my opinion. "New Mother" is Gira's best songwriting to date though, outshining any of his past efforts- a feat which I previously would have thought impossible. His songs feel so personal, yet universally symbolic; it's almost as if he's telling stories about you in first person. The words resonate so deep, they are almost difficult to read at times...but the music is so easy to listen to; with instrumentation as varied as guitar, banjo, dulcimer, Celtic harp, accordion, and much, much more; all blending into hypnotic waves on which Gira can float his baritone vocals; or rising into the wonderful melodies the likes of which nobody alive can touch. Michael Gira is simply one of the greatest songwriters we have. His talent is mountainous; his importance seldom recognized. The Angels of Light places Gira at a new high mark, and puts me in awe.



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EVENT REVIEWS

FUTURE JAZZ with DUBTRIBE Wednesday, April 21st The Wire, New Cumberland PA [Jena Laske]

Geoffro spun off the evening at the tables. Got us all grooving. Took us all to Jazzy Bliss. There were about 150 of us at The Wire, smiling, lounging on couches or sweating, thrilling it up on the dance floor. It was a perfect feeling of space. There was no smothering feeling of being over crowded. We had complete mobility whether we wanted to walk, skip, or dance. The vibe was luminous.



Dubtribe pictures by Ashley

Cosmic Jason, who is on tour with Dubtribe, spun after Geoffro. He implored us to step on up to "paradise". He granted us all an "open invitation" to get there through our ears and our bodies. While he spun, the dubtribe crew transformed the small brick stage into a sacred space.

Pretty carpets were laid on stage and surrounded, box-like, with instruments. Huge leafy palm plants were set on either side of the stage, along with huge bouquets of pink carnations, white roses, and blue daisies. Small wooden tables, which held intricate incense holders (and scores on incense) were set on either side of the flowers. In the center sat a small blue Buddha with a flower on top of his head.

Moonbeam, the petite young woman in a long flowing skirt, smiled when I commented that the stage set up was very spiritual. She said, "We like it to feel like our bedroom."

Sunshine opened up the microphone, and the set, by telling us all to "open up" our minds, followed by drums and percussion and a lovin', movin' dance floor. "You are beautiful, you are perfect, just the way you are", sung by Sunshine and Moonbeam reminded me of when I first heard the song at the Sunrise Festival and how the crowd was going wild for them. Moonbeam sang some Spanish songs. I don't know what she was singing about, but I was grooving. And so was everyone else. Their live performance reflected recordings from their album "Bryant Street" but with the added elements of vivaciousness and spontaneity that live performance brings. The lights were pretty spectacular, lots of color and movement.

All was just fine until the cops showed up because of complaints of "noise" and the show was shut down. Most of the people left, but a few of us lagged behind to hear Moonbeam spin.

My hair smelled like incense for three days after the show. I would put strands to my nose and whiff remembering the evening, the vibe, the groove, the perfection of it all. It was a bunch of real happy people and an explosion of beautiful music. It was magic. Magic that made you completely aware, entranced, and enthralled with what was happening at that moment. It was spiritual in the most important sense. Spirit that spoke to your heart and soul. Inspiration that sent you soaring into the exquisite. It was Dubtribe Sound System at the monthly excursion of Future Jazz. And if you missed it, you missed it!

STARSCAPE Saturday June 5th Fort Armistead Park, MD [Rod Miller]

Woo Hoo! Thanz, Ultraworld for yet another large,

vibe, and SAFE event. Again we all kicked it together as a sub-nation under one groove seekin' extravagant party to properly kick off the summer. And kicked it we did at a fresh venue with a fresh line-up outdoors in the fresh air. AAAHHHHHHH! Three accomodatn' areas to appreciate music. Of course there was the usual - adequate room to

dance, lots of cheap readily available water, muchos portap-



tion (Spanish for lipity Jonz), on-site EMT's for the philly kids (feh heh), and many eager partygoers who seemed to enjoy the space since the large Memorial-Day party the week before had overstuffed a supposedly unstuffable venue in Jersey. And so Starscape had the perfect settin' for a memorable evenin'. The Main Tent was a spacious Bigtop-like tent with an explosive sound system. The acoustics were on point as was the lightin' and stage set-up. Atom started off on the decks with a funk-out dub house and breaks set that deserved primetime hours. However, as 2 fat philly guidos with a cell would put it - "He's just a local. A filler. Not worthy of a big party." Nonsense! Kudos to you Atom - you rule! Also good ol' Chukie Feelgood pleased the crowd with a sik-ass house set. And sorry to say, but Astral Matrix has played better. The high-lights of the Main Tent were Uberzone, whose big breaks were performed live with percussion and intr'guin' mixn' methods, and Gavin Hardkiss, who pumped out an excellent techno set from front to back. Definitely two impressive sets that won't be forgotten. One that will, however, was the inconsistent, lackluster closin' set - nuff said.



The Drum n' Bass Room was charged-up as junglehead partygoers were ready to wreck shop. And wreck shop they did - nonetheless, I have a minor complaint as the strobes were a bit much. The room was frantic enough. Of course the only thing more annoyin' than the strobes was the white MC from 2Tuff, who seemed to spread himself thin while overdoin' his job. Yo yo yo! Try not to flow on a track that already has vocals! And to flow on just about every track for the first three sets (which he ruined for me) is a little excessive. "He ended up rappin' himself into a corner" said Steve Cawley, a devout drum n' basshead. The Adam F/J Majik tagteam proved to be the top performance in this

area as MC MC's phenomenal ragga-stylo meshed well with the DJ's who threw down in Metalheadz fashion. Other sets that deserve recognition were Wildchild and Ently who jolted the crowd with their signature energetic jungle styles. Go ahead Jimmie (joke for old skool FAQT readers).

