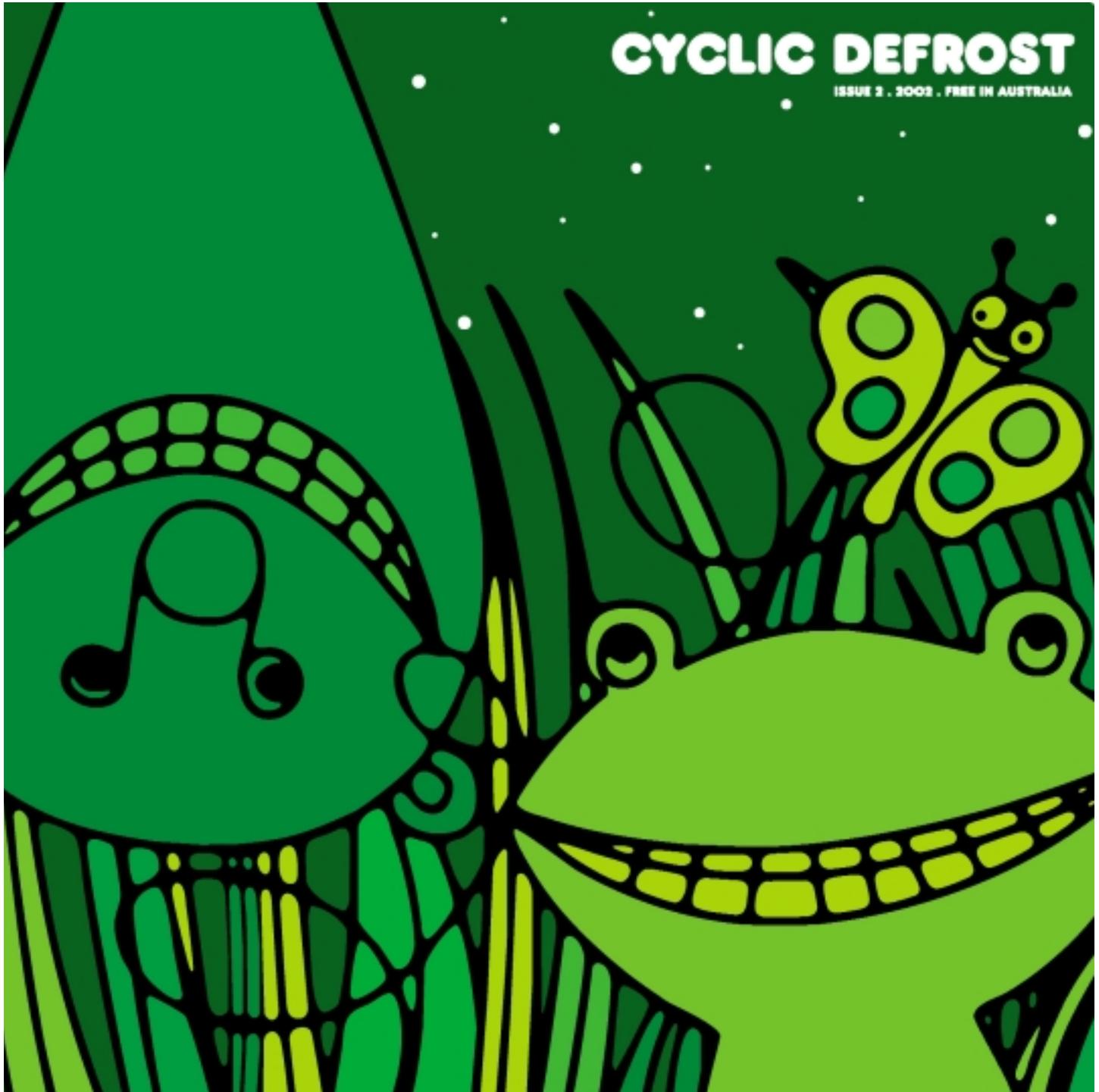
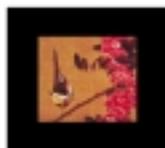


CYCLIC DEFROST

ISSUE 3 . 2002 . FREE IN AUSTRALIA



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BAY 29V

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"be rendered awe-struck... brilliant" *NME*

"completely divorced from any stylistic precedent... albeit of a kind that, with practice, you can still whistle and clap along to" *The Wire*



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CYCLIC DEFROST

good music, proper culture, real history



Welcome to issue two. It's been delayed somewhat by illness and the impact of Sound Summit on our general wellbeing and time. Since the last issue our print run has increased by 15% and now we have hard copies in every major city in Australia. Copies are appearing in far away places overseas and there is a general good feeling about what is in your hands right now. The online version has been rolling along serving up hundreds of megabytes of music to readers far beyond the reach of the print version. Those of you fond of the print version, fear not, we are firmly committed to producing something that is readable on the bus and most critically, on the toilet.

One of the most positive things to have come out of Sound Summit is the degree to which local artists are starting to work and collaborate with their overseas counterparts. So it makes sense that in this issue we have articles on Southern Outpost, who work closely with operatives in Detroit, and the Perth-based Dave Miller, whose productions emerge on Berlin's Background Records. Our cover designers, Rinzen, operate out of Brisbane's Fortitude Valley but have a huge reputation across the globe as a result of their prolific output and collaborative works, most notably their visual RMX projects. Our other stories this month cover the explosion of

Bollywood music in Australia as well as featured producers from Melbourne, Brisbane and Adelaide; and a feature on dubstep, a sound that has been tickling my earlobes over the past while.

We also know that quite a few of you fell for our little joke last issue, Adrian Ferra's article on Newcastle's Bloody Fist Records. Our "happy 10th birthday" present to our friends at Bloody Fist, was so convincing for some of you that notable music journalists were scratching their heads wondering as to its veracity. In this time of destabilisation and the general tightening up of 'freedoms', reading your media, even your music media, with a fine tooth comb is your civic duty.

Enjoy. Make contact. Share your copy. And check page 22 for how to get your name on the list for our screening of the new Michael Moore film

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A New Audiences project, assisted by the Australia Council, the Federal Government's art funding and advisory body, through its Audience and Market Development Division.

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Exclusive online giveaways

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Cover Design

Interview with Steve Alexander
by Sebastian Chan

UNIQUE RETINAL PLEASURES

Each issue we ask an Australian graphic designer who is working in or with electronic music to design our cover. There is no specific brief. Designers are sent a previous copy of the magazine and a table of contents, but other than that they have a free reign. The idea behind this is to shed some light on the interface between music culture and design culture, art and sound (and maybe sound art), and the wealth of interesting people working along the continuum in Australia.



Piece from the Cromatico Paper Sampler
commissioned by Edwards Dunlop Paper

Cyclic's cover this issue comes courtesy of Brisbane designers Rinzen. Designed by Steve Alexander, several drafts were emailed back and forth until the cover you now see was settled upon. Being the lovely folk that they are, Rinzen also offered to make a 'centrefold' for Cyclic and you will find their black & white spread in the middle of this issue.