And then there was the 6,000 sq.ft. Cloudwatch pier hosted by Sonic Soul. With an art gallery at the front and large screens set up for enhancin' visuals, this was undeniably one of the best chill-out set-ups I've ever experienced. The serene sounds of the bay and immaculate view of the bridge and idle boats in the distance were somethin' to behold. Oh yeah - the music wasn't half-bad either (feh heh). Asphodel mates Byzar and Badawi performed

live with extraordinary performances. Byzar's urban ambient set boasted experimental instrumentation over dub while Badawi's ethnic-tribal beats were accompanied with an eastern influence. Although headliner DJ Ease attempted a FEW tricks over a nice selection of down tempo cuts, there seemed to be some technical difficulties that restrained his performance (that and he mixed in a record on 45 - oops). And not to be biased but LG and Fluid, who both reveled in their chill-out-o-sphere, flexed versatility with sets that covered a range of emotions. So of course, I'm still danglin' from Ultraworld's scrotum and I don't think I need to explain why. And although they didn't ruin my night, I do need to mention a couple of buzz kills. Buzz kill no.1 - an oriental girl who collapsed in convulsions near the end. When are you guys gonna learn the difference



dubtribe

between recreation and abuse - GEEZI! Buzz kill no.2 - those 2 fat guidos with a cell phone were upset 'cuz they could walk from point A to point B without plowin' thru people and too much dance space. But who needs to dance when you can play with your chest hair thru your cheesy half-but-toned silk shirt! Anyway, thanx again Ultraworld. Next stop - Sunrise Festival!

COMMUNITY SERVICE TOUR Electric Factory, Philadelphia PA July 11th, 1999 [Junebug]

The first mega techno tour of the summer passed through our great land recently, featuring major league names like Orbital, Crystal Method and Lo Fidelity Allstars. Quite a line up I suppose, but the only name that really interested me was Orbital. Though I've seen Orbital about 6 times, I will keep coming back because they are the real deal. They truck a trailer full of delicate gear from show to show and they play fucking live. Yes, live. You have to respect that sort of work ethic in this day and age where most "live" techno is preproduced and prepackaged in the studio ahead of time. Ok, I'm not going to go into a big rant and pick on Crystal



Starscape pics by Al Santos

Method and Lo Fidelity Allstars. Actually I missed most of the Allstars so I can't really comment. Crystal Method ran through their usual set, without flaw and in their sleep, playing the majority of that brand new album, "Vegas". Perhaps you've heard about it. "You mean it's out already?" Only for about two years. Hey guys, write some new fucking songs! You've had the time. You're too early in your career to milk it.

was happily surprised to see the crowd get fully into the continuously mixed presentation with all its peaks and valleys. It's gratifying to see that the venerable brothers Hartnoll are not only still in the thick of it, but remain popular enough to headline a big techno tour.

ATARI TEENAGE RIOT w/ ADD N TO X 9:30 Club, Washington DC July 18th, 1999 [Maveriq]

Anyone bored with conventional electronic live shows was in for a real treat with this power house line up. ATR and ANT-X are some of the higher profile artists of late who take circuitry bending to raw extremes, and witnessing it up close was one of the more orgasmic pleasures I've had this year.

We caught openers Add N To X one song into a set of Moog-punishing, analog rock - the first track off of "Avant Hard" I believe. The trio of Ann Shenton, Barry Smith and Steve Claydon were already in the throws of performance - along with a drummer who just might have been from the High Llamas. Throughout the set, Ann - looking quite the hottie, I must say - alternated between keyboards, and theremin, while Barry played with the vocoder and Steve pumped out loads of noisy circuit bending mayhem out of a large box hanging off his neck. The collective jamming of this quartet produced an incredible sound - one that crossed all levels from noise aficionados to Stereolab fans - the kind of loud, bassy heavy, tremorous sound that made the hairs on my earlobes vibrate and my stomach lurch. All the while, these experimentalists rocked hard - not so much with their energy on stage - but through raw, uncensored sine waves.

Next up was the infamous Atari Teenage Riot. I figured this might be an interesting show, and I was right. ATR frontman was joined by Hanin Elias and Carl Crack for a three pronged vocal attack, while noise goddess Mic Endo (wo)manned the gear (DATs, or sequences, Im not sure) and made some live white feedback on the spot. (Really, it was live, I saw her). Ear bustingly loud. ATR tore through old and new - "Deutschland (Has Gotta Die)", "Atari Teenage Riot" and songs from the new album, "60 Second Wipeout". For those not familiar, ATR is a mixture of gabber, breakbeats and raw noise - casually blended with a hybrid of hip-hop and punk. Digital hardcore, they call it. Those crazy kids. Anyway, it sounded like sweet armageddon, and the mosh pit was in full effect. Between songs, Allec - always the activist - scolded the kids for being politically adolescent - particularly in the wake of American fascism and the recent NATO bombings. I'm glad he said something, but most of the kids were pretty stunned by his words as Im sure they'd already made up their minds that blowing up Serbs was a good idea. The knowing look on his face made me feel a little embarrassed, but he shrugged and got back to what everyone wanted to hear. Bludgeoning electronic/noise. What a show.

XPLODE The Silo, Reading PA [Maveriq]

This was another Jay Rave event that almost reached success, if not for the authorities. The Silo is one of the oldest and best clubs in the Central PA area, but I don't remember it ever being used for a DJ party. It turned out to be a perfect location: Two floors - one huge bottom floor, a smaller, over 21 upstairs floor with flowing taps of draught beer. Part of the upstairs overlooks the downstairs, so you can witness the whole thing from one spot. I arrived late and missed James Angel and Hobie C, but I caught Mike E' Love who spun some different but groovy house to an empty floor. Meanwhile, Bluff played a most excellent set of diverse techno downstairs. People were definitely moving to Bluff. At midnight, Excel went on upstairs mixing up a nice breakbeat set that finally attracted some jiggling bodies. Meanwhile Hectic and Jason Mythos tag teamed through some techno and trance with great results, keeping the Bluff dancers where they were. Wrapping it up was Kevin V - upstairs with slow, funky house - and Bob Brown - downstairs with some hypnotic crunchy techno. The night's marquee DJs - Speed Demon and Philly's Carl Michaels - never did get to play because of the cops. The reasons they shut the party down was dubious, but Jay Rave is taking some legal action on the matter. Let's hope he gets somewhere. In any case, it was a solid, well attended party with some great tunes and a happening venue. Keep up the good work, Jay.

Joey Beltram - continued from page 10

like 15 or 16 I wasn't trying to be educated. When I got into dance music I didn't care about the history of dance music. I just wanted to go out and have a good time. However that was achieved, it was good time. That was up to the DJ.

As a DJ, I'm not trying to educate anybody. I'm not a school teacher or nothing. I just want to make sure they dance their asses off. A lot of people in Detroit - everytime I read an interview with certain old skool producers or whatever, it's always like, 'Oh, I always try to educate the crowd. I try this and that', but that's when they lose the crowd. Because they're so busy trying educate them, that the crowd isn't having a good time. Like, they're trying to play them in a three hour set the history of dance music and what they SHOULD like. But people like what they like. I just care about getting everyone off the floor and making them go crazy. However I do it, I do it.

I mean, I'm old skool now, too. But I don't even give a shit about that. It's not what I did. You know, I'm not like, "Oh, okay. I made a bunch of hit records. My place is solid in dance music, now. So I can just sit back and do whatever I want and if people don't get it I can just say, 'Oh, you don't get the old skool.'" Fuck that. I still have to be on my toes. I still gotta please. It's not what you did yesterday, it's what you're doing now. What you're gonna do. I still have everything to prove. Fuck what I did. All that stuff is meaningless, it's done already.

You don't drink or do drugs...

Yeah, maybe when I was a teenager in high school, I'm sure I drank a beer. But somewhere along the line, I guess... I don't know, it's not like a conscious thing. It's just, I'm not interested. I'm a focused person. I don't have a taste for alcohol, or a need for it. I never got into drugs, and I don't have any desire to go out and "open my mind". To me it's already open. Whatever reason people have to use drugs, it just doesn't apply to me. But I'm not a preacher. I have friends, they do it and have a good time. Everyone has their own life to live. It's not even something I think about. I don't think there's anything wrong with it. I'm one of those people that thinks marijuana should be legalized. A lot of these laws against certain substances are ridiculous.

I just thought it was interesting because coming from your perspective, you still connected with the dance culture which is very drug oriented.

That's funny. There was that whole "Energy Flash" thing. You put that ecstasy sample in there, it was like an ecstasy anthem. When "Energy Flash" came out in early 1990, I wasn't in Europe at that point and I didn't know about the ecstasy drug at that point. It was just a sample that I thought sounded cool. I was going through a bunch of samples and I got it from a record, "Rock To The Beat". I threw it in, and I thought cool - ecstasy! I mean, it's been used in other records. It's just when "Energy Flash" came out, it was a strange coincidence that there happened to be a drug that at that same happened to be called ecstasy - that was the dance drug of the nineties, I guess. Maybe, that's what helped the record to become popular. I don't know. It's just one of those things.

[Joey Beltram: The Sound Of 2 AM (on Moonshine) is out in stores as you read this.]

Cibo Matto - continued from page 14

albums of all time. That's pretty cool, isn't it?

Yeah, that was awesome. Totally awesome.

You and Miho have been involved in a number of side projects over the past three or so years. How invaluable were those experiences?

Yeah, everything we do definitely influences us and we do learn a lot of things from doing different things. It also keeps us excited about music, and all these things that people do or people see or think or say is fresh to us. We definitely try to bring it into our music...

Going back to Butter 08 [a one-off indiepoprock side project on Grand Royale], how has that influenced what you're doing now?

I don't know if it had a direct influence. It was fun to do, and I did some production work in the studio which definitely gave me some confidence about doing this record.

You collabed with Arto Lindsay... can you tell me a bit about that?

I think I played on one of his records. I did a lot of programming for him. I like what he does a lot, and when we used to work he would just come over and say, "I want to do this." And we'd just try things out, and it was a pretty relaxed vibe.

I know you and Miho have a pretty big fascination with Brazilian music.

Yeah, we do and [Arto] is so responsible for that. He definitely introduced us to a lot of artists there, and opened a lot of doors to them.

What is it about Brazilian music speaks to you?

It speaks some kind of sensitivity that we're missing. It speaks some kind of element or complexity... a lot of times here, we're dealing with one side of things. I suppose with Brazilian music, it kind of looks around it and talks about all the other things as well.