Formed in 2000, the small group of under-thirties designers (Steve, Rilla, Adrian, Katrina, Karl and Craig) who make up Rinzen are possibly the most interesting and visually coherent crew of young designers in Australia. Their signature vector graphics, bright colours with forays into childhood psychedelia and their often tongue-in-cheek approach make for rather unique retinal pleasures. Although much of their work is for overseas clients, you might have caught glimpses of their style on the covers of various CDs by Waikiki, Regurgitator, Ponyloaf and most recently, Lawrence English's ::room 40:: label. Or you might have seen their work featured in various design magazines – *The Face*, *Wired*, *Zoo*, *Black + White*, *Creative Review*, *Nylon* and *Etapes*. Or come across their infamous RMX project.

"We're all music lovers, to varying degrees," explains Steve. "Personally, I've always been interested in music both sonically and visually, so I'm constantly talking and collaborating with musicians, labels and event organisers. And so it's only natural to be producing the design work too. The music industry on a local level is its own frenetic universe, with very small budgets (if any), lack of planning, tight deadlines and shady characters... so it's essential to be totally into what you're producing. When you're involved with a club, you produce a large quantity of artwork, very quickly, all rather disposable. I think it's healthy though, you discover a lot of ideas, some nice accidents".

It is these 'accidents' that make Rinzen's two RMX projects exciting. The concept of the RMX projects is modelled on the Surrealist game of Exquisite Corpse. In this game participants would write a phrase on piece of paper, fold it to conceal part of the phrase then pass to the next player to add to it and so on; the idea being to generate a 'collectively produced phrase'. Updating this to the age of digital media and the net, the RMX project was an inevitable step. Instead of a phrase, Rinzen coordinated the passing of a design work from one player to the next. Both unaware of who it came from or who it gets passed onto after their additions/subtractions, the end results being stunning collectively made works.

"[RMX started] as a gag with some friends - drinking, making some fucked up shit because we could. The project surprised me in a way and in some respects it serves as a complex psychoanalysis of the creators and their egos. While the project works on a superficial level, each person making their vision, there can be a really nasty personal undercurrent. Other people simply enjoyed what they got and played along. The gameplay outweighs all the preconceived graphic judgements that could be placed on the individual works. It's about the whole, rather than its individual parts. That said, the individual pieces explore ideas that each participant wouldn't have discovered otherwise."

The first RMX was featured at Fresh Conference in Sydney 2001 and is still available online from Rinzen directly. Curiously it came packaged with an audio CD full of chopped up speech and noise. "For the first RMX project we recorded one of the regular 'meetings' – booze related antics, bitching, declarations of dissatisfaction and general banter. From those recordings Adrian and I created 14 tracks with no other samples allowed. For the second project we asked the designers participating to supply a

small introduction. The resulting intros were uploaded for all interested musicians to manipulate into small tracks. Again no other samples allowed. We wanted to contrast the vinyl sized book with a Mini CD format, so recording time was limited (21 minutes total). As well as the nine tracks from Adrian, myself, Sweden, Menu-Exit and Ponyloaf, we were able to include the working files to the last six designs on the CD too, opening the project to a greater, less controlled participation.”

Rinzen’s success has been the result of an extremely strong body of work and the ability to be in Australia but at the same time participate fully in the global design community. Steve explains, “We all studied at the same ‘institution’ [Queensland College Of Art] and Rilla lectured there for a few years and got to know Adrian, Katrina, Karl and Craig. Rilla later worked with them in the same studio, doing mostly corporate design, while I worked across town at Inkahoots, a totally different studio, more community minded, less corporate work. The studio was burnt down in 1998 in an arson attack about the time of the whole Pauline Hanson debacle. Following that, Rilla and I relocated to Europe working for a large web agency, where we ended up winning the pitch, designing and producing the *Wallpaper* website. After returning to Australia, we continued to work on several overseas commissions, travelling back and forth between Europe and Australia ... [Back in Australia] we realised the potential we had as a team, and decided to form a collective. This became Rinzen. The intention is/was to work mainly on our own self initiated projects, doing the odd job to make a living Rinzen is about creating interesting, well crafted work. Employing loads of people, taking financial risks to make a million, that’s not for us. If anything we’d rather work with talented individuals, project by project”.

Working with musicians such as Lawrence English’s :room 40: label has allowed Rinzen to play with different audio packaging formats beyond the jewel case. “[Nowadays] more small independents are doing their thing, which has been made easier by the net and greater availability of new technologies. Ordinary jewel case CD formats were the result of big labels setting cost effective standards and sticking to them for years with little variation and large profit margins prevent creativity I’ve always enjoyed packaging. I create packages that suit the contents, packages that I like visually and would purchase. I’ve been lucky enough to work in positions that allowed my exploration of different media. Once you have the knowledge the rest is easy, you can apply it to anything. I like finding new ways of working it all together conceptually. I look forward to the challenge of any new media. Design is problem solving... When a new format is introduced it takes time for people to adapt,

find a solution they like, get bored with it, then it’s “let’s try something else”.

The growth of xDSL broadband, although comparatively expensive in Australia, has allowed Rinzen to remain in Brisbane and yet function as a global design agency. “Brisbane provides a cheap base to live and work, the advantage being that we have a lot of contacts here, friends, family, printers... Like everywhere, if you stay dormant for too long it becomes dull ... The internet has changed the way the world works, we’ve embraced that, and tried to keep a flexibility to the way the collective operates. Email played a large part in making a lot of those connections overseas and before working overseas we were on costly dial up connections, so we were efficient in our use of the net. Working for a large web agency in Europe meant we had a constant broadband connection. While “doing our work” we could chat with friends, family, clients, and really explore the web. Everything was so immediate. We started talking to people that were conceivably untouchable. Making new connections, everyone knows everyone... Back home xDSL connections are getting cheaper and broadband is becoming common. Australian providers are competing with international competitors, which means everything is more realistically priced. With all the connections we’d made overseas, it was inevitable that we’d explore the RMX project on a global scale. Making the most of internet connections, talented friends and an interesting project that we felt could be pushed further again. We’d met Henni from DGV at the RMX1 exhibition in Berlin. DGV were interested in doing a book with us, which enabled us to fulfil the idea of a global RMX project and show it to a broader audience”.

Rinzen is about creating interesting, well crafted work. Employing loads of people, taking financial risks to make a million, that’s not for us. If anything we’d rather work with talented individuals, project by project”.

Logotype for Brisbane club Fabrique

STEVE'S FOUR FAVOURITE PROJECTS

CROMATICO PAPER SAMPLER

"This is a recent project commissioned by Edwards Dunlop Paper. The beauty of this project was the freedom to explore a narrative through the use of different paper stock and printing techniques. The narrative is intentionally ambiguous, its purpose being to evoke a feeling rather than an obvious story. It's a project where our perception and visions were sought out and we were allowed the space to find something interesting."