You played in Brazil with Tom Ze last year. How did that go?

Oh, it was so awesome. We're big Tom Ze fans. We played at this big festival and right before we were going there Sean did a remix for Tom Ze, so we had a little contact. Before we did Viva La Woman, we had a guest artist of the night. So we asked Tom, and he said, "Sure." We were pretty psyched. We did one improvisation piece, which is his forte. And we also covered a Brazilian song which Miho and he sung together. It was a pretty amazing trip. I think the audience was psyched to see the association between us and Ze.

Last year, you produced Sean's debut album. That must have been a lot of pressure.

It was a lot of pressure, because it was my first time producing anything on my own. And I really care about him a lot, and [I was thinking about] how to go about introducing him to the world. I mean, he has a lot of baggage. He's somebody you already kind of know, but you don't really know who he is.

How influential were you on the final product?

I was really trying to stay away from his creative process. I wanted him to really write his own songs, and I was trying not to put my judgement on it, or my opinion, too hard. I told him everything I thought everytime he asked me. I was trying to create what he was envisioning, because sometimes I'm sitting in his position and I would have a producer. And I would want my album to sound like what I want. So I was really trying to make him comfortable, and just wanted him to have his vision and to try to help realize that vision, technically.

What are your thoughts on "Into The Sun", now that you look back on it?

I think his writing is pretty amazing. I think people were expecting a more commercial production. And every now and then I wonder about... was it right for us to have done such an artistic approach. I don't know, but I think we did what we felt. And I think that the truth is the best thing.

You were on the show Buffy The Vampire Slayer.

[laughs] That was really fun. I'm afraid I never watch TV, so I really didn't know what the show was about. But I really dug it, and it was also really fun to see how the Hollywood TV scene works. And being able to be apart of it.

Did the band play at the highschool prom, or something?

Well, they had some sort of night club. There was this night club they go to, and that night the special guest was Cibo Matto. So we were just playing on stage. We weren't like acting or anything. [laughs] And people were dancing, and acting in front of us. It was fun to see.

I guess if there's a show to be on, it's Buffy. Buffy's cool. At least it wasn't 90210.

"Stereotype A" is out now on Warner Bros.

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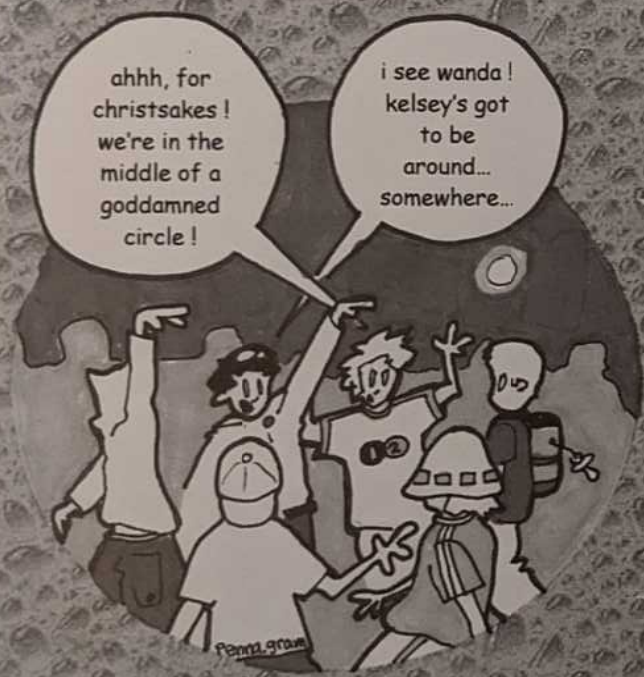
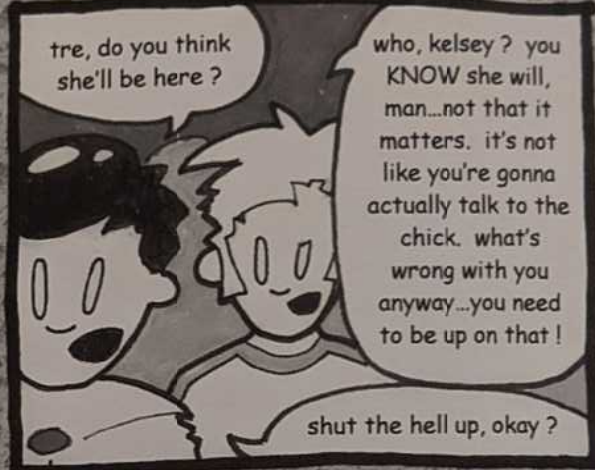


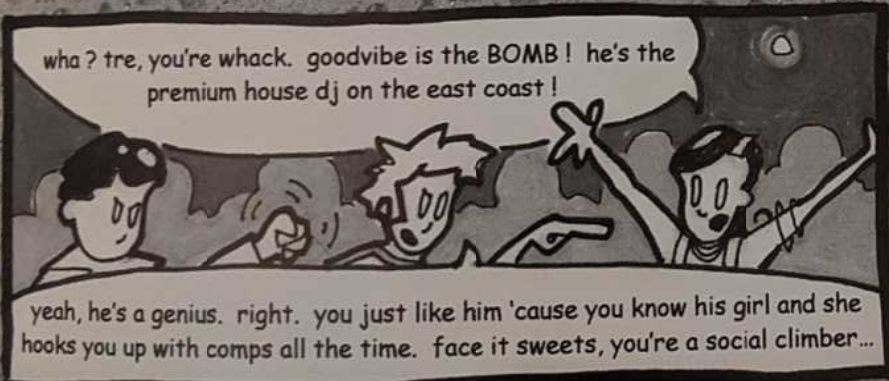
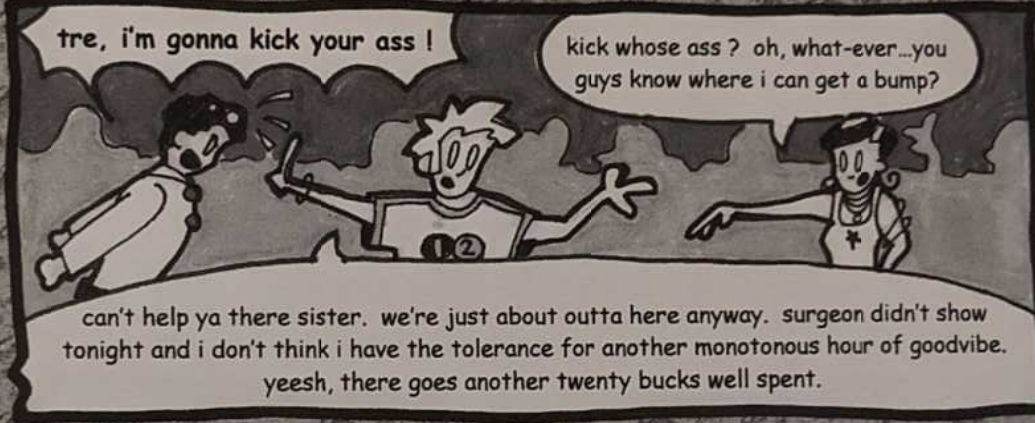
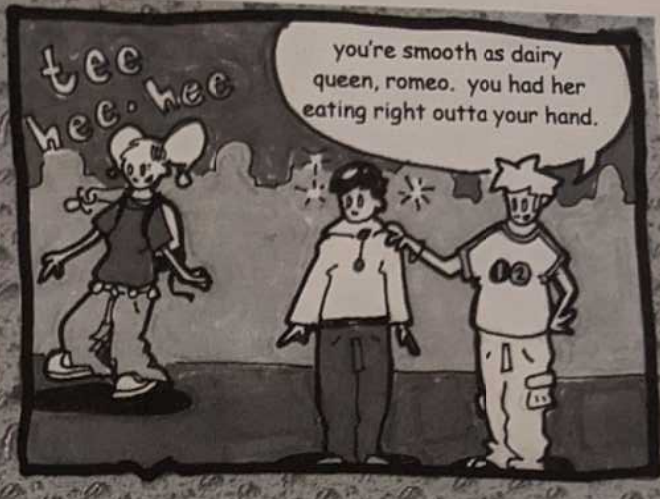
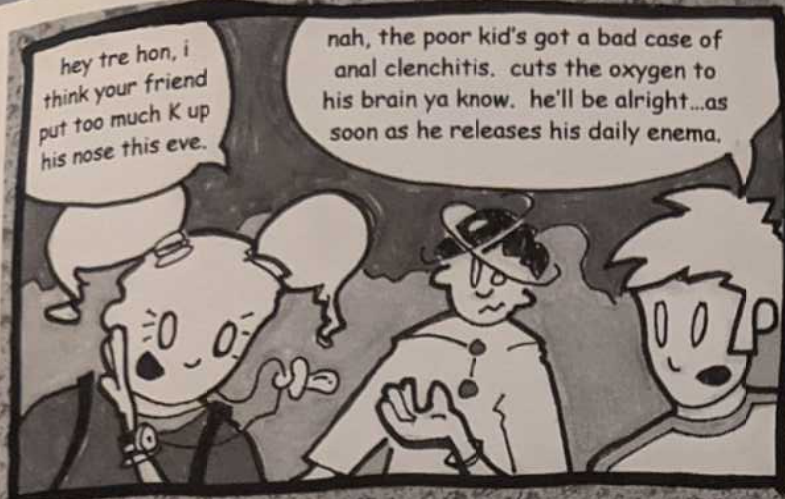
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important to the result.

AH: Not changing the concept in the middle of the production is essential to me. This forced way of working very often brought very good results...It's sometimes like standing at the end of a one-way street, looking for a way out, without going backwards. Sometimes painful though.

MK: Do you like to set certain limits, or work within certain restrictions, to avoid the distraction of options and choices? For me, anything is subject to change at any time. However, I obviously have to give up some focus to allow that freedom. I don't know the destination until I get there.

AH: For one side, once you have set the parameters and be strict with it, distraction does not appear. Mostly when I lose the concept, which sometimes happens when I am not concentrated or running out of time, I realize that I start trying options, but it never works out until I get the concept clear.

MK: Regardless of the effect on the results, it is hard for me to have fun that way. I wouldn't say the concept changes, though - instead, it becomes clearer as I work. Or, another way it may take some time to discover the raw materials that match the concept. If I put a track together over 3 days or even a month, the ideas that come to me, or the ideas triggered by the process, give a result that I may not have been able to find otherwise.

AH: Well, I am not that stuck into the same routines, or at least I am trying to avoid them. On most forms or productions you can apply what I said, although on some, every so often, I try to avoid to strict concepts or plans, and take whatever comes always within preferences, of course. In general the concept mostly is just an aesthetic concept, than one dealing with something like sense, it's more an associative work and the sense or the wider picture comes with the progress.

MK: As it is now, I have about 6 hours a day in which to fit all listening, composing, reading, exercise, going out, etc.