Example from the Cromatico Paper Sampler

I/O *Calm*

CD artwork for ::Room 40::



DJ Olive & I/O

Powerhouse Sessions

CD artwork for ::Room 40::



::ROOM 40::

"Lawrence English is a creative individual, he's always developing new projects, putting out solid releases and inviting interesting people to play [at his event at the Brisbane Powerhouse called] Fabrique. People don't actually comprehend how fortunate they are to have such an event nearly every month.

Rinzen produced the designs for each of the three ::Room 40:: releases so far, as well as projections for the Fabrique events.

CASE STUDY:

::Room 40:: & Rinzen Sleeve Design Collaborations

Dialogue between Lawrence English & Steven Alexander

When it came time to start ::room40::, I was aware I wasn't looking for your typical packaging and design options. Having already worked with Steve Alexander from Rinzen, he was the first person I consulted about visual concepts for the label.

I wanted ::room40:: to have a feel all its own - something distinctive, but instantly recognizable. It didn't take long for Steve to come back with something that met all my criteria.

"If the audience can comprehend what is on the CD by looking at it," Steve explains of his approaches, "if it intrigues them and sparks the imagination, then I've done my job. I totally believe in the ::room40:: releases, so I'm making the music look the quality product it is. It disappoints me that music is becoming nothing more than an extensive marketing plan; I want the music I consume to stimulate more than my ears. It's unfortunate that big labels spend so much and rarely get it right, the bureaucracy is absolutely detrimental to the creative process."

Having the chance to develop the visual side of the label from scratch, without more hindrance than the odd suggestion, isn't always the usual working relationship for many designers.

For Steve Alexander it's certainly his preference and something he actively seeks out. From what I can see, ::room40:: has allowed Steve to experiment beyond the 'marketing' confines of some of more commercial project-based commissions he has undertaken. Through this process he has been able to further test just how far he can push his creative practice.

"It's a rare opportunity to develop a visual concept for a new label, creating a unique vision. Something that has been lost in the corporate world due to misguided marketing emphasis. A label like ::room40:: is very personal, it's basically a sonic and visual representation of your [Lawrence's] interests and output.

"I approach everything in an holistic way. There needs to be a sympathetic balance between the label and the content. A package should visually repre-

sent the audio while still remaining associated to the label. Each of these individual packages should collectively represent ::room40::'s existence and direction, something I believe we've managed to achieve with these releases."

Still, working with a solid framework - a one-colour celo-glazed cover - could be an issue or encumbrance to some designers. Instead of perceiving it as this, Steve Alexander, like the other members of Rinzen, see it as nothing more than a chance to rethink approaches and creative choices.

"The 'standardised forms' allow greater experimentation with the graphics, while maintaining a solid base - a base that will always be identified as a ::room40:: package. The packages have two constraints - shape (macro) and typography (micro) - the rest is free. Long term too, the 'standardised' covers work toward creating a cohesive catalogue. "It's totally collaborative," Steve concurs, "The nice thing about this relationship is that we have similar interests, if not identical.

LYCHEE LOUNGE

“Lychee Lounge is a cocktail lounge in West End of Brisbane. Elie from Lychee Lounge is a good friend, and has been into our work since the first RMX project. Actually, it was his encouragement helped convince us to form the collective. A visionary of sorts, he realised we knew what we were doing and gave us the freedom to make the most of his design work. We developed the identity for the lounge focusing on bold uses of colour and minimal logo application to compliment the interiors and the diverse cocktail flavours. Elie is well known for his creative approach to his cocktails and his business, he’s an innovator, which makes him sympathetic toward achieving the best creative results.”



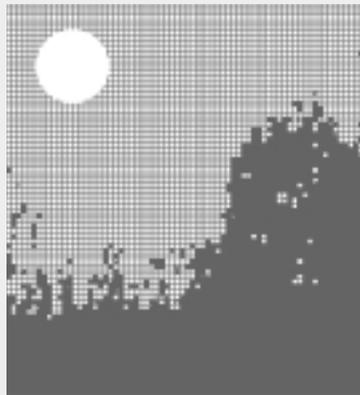
PAUL CURTIS/ REGURGITATOR *JINGLES*

I’ve always enjoyed Regurgitator’s output, they’re creative shapeshifters, suggesting “why not” on every album. Paul is an artist and knows what it takes to achieve a great result. His Valve label has been essential listening for years. Again we were trusted to utilise our graphic wits. *Jingles* explores the idea of a greatest hits album as classic compilation arcade game. Childhood memories. TV blocks, shooting, weaving, hitting, running. Each song is explored as a game, but distorted by age. The cover represents the glorified non-block-like representation of all games in one.

Cover of
Regurgitator’s *Jingles*

Design is personal and expressive, clients should find people that reflect their style and personality, people they get along with. Work with them, not against them. Trust is crucial, as is honesty. Just as clients are aware of their industry and product, designers are aware of their abilities and function. Lawrence is honest with me and I am honest with him. Anything less is going to end negatively.

If there’s one other factor that plays a vital role in how *Room 40* and Rinzen function together, it would be a shared musical language; Steve explains: “I’ve usually heard the audio, or listen to it when I produce the artwork – similar to method acting. I like to absorb myself in that mindset. Often I’ll let the project sit for days and think about it. I’ll get a rush and know exactly what the CD will look like. I resolve a lot of my work like this.



Detail from Scanner & David Toop
A Picturesque View is Ignored
CD artwork for *Room 40*:

“In turn when I’m making music, I’ll see a visual representation of the sound I want. I don’t think of barriers between the work I produce, whether it be sound or visual. The visuals sound good and the sound looks good. It’s all the same.”



A MILLER'S TALE

Dave Miller's introduction to digital music came via his enjoyment of the heavy and harsh sounds of industrial: clubs and pubs, Detroit and Chicago house, chillout sessions to the dubiously titled IDM. Religiously listening to local Perth radio RTR gave Dave the inevitable urge and inspiration to start buying the music for keeps. Vinyl addiction and production instruction ensued.



photo by mark mcpherson

"I was always interested in music production, but never learnt an instrument. When I found out some of these producers were doing it all on a computer it made sense to try it, and I started to play around with sounds. In time I began to be more happy with my production and was continually bugged by friends to send demos out to labels."

Favourite sounds and nice noises: "I like many – I like bass. I also like nice warm chords, moody or happy, as long as they fit. Sometimes the best songs are the ones that don't fit and need to be chopped up so they do."

The time spent perfecting his digital art has given Dave a number of years of learning when to limit his sounds and layers. "I just go by what sounds right to me. Whether it's two or twenty [minutes], it depends on the producer. I'm sure many people would consider it [my music] too minimal, but there's probably other people who would want to strip it down even more. At the risk of sounding very corny, I guess it is just instinct."