AH: Good for you. Not many people have enough energy after their job doing anything else but watching TV. I have the whole day for music and related works and in peak times I spent up to 14 hours in the studio...but I am trying to cut that down a bit.

MK: Would you say the number of recordings you make is a goal in itself? That is, do you feel obligated or compelled somehow to finish a lot of music?

AH: I don't think the amount of records itself is any kind of goal. I have another problem. I think I really try not to work too much and not to think too much about things like projects, products, concepts, etc., but the thing is, I cannot switch off my mind. Very often these ideas or concepts really fascinate me and I cannot resist leaving them undone. This results in a huge pile of next projects which never stops or gets less. I don't know what to do. Even from a simple joke sometimes a great project is arising. So, I have to do it for my own satisfaction, but not thinking in release numbers.

MK: I don't want to say something (we talked about that earlier), but I guess there are certain structures, or certain feelings, or aesthetic effects I want to create, and I have no urge to do more.

AH: That describes it. Thank you.

MK: At the same time, I take no issue with anyone who has an urge to express himself in any different way. In fact, I admire the focus of someone who can explore one area in many different ways. That is an altogether different kind of patience than what I have.

AH: Agreed.

MK: I was saying before that it seems like you are inspired to create albums in somewhat the same way I am inspired to create tracks. One reason I think I approach it the way I do is the influence of symphonies for example, or the Beatles' "white album" - that is, a complete work which embraces many different things.

AH: I always consider an album as an independent entity, something that could be done in exactly that way, but by another artist. Something like turning into another personality for some time. Once it is finished, a new picture is on the plan and this pretty much satisfies my need for diversity. I think it is very diverse.

MK: Sometimes, for my taste, the records stay too much on one angle.

AH: That's the idea.

Some days ago I listened to your CD. The material reminded me quite a lot of the tape you sent me the other time to Frankfurt. I have to admit that it was a little bit too rough for my taste.

Also of course I was listening to the timing and none of the songs sounded stiff but neither they

sounded tight. Actually I had the feeling that lots of events were anything but tight? Any special idea behind that or is it a technical thing? I am curious.

MK: If you consider the amount of variation in timing that is already programmed, a little bit more "sloppy" doesn't mean too much. Either I got used to it, or else the result was pretty much what I was trying to get anyway. Some of it is supposed to sound like it is skittering across an icy road or something. The new setup is more precise and more accurate. So then some of the time I scatter some of the events randomly... Very often, at the back of my mind at least, the idea is to get away from a precise, accurate, mechanical sound - which may or may not resemble a more human timing.

AH: I don't think so. I had the feeling that the entire structure of events was untight and moving back and forth all the time...

MK: Yes, it does. I think the plan worked.

AH: With your music I was having a very similar experience like I had with the music of Victor Sol (my partner in +N) which is that I like how it sounds and actually like the ideas, but at the same time some sort of roughness doesn't let me enjoy it.

MK: Not at all surprising. As I say, it reflects my state of mind; this is what comes naturally to me. Your musical world has a lot more sunshine.

AH: Probably that's the point. I miss the sunshine.

MK: I assume you mean roughness, in the sense of harshness or heaviness, rather than sloppy or unfinished?

AH: Exactly...the sunshine. Music is a discourse and to believe that I am, or any artist is, superior to the consumer and could give advice to them is simply arrogant and ignorant. I am just encoding my life into music and do not believe that anyone on this planet could or should decode it. I. Fuzziness is the term.

LASSIGUE BENDTHAUS, "Pop Artificielle" out now on Kk Records
FLANGER (Atom Heart and Bernd Friedmann), "Templates" out now on Ninja Tune
BURNING ROME, "Senseless" out now on Mindfield Records

Holger Czokay - continued from page 15

ing an interview with me. And he then said, "We are doing everything completely different from what you do." And I said, "What are you doing then that is so different?" And he said that he was a DJ. I said, "Ok, I make you a suggestion. When you have a DJ party, I will come to this party and then I will write about you what I hear. And then you can write about me." Something like that. And I was absolutely shocked when I came to this sort of a very, very special underground party. I had heard nothing like that ever before. It was the sound, it was the rhythm, it was the attitude, it was the audience, it was the sound that was going through the turntables... I've never seen something like this, but I saw the whole thing [and I thought to myself], "Have you slept for ten years or something?" I felt completely isolated at this moment, but I was enthusiastic about the music itself. For me it was like a shock like in 1968 when we started with Can. It was unbelievable - you know, the rhythms are especially so strong. And machine made rhythms could even beat drummers! Before it was different. If you were working on a pop production and you were working with a drum machine. And then at the end at the last step, maybe you decide, "We can't use the drum machine because it is not living enough and we must have a drummer to do the same job according to this drum machine." And suddenly you don't need that. [laughs] Why? [A machine] has such a power that a drummer can never achieve! Which is not quite true, what I say. But it is in a way, true. Because a machine can do things that a human body - flesh and bones - is not able to do.

FAQ: What drew you to Doc Walker?
"Doc Walker invited me [to play with him] at an underground party. I was not playing live for 18 years. Since Can, I gave up hope that I would find people who would understand me. That sort of craziness. I could suddenly play what I wanted, and [Doc Walker] reacted so easily about this. We played a session of 3 hours for the audience. It was pretty weird and very wild, but it worked, it worked, it really worked out. And I was so surprised it actually worked! So we decided to make this American tour. He was going to his house, and I was going to my studio and we were all both working completely independent and secretly - working our material together. And when we came to America on stage, we just showed the other one what we had worked out, and we surprised the other one."