It was when Dave Miller supported European producer Jan Jelenik that the transition from bedroom to beyond began. Handing demos to Jan, these snippets were again passed on, eventually landing in the hands of Germany's Andy Vaz, owner of Background Records.

Founded in 1996, Background was set up to "build a home for unique left of centre minimal

electronic music" (quote: Andy Vaz). A suitable place then, for Dave's own minimal outings.

As the original home for Akufen, Sutekh and Kit Clayton, there is no doubting the calibre of Background's A&R. For Andy "good electronic music" is one that "takes a risk. Trying things out or trying old things in new way [sic]. Combining function and intellect, minimising sounds and structures which allows deepness to flow." When looking to sign an artist to the label, he is constantly aware of "unique, personal music that takes a risk, [and is] never compromising." He is also keen to take on artists from around the globe, an essential international flavour.

The *Grey Summer* EP was the first release for Dave on Background, and the response from international press was encouraging: "dexterous and rather colossal bass seesaws in finest shuffle time brave new auras of sound as if Akufen had been taught to play harp beats that look for ways through digital trees."

Despite such positive reviews, it is interesting that Dave has yet to find a local home for his music. Unable to locate an Australian label that pushes a similar sound [insert arguments from local labels here], Dave admits that he was virtually forced to look overseas. Distribution too was a contributing factor.

While Background do have a worldwide distribution deal with Neuton, Australian distributors are

yet to pick it up. "Hardware used to distribute the Neuton stuff throughout Australia. Now that Hardware have shut, it means that only the stores that deal direct with Neuton can get it here."

And here lies the major gripe for Dave, the fact that people in Australia really can't access his music. Having been signed to a German label, "It's just a shame that stores have to import it themselves." We all know what the price on overseas releases can reach.

Away from the intricacies of label distribution, Dave Miller is primarily a computer compulsive. Apart from creating digital minimalism, he is currently putting the finishing touches on a degree in software engineering. With screen time for Dave reaching critical, there is no doubt about his binary addiction. But he concedes that not all producers would necessarily share his love for computers, explaining that the interaction with hardware would be more just a way of life. "It has just become easier to get great sounds from a computer. Computers have caught up to most pieces of hardware. It has produced forms of music that wouldn't have been imaginable with analog gear."

His own tech specs? "I've had a G4 PowerBook since the start of the year. I just started using Ableton Live to play live, I think it's great as I have the opportunity to do somewhat of a "live remix" of songs I have done on the fly, so there is a lot of spontaneity in my live sets now. Should I want to dub things out, slow things down, strip them down, I can do so it at my will. I can also throw loops into my set of tracks that I'm yet to finish which is great as well."

So is Dave Miller just another in the current glut of laptop producers? Another faceless screen creating minimal glitches and clicks, an art mirrored by hundreds of other Mac happy producer-wannabes from all sides of the world? "Laptops have made playing this music live around the globe possible," he argues. "Before it would have meant having to pack up half a studio of bulky equipment to find that some things were broken in transit, and others were lost."

The growth of their use, he feels "is due to the fact that it's a lot easier to do for the producer, and a lot of people are producing music solely on their computers these days anyway. For the punter it has made it a little less interesting to watch, but at the same time, there are a lot more people playing live these days, with a lot less gear hassles which is a good thing."

Apart from Grey Summer on Background, Dave has a track on the compilation Futuristic Experiments #6 as well as a remix of Background label boss Andy Vaz on the Sound variation label. Both are out early 2003.

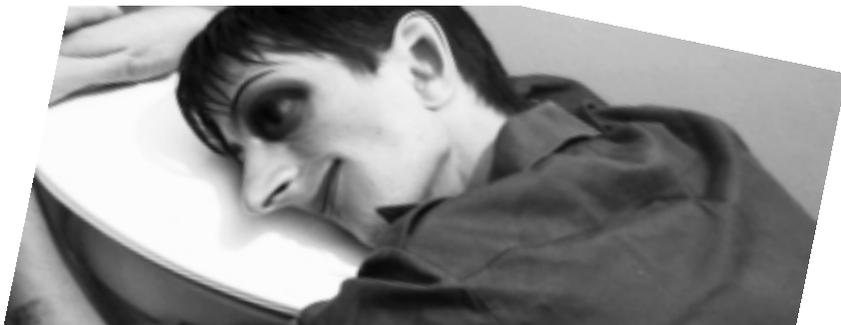


Puzahki

Interview with Craig Parry
by Lawrence English

NOISE ADDICT

On Puzahki's debut offering *It's Just Noise*, Brisbaneite Craig Parry flexes his audio splicing skills and unleashes a record of diced drum n bass and lurid innuendo. It's a solid listen and highlights a great deal of potential in its creator.



Tracks like 'My Daddy' collage together a sometimes confusing array of vocal cut-ups that examine sex in its many forms and uses – entertainment and procreation being the centre of attention.

While sex is a recurring theme for some of what Puzahki is about, it's not the singular focus.

"Um, Shit," Craig replies when asked to outline what he addresses with his chopped sound, "you've really gotten yourself into something with this one. A lot of things I guess, although none of them are really conscious. At the end of the day I think I make music because I don't have a choice. Most of the time it's the only way that I can adequately express my feelings and emotions in purity without tripping over the formalities of superficial communications such as language. Cliché maybe, but true.

"I also think that it's a purging of sorts for our 'hyper info-consumer' culture, like some sort of information/cerebral faeces that's only going to otherwise manifest itself into something very ugly and very bloody. Some days I'm sure I'm living in a commercial and that kind of makes me sad(istic)."

There's more to Puzahki's formation than a desire to unleash personal views. Sex, that recurring theme also played a role as well. What part of "sex" you ask?

"My libido" he laughs, "I have an insatiable sexual appetite that's never entirely slaked so I guess the frustration needed an outlet somewhere. I think if I got laid twice a day I wouldn't need to make music. Actually, when I first started making music I didn't even know that there was a genre for it – this was mostly attributed to the fact that I was residing on the Gold Coast.

"My musical head was well and truly up my arse, so it came as quite a shock when people started recommending stuff that was similar for me to listen to, although I still haven't heard anything that is really quite like Puzahki."

While Parry may have birthed Puzahki in a musical vacuum, his work has nonetheless drawn numerous comparisons to the usual suspects of cut-up electronica. Even though he's not particularly bothered by the remarks, he is disappointed by people's lack of comparative scope. "I usually tell them to fuck off and find their own bandwagon," he comments about his feeling towards comparisons to artists such as Squarepusher. "I mean sure, respect should be paid to anyone whose shit is original and interesting but for God's sake people, it does not start and end with Aphex Twin and Squarepusher!!!"

Outright comparisons and accusations of ripping-off artists are unjustified in Puzahki's case.

Listening to *It's Just Noise*, tracks like 'Steam Boat' and 'Entropy Excuse' (now a side project for Parry) largely sit outside any Warp-related comparisons.