FAQ: What did you carry away from that experience?

These were your first experiences to the electronic dance scene...

"This is right. It was also the first time where I tried to find my role into this. The logic about us both - first of all Walker is able to react to changes like in Can musicians had. That means we were in some ways like Can, but using the equipment of our time. He had a sort of a sequencer or something like that. He could create the rhythms on stage without having a computer program to correct it, so all his loops are somehow imperfect. And then, I was free and I could play on my instruments whatever I wanted. And he tempo-ed me on stage, and brought me into the sequence."

FAQ: Were you surprised at the flexibility of the technology?
"It was fantastic. It was for me like a rescue."

"Good Morning Story" is out on Tone Casualties!

Add N To X - continued from page 13

sort of press it on and it's going to do what it's told. We really love having another schizophrenic element in the group that we can work against. I'm not saying that any of us have mental problems. It's just really good like this. Rob Allen as well, the guy we used from the High Llamas. It's so brilliant having a talented drummer like that working with you. His input is just as important as ours. It's much more exciting for us. We can look around and give him a glance, and he's going to double the tempo. Give him a wink, or a sign, and we can change things depending on the mood or what's happening that night. It's just much more...

Spontaneous?

Yeah, or organic. Organic sounds a bit iffy, but do you know what I mean? It just has that organic-ness, next to something that's quite structured. These DJs that use samples of live drumming and just sort of loop them - sometimes that works. But I don't think you can beat that live drum sound. We love it when sometimes things sort of fuck up. That's why we don't like that all-sequenced stuff. Everything sounds so regimented, so uninteresting. You're not going to be surprised by anything.

I suppose you'd have a problem with dancefloor techno, then...

A lot of techno stuff is very kind of regimented. People who are into that whole kind of drug culture, they need something. They need to get into that kind of repetitive thing. It's almost like autism. They want to keep repeating their dance moves. They want that sound to be kept repeating in a way that they know. I'm sure if something jumped out of the blue, it would drop them and they would probably start crying. They'd have a breakdown because their dancing would have gotten all fucked up.

That's why we hate playing in bloody Holland. We went to Holland and everyone was on E. They didn't like it. They found it upsetting...

How did you get signed to Mute?

Daniel Miller came to see us play live quite a few times. We were trying to organize our own gigs. We'd always know he was in the audience, because there'd be a big puff of cigar smoke. He'd always smoke a cigar when he'd go to see a live band. I think he signed us on the basis of our live show, which I thought was really admirable of him. I'm really pleased we are signed to Mute. One of my favorite records was "Warm Leatherette" by Daniel Miller - The Normal. When I first met him, Barry was like "Ann, do you know who that is?" And I'm like, "Yeah, Daniel Miller." And he says, "No. Do you know what group he was in? The Normal, stupid git!" And I was in tears. I couldn't believe it was the same man.

Why do you think there aren't more women making electronic music?

I don't know really. It's one of those things where people go, "Oh, you must be the singer." And I'm like, "No, I'm not." It's a hard one to answer. I think maybe it's because sometimes women find themselves wanting to be in music, but the boys have bought all the instruments already. And they say, "We're really crap. We need a pretty looking girl for our band. Can you sing?" And she might go, "Yeah. I can sing." I think it might be one of those insecurity things.

You seem to be the type that doesn't even think about it...

Sexual politics obviously are there [in Add N to X]. They're always going to be there. But, it's not one of

these major things of our group. It's not an issue because I'm part of the group. And they're part of MY group.

Do you find it difficult to play live?

No. It's more exciting than difficult. The synthesizers are unpredictable, a challenge - especially when you're traveling from A to B and they're battered about in the back of the van. And sometimes bits have fallen off. And you have a crippled synthesiser, which you try to work with that evening. It's exciting, really exciting.

"Avant Hard" is out now on Mute Records!

Nobukazu Takemura - cont from page 21

computer do the scratching."

And the significance of the title "Scope"? "Scope" suggests something which we can't see by the naked eye without the use of a telescope and microscope. Also, in line with the meaning of "Childs' View", that people who use only their knowledge and experience can't see and feel."

Also released this year was "Reich Remixed", a high profile tribute to minimalist Steve Reich on which Takemura submitted a mix. His experience with it was not a perfect one.

"I think that was strange plan. On the first mix, I used a marimba and clarinet, but the planner asked me to please make a more fashionable remix. As soon as I remade the remix as they said, they selected and recorded it. I believe that Reich would have liked the first version."

I wondered what he thought of being labeled a Japanese artist.

"Japanese abandoned all of their history once they were beaten in World War 2. This is a very sad incident. So, our generation use and play western instruments more naturally than Japanese traditional instruments like the Koto and Syakuhati and so on. For all that, I can't allow them to imitate everything from the west.

"Now, I have [been commissioned to make the] music of "Issey Miyake". "Issey Miyake" is one of the most representative clothing designers in Japan. They represent Japanese traditional sense of beauty on the forms of western cloth, instead of the Japanese style, "Kimono". In short, I wanted to show that "form and style is not important". I believe that there should be something in the depths of (or through) form. So, I think I don't care about Issey Miyake's style as regards to the music, if people can feel something in their depth of sound."

"And, I'm very interested in "Gagaku", a Japanese old music style. As I live in Kyoto, I can hear its sound from outside during the festival season. I think that "Gagaku" is a more profound sound than the one of La Monte Young's."