There are other challenges for Craig to face up to. "Trying to keep a straight face is one. I have a lot of stuff that I've written that tends to get a bit carried away with itself. This may sound elitist but that sort of stuff probably won't end up getting released for a while because I don't think people are quite ready for it yet. I get a lot of funny or bored looks from some of the music that I write. I also find it very difficult to keep things structured. I don't like it when people make structure because they feel obligated, but if you're trying to tell a story I guess people appreciate a start, middle and end (although you can play with that concept just as you can in film). A lot of noise purists might find that mentality a little 'conservative and bullshit' but I'm sick of hearing self-indulgent 'noise-art'."

Suddenly everyone with a computer thinks they're the new John Cage. Fuck that! While respects must be paid, at the end of the day, if you're on a stage, you're nothing more than an entertainer of sorts. Although they might pretend to, people don't give a shit about your emotional connection to the music, or how much trouble you went to lowering a microphone down a thirty foot stormwater drain to get the sound of running water with a natural reverb. I think that moulding your messages and exorcising your demons in a format that people can connect with can sometimes be an artform in itself. And no, I am not bitter and jaded."

As for Puzahki's next move, remixes and interpretations seem to be the call of the day. "I've kind of lost perspective on the tracks after hearing them so many times," Craig says frankly of his new release, "I think that it fucking rocks, but then my opinion probably isn't valid. I mostly only listen to my own music so I guess I'm keen to start writing again, which I already have. The version that's to be released locally will be a double CD, multimedia extravaganza containing a HTML browser, more than thirty tracks, a film clip preview and shitloads of info.

"The first CD will be the 'My Daddy' maxisingle containing the crunchy stuff with remixes from Yanto Browning, Matt Weimers, I/O and OK Sushi. The second disc is an ambient side project I do with Sir William Gull called The Entropy Excuse. I'm not sure what the final product that is to be released on Alias Frequencies in February 2003 will contain. Heaps of new and improved stuff hopefully. Sorry, I'm not much of a sales person. Uncle Puzahki Says 'steal money from your parents and just go out and buy it kids'."

Puzahki's debut EP will be released on *Aliasfrequencies* in early 2003.



Pretty Boy Crossover

Interview with Cailan Burns & Jason Sweeney

by Bim Ricketson

BOYS 2 MEN

Ask any electronica musician or fan what IDM stands for and you're guaranteed to get a wry response rather than the actual 'Intelligent Dance Music' answer. You're much more likely to get something like Itchy Dick Membranes or Insignificant Droning Mongs. Many reject the elitist nature implied in the 'Intelligent Dance Music' moniker and prefer to take the piss instead. That Pretty Boy Crossover suggests *Introverted Dumb Men* as their definition says a lot about their open and expressive approach to this sometimes very exclusive nerdy music. Avoiding the laptop trickery employed by many of these programmer-cum-artists in the IDM world, Pretty Boy Crossover succeed in targeting the heart, rather than the head.

Pretty Boy Crossover is Cailan Burns and Jason Sweeney, both confessed "self-trained geeks". They met in Adelaide in 1996, began a radio show together at 3D and "giggled way too much on air" playing other people's tunes. Sweeney released a CD of works for theatre and dance shows which Burns contributed to and so began the fusion of the Prettyboy and the Crossover.

They have released two full LPs, featured on a number of compilations and had vinyl-only pressings. Their new EP *Any Number Can Play*, released on Clan Analogue, features four new tracks and four remixes, a pre-cursor to a new LP to be released later this year. Probably the very antithesis of 'soulless' IDM exclusiveness, their sound falls between their soundtrack and pop side-projects and their eclectic tastes for 'sad' electronica and pop. What remains constant is a gentle and soulful melanco-

lia, reminiscent of older Autechre and more recently DNTEL or Monolake, or in their own words: "tales of loneliness, taking trains across desolate landscapes, walking through cities at dusk, falling or needing to be in love, staring at architecture in the sun..."

The tracks on *Any Number Can Play* range from ambient to beats, always atmospheric and delicately composed. The opening track 'Mystery Sentence' features Sweeney's vocals, just fractured enough to obscure the mystery sentence and to whom its yearning is directed - perhaps a lost love? 'Inventor vs. Invention' is an echoing ambient piece with a deep, rich resonance perfect for headphones. 'The Translucent' and 'If You Could Go Anywhere' are both reminiscent of Autechre, with sliding melodies overlaid with trademark scattered drum patterns.



PRETTY BOY CROSSOVER'S TOP 10 RECORDS

as of Tuesday 2.42pm, Oct 8, 2002, in no particular order:

1. Robert Pacitti

Evidence of Life After Death

For (very) personal reasons. Ask me about Wagga Wagga sometime. And if you ever meet this wonderful man please don't tell him he sounds like Marc Almond.

2. Qua

Forgetabout

Cornel is dreamy. I think it's the Italian in him, and he's also very good friend. He inspires us both immensely. The new stuff he's making is so beautiful too - it's quite a rare treasure.

3. Mœm

Finally we are No-one

You call us melancholy! I get a little teary just thinking about this album.

4. Glen Campbell

By the Time I Get to Phoenix

An all time favourite and will probably never leave my top five.

5. Notwist

Neon Golden

My soundtrack to May 2002, Simpatico indie pop road tour of USA. I think we had 'Pilot' on repeat for most of the way between Chicago and New York.

6. Styrofoam

The Point Misser

This and so many more records on Morr Music. I'll slot in Lali Puna, B. Fleischmann and Team Forest here.

7. Underground Lovers

Cold Feeling

... and all their other records. Underground Lovers are one of the reasons Cailan really wanted to make music.

8. Melke

Kim Hiorthoy

9. Fingers Crossed

Architecture in Helsinki

10. Takagi Masakatsu

Eating

The four remixes are thorough reinterpretations of equal quality to the originals. Automotive, Melbourne producer and DJ, Daniel Feary, morphs the watery 'Inventor vs. Invention' into a deep house delicacy. Ai Yamamoto, known best for her noise scapes of found sounds, game noises and melody deconstructs 'Component Curve', creating a foreboding environment of machine clicks and heavy drones. Melbourne based Shimmer, a.k.a. Kate McAnergney, contributes 'Pretty Boy Megamix!', presumably consisting of elements from a number of tracks, the result being an evil alien soundscape. Clan Analog favourite Kazumichi Grime extends 'Mystery Sentence' to its ultimate ambient end, with eight minutes of refined beat-and-vocal-less headphone sugar; or as Prettyboy themselves describe it, "a moody, spine-tingling thriller".

The whole album has a contemplative and sad air, an expression of the artists themselves: "It's just in our nature," explains Sweeney "we're both very contemplative people and we see a lot of beauty and sadness in things." The artwork too, is organic, with pastels and handwritten tracklistings and autumnal leaves.

But Pretty Boy Crossover assure me they aren't entirely morose and melancholic. "I've always wanted to be a Casio keyboard," confides Sweeney "and so, by strapping one on to play, I feel like I can almost be one. All my other projects are more pop

oriented, vocal based. Pretty Boy Crossover is definitely the more experimental of the projects and probably the most changeable in many ways, in that we make music that is inspired by the friendship Cailan and I have. We don't have any set musical agendas, except for our mutual love of sounds and melody. Oh, and beats!"

The duo's other projects, particularly Sweeney's, reveal a more upbeat pop nature. Sweeney plays every instrument for indie electro-pop outfit Simpatico. Described by adequacy.net as bordering on "a work of genius" with "perfect" warm and emotional vocals, Simpatico has toured extensively on both coasts of the United States. Other People's Children have released a "very exciting" 7" on Morr Music. Sweeney also has releases on Gifted and Matinee, a Californian label. As Pretty Boy Crossover, they are about to start work with Sound Summit stars COCOSOL1DC1T1, a collective-based label in Montreal, Paris and Manchester. Then there's the experimental theatre and dance stuff and a film soundtrack for Triple J's Megan Spencer. Plus a European, UK and USA tour to promote Surgery Records. Sounds like some busy times ahead. "The whole thought of it makes me very sleepy," admits Sweeney.

So what keeps them going? Sweeney explains: "In essence, I'd rather make music, play it to people and have them hear it, rather than making useless small talk in overcrowded, smoky, venues.

"We make music that is inspired by the friendship Cailan and I have. We don't have any set musical agendas, except for our mutual love of sounds and melody. Oh, and beats!"

Cough cough. It only leads to nicotine poisoning." A good enough reason as any to create music. Forget about the Introverted Dumb Males with Mac tans and get on with these I Do Macramé types who create great aural craft!

Any Number Can Play *is out now* on *Clan Analogue*.



ollo

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Interview with Alex Crowfoot & Lars Chresta
by Neotropic

OLLO, I LOVE YOU

While on nationwide tour of Australia, UK's Neotropic interviewed her tour buddies ollo from the backseat of their tour bus...

Two weeks of travelling between Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Brisbane, plus playing shows after ten-hour-drives would be enough to frazzle even the most patient. Alex and Lars, the duo that make up ollo, however, take it all in their stride. "It was great, it was a really good experience, and it was the first time we'd taken gear on the road. It was quite intense at times, we drove from Newcastle Sound Summit to Sydney to Melbourne, Adelaide, Byron Bay, Brisbane and back to Sydney. The Melbourne to Adelaide leg was full on. We only saw one street in Adelaide, and that was my first visit there." Perhaps having Neotropic in the back seat made it more bearable...or not;

- Alex:** Of course we were touring with the wonderful Neotropic...
- Neotropic:** I believe she's a bit of a diva...
- Lars:** I believe so.
- Alex:** In fact she's pretty unbearable.
- Neotropic:** Yes, but like all great artists ...
- Alex:** Yes, so she's awful, but the tour was fantastic.
- Neotropic:** And how were her shows?
- Alex:** Dreadful load of twaddle.
- Lars:** Her computer kept crashing, and it wasn't actually until I started keeping my fingers crossed when 'Muddy Water' started that she was able to play it all the way through from beginning to end.
- Alex:** No, it was really great to see the next progression in the Neotropic sound and I'm very excited to hear where it's going. It was good also to see more interaction with the audience...this is very weird talking about you in the third person
- Neotropic:** I know, and we won't elaborate. This is about you.

SO...BACK TO ollo

ollo are part of the latest crop of Australian electronic musicians that are currently tickling Neotropic's fancy. "I first came here about four years ago. And this time around I definitely feel that there's a great scene bubbling around; in fact it's far more exciting here for me musically than it is in the UK, purely because I feel that people aren't so jaded and living in that London bubble bullshit thing."

Alex agrees, "It's definitely an exciting time. There are albums coming out that are just as interesting and exciting as anything coming out of anywhere in the world, if not more so. There have been many albums of that standard before, but at the moment there's just so many. There are definitely some extremely creative and exciting new sounds coming from this country.

A first-time tour by an electronica duo about to release their first album can go either way, but the feedback from the crowds has been very positive. Alex points out that "the music hasn't been out there much – it would have been the first time they heard it – so I finally feel that maybe people actually want to hear this stuff!" Lars elaborates, "It was really great to have people come up afterwards and give us their feedback, and ask whether we had any music that they could buy."

There were even calls for encores in both Brisbane and Sydney. "Everyone that was playing on the night improvised a track together at the end. In Brisbane, it was Neotropic, Lawrence English, and ollo, and in Sydney without Lawrence, just doing a bit of an experimental ambient improvisation off the cuff. It was a very different feel to the rest of the material that was played throughout the night, which was a bit more compact, a bit more song-based. Alex chimes in "and highly worked. To launch into something where you don't know where you're going in front of an audience was actually a lot easier than I thought it was going to be. It was good fun to feel that free and not be constrained to a track length. We just stopped when we felt like it or felt that that particular movement had come to an end."

Another major part of the ollo show are the visuals that Alex has been creating, which were used on tour for the first time. "It's all been very lo-fi so far.

I'd like to do some visual work that is more thoughtful and structured some time. There are certain things I'm doing with the visuals at the moment that I don't feel I've exhausted the potential of, so I'll continue with that. I realised I am a bit obsessed with the way water moves... I like playing off the organic and the digital against each other in that I tend to film real world or natural forms or movement and process them through the camera. I also like playing with the edges of what the camera can do, not using the camera in the way it was actually intended to be used, and using the defects in the camera to create something new, whether that's while shooting or during editing."

The album that all these newfound fans were clamouring to buy contains a song called 'Reconciliation Train', a track that interested Neotropic because of its political agenda: "Electronic music can be faceless and doesn't necessarily have figures within it that have a political agenda. With punk or hiphop, people's political agendas are often quite clear – whether they've been personally exploited in some way or feel strongly about an issue. A lot of people that I work with have that way of thinking but don't express it."

It is an issue that continues to pervade electronic music. Alex points out that "part of the reason is that it's quite difficult to incorporate issues you care about into electronic music without having

lyrics and a song. You can do it through titles of tracks, but that's not really sufficient. There might be a sleeve concept that communicates something, but that's very rarely got any relationship to anything other than music itself. Or it's simply a great looking design and that's it, so essentially it seems to exist in a bubble – there's no context. I think it's a challenge, but it's a creative challenge, and I wish more people would take that up. Not that I want every album to be haranguing me. It's hard to find a way."

Lars points out that "it can be expressed through the use of samples perhaps, and being part of certain events that are politicised, whether it be playing at a squat party or at a reconciliation event is one way of showing your political colours. I'm not an activist by any stretch of the imagination, but there are some things which I think are very wrong at the moment, so perhaps being part of an event that stands for something..."