What of returning to producing music for the dance floor...?

"I have not made dance music ever except for the remix of others. Always in my composition, I make the melody first, and I'm poor at making the rhythms. I love to find my original rhythms in the sound, and not to have any beats."

"I think that the recent commercial music, in particular club music - it is something like a castoff skin with no contents. In this scene, they look upon the DJ as the creator, rather than the composer who made it. And club music, worst of all, is getting to be rationalized.

"I enjoyed the 80's club music scene, as it was the era of trial and error, but now it has stopped and nothing has changed, so I can't understand it at all."

"Scope" is out now on Thrill Jockey!

the new album

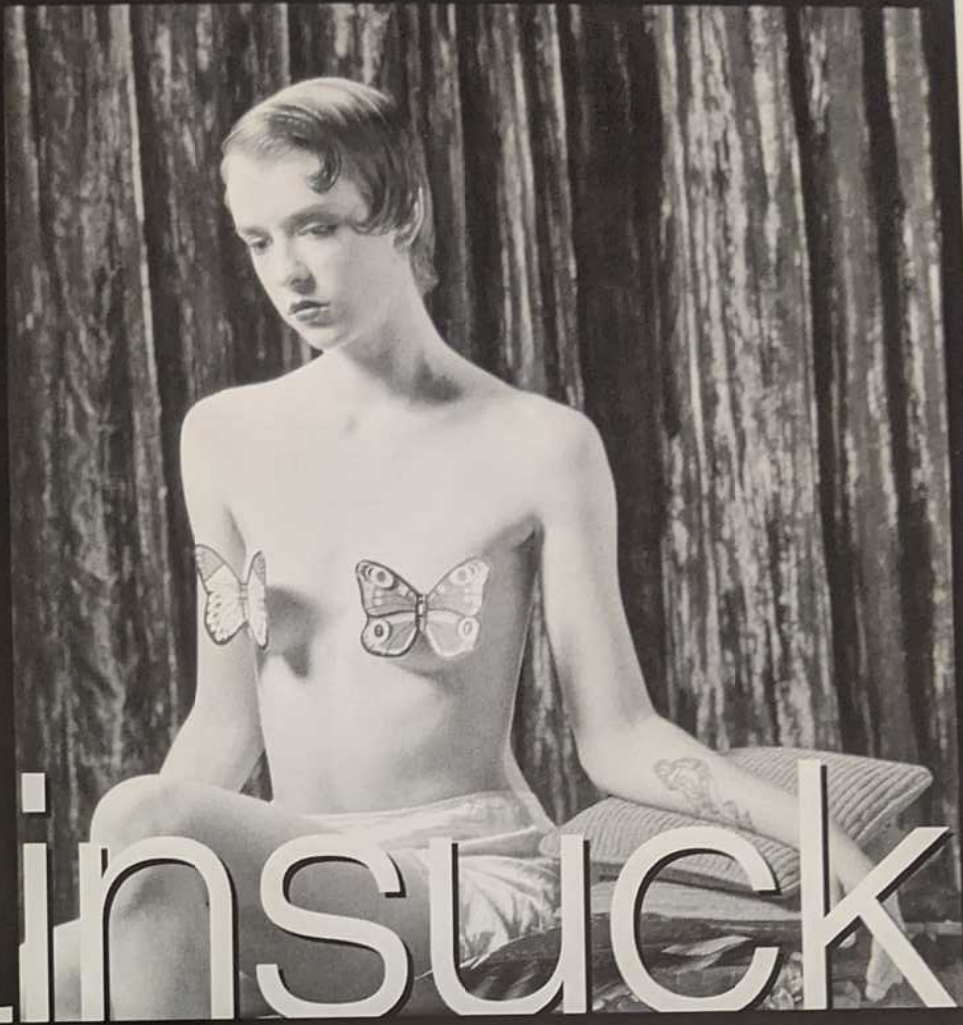
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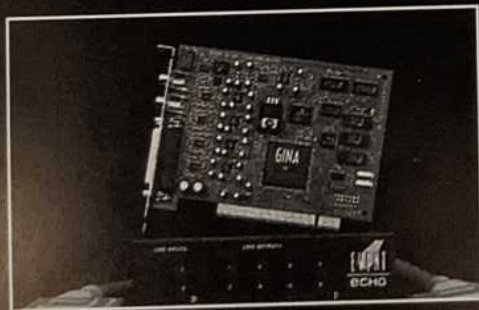
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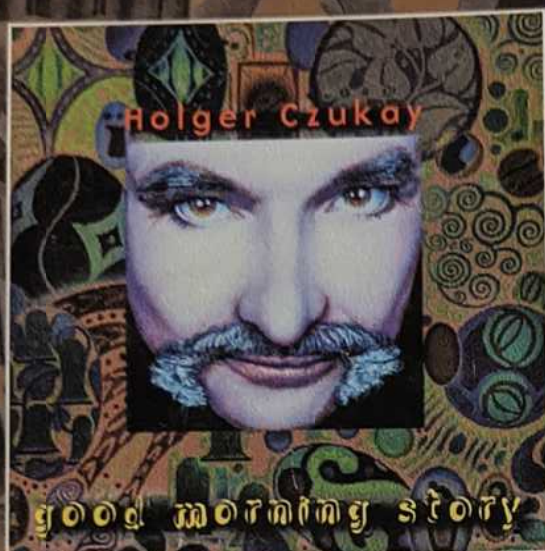
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