Neotropic agrees that benefits, protests and the like are important, but also likes the idea of presenting an agenda as part of a live show, although not necessarily in a soapbox way. "I think as an outsider coming in to see someone live and mention it, I think it's really important in that instance, people then get an idea that you do have a conscience, and I think that's really important, rather than maybe making it so obvious within the packaging or in the lyrical content".

ollo did exactly that as an introduction to 'Reconciliation Train'. "A lot of what we do doesn't have lyrics as such, but that doesn't mean that the



photo by James Blackwell

tracks don't have meaning, and so I wanted to communicate the meaning behind that track, which is me waving a little flag for Aboriginal reconciliation. I've realised it gives me an excuse to talk about it when we're playing, so I can do my bit, however small, to keep it on the agenda."

Future plans for ollo include a potential tour of the US supporting Neotropic, as well as more work in the studio. Alex explains, "At the moment I feel that there'll be two strands, one I guess will be like a lot of the material on this album, in that it's accessible, and then I'm interested in doing a lot more abstract work, and experimenting a lot more with sound, and I feel we're at the point now where we can do both. The reason the album is quite diverse

in terms of styles is that we listen to lots of different kinds of music and don't want to be restricted, so maybe that will be the common theme. I want to keep exploring."

They've also been collaborating with their back-seat driver: "Last night we recorded about seven or eight tracks with Neotropic. It was a very enjoyable and I'd actually like to see that project go a bit further."

The ollo album, Sleeper is out now on Creative Vibes. La Prochaine Fois by Neotropic is still available, and she will be recording with her newly assembled band for release in 2003.



OLLOTROPIC TOUR BUS TOP 10

1. Various

Studio One Rockers

Singalong boredom breakers, especially Marcia Griffiths' "Feel Like Jumping" (which, after that many hours in the car, we did).

2. The Orchestra

Look Away Now

Upcoming release from a London orchestra that collaborates with contemporary artists, including Neotropic.

3. Can

Radio Waves

CD of Can bootlegs left in the car by Sir Robbo. Full of dark wonders, Can's *Tago Mago* was also on high rotation. Must be the autobahn effect.

4. The Beatles

Magical Mystery Tour

An education for Alex who's always had an aversion to the fab four. Strangely, the album title's appropriateness never occurred us.

5. Burnt Friedman and the Nu Dub Players

Just Landed

Mellow yet percussive enough to prevent dozing-off-at-the-wheel type disasters. You can't sing all the way, so albums like kept the wheels turning.

6. Pretty Boy Crossover

Any Number Can Play

Both their album and this newer EP made for great journey soundtracks, and formed part of our download to Neotropic of what's going on in Australia.

7. Aretha Franklin

I Never Loved a Man the Way I Love You

The most spine-tinglingly raw yet skilful Aretha vocals ever recorded.

8. Qua

Forgetabout

Stunning fusion of glitch, guitar, and electronic sounds. While driving the ear needs a hook to carry you through more abstract sounds, and this has them.

9. Mùm

the new album

The pleasure of not knowing what people are singing about, adding that frisson of mystery.

10. Donnacha Costello

Together is the New Alone

Surprisingly appropriate across the outback. This was good 'lull' music, for the bit after the chatter and before the delirium.

HONOURABLE MENTIONS:

Frank Sinatra – *Songs for Swingin' Lovers*

Ritual – *Le Mystère des Voix Bulgares*

Lots of Stereolab and Muslimgauze

Truckloads of dub

Lambchop

Some track on the radio as we approached Melbourne with the dainty lyrics "lick my clit, lick my crack." We laughed as the vocalist tried to fill out the song with a verse. Where do you go from there?

The New Pollutants

Interview with DJ Tr!p and Mr Speed

by Paul Armour

NEW POLLUTANTS

RECOMMENDED LISTENING MATERIAL

Fight Club Soundtrack – The Dust Brothers

Requiem for a Dream Soundtrack – The Kronos Quartet

Man Overboard – Buck 65

The Herd – The Herd

Curse ov Dialect

Castlevania 4 for Super Nintendo

NEW WORLD ODOUR

The New Pollutants, a combination of the 8-bit mastery of DJ Tr!p and the vocals and production of Mr Speed, are a collision of hip-hop, electronica, funk and lo-fi gaming soundtracks. Their debut album *Hygene Atoms* has recently received rave reviews and was named album of the week in *3D World*. Pretty impressive for two unlikely lads from Adelaide.



When we've got a 50k back track and two dollar mike,
Our knees go all weak and heads all light,
There's no point in technology when it's just not right,
When we've got a 50k back track and two dollar mike.

DJ TR!P

AKA TYSON HOPPRICH

"In the beginning I learnt to count on my parents 7" jukebox, by matching the numbers and letters to the song, and when I was about 11, I used to pretend I had a radio show and would do dodgy stutter rap remixes of tracks using two tape decks, dropping Public Enemy, NWA and Kraftwerk samples, and pass them out to my friends.

"In Year 7 I got a hip problem, which I used as an excuse to not to dance, so when we had dance classes they assigned me to be Mr Music. I would press play on songs like 'The Hustle' and 'Nut Bush City Limits'. At recess I would bring in my dad's Grandmaster Flash, Kraftwerk, Tangerine Dream, Frank Zappa, and Devo records, and play them to freak out the other kids. My dad was a bit of a hip-pie and had really good taste in experimental music. I still use those old original records of my dad's today.

"DJ Tr!p arrived in about Year 10, I still have the original diary in which I first wrote "DJ Trip". I was getting into trance and techno and didn't go out much. I conceived concept albums like *Trip-Around the World*, *Trip-Over*, *Trip-Overdose*...it all seems quite prophetic really,

"During high school, my artist name was Wizard for all my computer graphics, games and my first early mods on my Amiga. There was this group of friends who all had Commodore Amigas and C64s and we would have computer parties where we would swap a lot of data and games - that was my first exposure to electronic music, back in the days of tapes and the R-tape loading error.

"I started wanting to take people on a musical journey through styles and sounds of music, then I started maturing my sound. The irony is nearly ten years on I am making music true to my musical roots with the Amiga and I cherish the innocent beginnings of it all with pride.

"I have released *Vinyl Perplexa*, *Recyclise*, *Recyclise Reinterpreted*, *Rock the beat* (EP), *Various - Reflex*, *Various - Obtuse*. There are two more in the *Various* series on the way. I have also had tracks featured on a number of compilations.

MR SPEED AKA BEN SPEED

"As a child when I went to my dad's house on the weekends, he use to have music like Michael Jackson's *Thriller* and Dire Straits' *Brothers in Arms*. I used to stand in his lounge room and mime 'I want my MTV' doing the air guitar rock thing. My dad was into super hi-fidelity, back in 1986 or thereabouts. When the CD player first arrived, he had the sickest player you could buy, he would get all his friends over and crank up the stereo so loud your body would shake, and the neighbours would complain. My dad still has the same sound system, it's so sick and chunky.

"In high school I started playing the classical guitar in the school orchestra (the air guitar practice finally paid off), then moved onto the high school band playing grunge music, Nirvana covers and rock classics. The transition to electronic music was inspired through cross over hip-hop bands like Rage Against the Machine, Beastie Boys and then DJ Shadow. I got right into making electronic music late high school and early university days, about four years ago.

"My first artist name was a pay-out to the DJ thing - I was Mr Tappin Fresh, a cheese hip-hop anti hero and released an EP called *Music for Mass Consumption*. I then evolved into Mr Speed and released *The Other Half Of Humanity*. I still love the cheese though."

DJ Tr!p and Mr Speed have combined talents to become The New Pollutants, who have recently been compared to Buck 65, Tricky and DJ Shadow.

What's your reaction to this comparison?

Tr!p: In no way are we setting out to be similar to anyone. We are trying to produce and release a world-class sound with a local flavour. I don't get too excited about opinions, good or bad, it's what I feel that matters. That said, it does feel nice to be compared to artists as good as that...much better than being compared to shit!

Speed: I always hate being compared to other artists. I really do want to have my own sound. The vocal similarity to Tricky I understand, I have had that comparison before with my solo work, but I am not influenced nor do I want to sound like him either. I don't even want to sound like an Aussie, because I don't sound like that normally. I also don't want to sound like a white boy on the mike, so I try to be as true to my normal voice as possible, speaking the words, not rapping and rhyming."

When I walked in you were making a SID sound-ing track, you called it Sid-Hop. Tell me more.

Speed: Sid-Hop was what you were hearing, its called '50K back track and a \$2 Mike' The song is 54K in size and Tr!p bought the mike at an antique shop in Port Lincoln for two dollars, hence the

name. On *Hygene Atoms*, there are heaps of 8-Bit Amiga tracker songs that we produced. Now we have gone one step back again before the Amiga to the original C64 files, or .sid files as they're called.

Tr!p: The SID chip only has three channel sound capabilities producing pure sound synthesis and some programmers worked out how to get a fourth channel and even get samples out of it, as well as crunchy break-beats. The quality is so low at about 12Khz and less and most files are between 600 bytes and 40k so it is extremely limiting. I use my 8-bit mono Amiga 1200 with a 300mb hard drive with 8mb of ram with a 14mhz processor. I use a program called Octamed Sound Studio - it's a four-channel tracker, which was around before sequencers, and then mix down to stereo. Then I put it to MD and then it goes onto Speed's PC, mixed in twice panned left and right to create a stereo sound.'

Speed: I add the vocals full cut 'n' paste style with Cool Edit Pro- because the Amiga runs out of hard drive space and channels quickly when you are recording vocals, we need to get it onto the PC to complete the track. It's where the lo-fi and the hi-fi meet and so you get the pollution. If the track has no vocals we just master it on Tr!p's Apple 7300 Pro Tools machine and burn it and bang, there it is.

You're both born and based in Adelaide. Tell us a bit about the Adelaide scene.

Speed: We both love being in Adelaide, the good thing about it is there are opportunities to be able to make your own kind of scene and voice. There is creative freedom to be an artist and because the scene is small, people express themselves and create on a different level, and don't try to fit into a particular 'sound'. You don't have as much pressure financially here, there are heaps of opportunities and spaces and it's a good place to mature your sound. We can always travel and then be the interstate guests, rather than local, so that's nice.

What's the live scene like for electronic acts?

Trip: There is really nice vibe here. I DJ regularly at The Crown & Anchor Hotel Wednesday and Thursday nights, which is totally different to my live thing. Our regular favourite live venues are Mojo West, Skylab at Minke, Rhino Room and The Crown and Sceptre Hotel. All different but they're all are great to play in, the audiences are very open and embracing towards live electronica.

See cyclicdefrost.com for further New Pollutants banter.
Hygene Atoms is now available in stores or at mp3.com/speed
A 7" Sid-Hop and 12" EP are in the works.



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Label Profile: **Southern Outpost**

Interview with Patrick HAF

by Domingo Yu

ANTIPODEAN TECH



Sydney, Australia and Detroit, USA. From the people to the weather to the political climate, the two cities couldn't be much more different. Yet when it comes to music, the two are indelibly intertwined, due in no small part to the Sydney-based techno/electro label, Southern Outpost. Founded by Patrick HAF and Phil Chan, Southern Outpost has been putting out records since 1998 and teaming up with key figures in Detroit's music scene long before that time.

But why Detroit? Why not Los Angeles or Berlin? What about New York or Manchester? According to Patrick, there really wasn't much of a question. A DJ for more than 12 years, he dabbled in various genres early on, but continually found himself drawn to the sounds coming out of Detroit. "When I started DJing I was buying different genres of music. The records that I always came back to were (Detroit techno label) Underground Resistance records. You never knew what they were coming up with next. Underground Resistance and other labels like Metroplex and groups like Cybotron changed how I thought about music and how music was done. I never knew the background of all these people. I just based my love of the music on the content of the records."

While Detroit's musical legacy spans genres as diverse as jazz and hip-hop, all of which have influenced his own music production, Patrick's fascination peaked with electro. Elaborating further, he differentiates between the Detroit sound, and electro's other hotbed, Germany. "I like some of the German stuff but I keep coming back to the Detroit sound because it has that raw grittiness to it, it has that street sound. From what I've heard, German electro

seems to be colder, almost mechanical. That's a very big generalization. The Detroit stuff seems to be directly influenced by what people in the inner city listen to when they go out: hip-hop, Miami bass. That's what it seems that Detroit electro is about, fusing those two styles together."

Patrick began making music with friends in the mid-nineties, before formally starting his own label in 1998 with Phil Chan. Once again, Detroit was a direct influence as Patrick had developed a friendship with Underground Resistance head "Mad Mike" Banks. "One day I just called a number on a record. It was the early 90s and I just started speaking to him. I kept coming back, building up a relationship and I started to understand his ideas about being independent and being militant with the media and things like that. It really struck a chord with me." During a 1998 visit to Detroit, several conversations with Banks prompted the formation of Southern Outpost, which quickly grew to include artists such as Data and ShapeShifter.

Since that fateful visit, Patrick has been back to Detroit on different occasions to meet some of the key players and see the environment that spawned the music. The city that birthed the auto industry remains fascinated with technology, thus, musically speaking, it should be no surprise that techno started there. While the city is currently on an upswing, it has unquestionably faced some hard times over the years. Says Patrick, "It's sort of hard to describe my impressions. It has such an interesting history to it. Like downtown you can see huge burnt out buildings still standing from the (riots of the) late 60s. It's definitely a tough city. People have been in a tough situation, especially being in a city that's been run down over the years. The government has played a part in it. The whole inner city vibe, it's like living on the edge." Ironically, this tough edge has led to another form of music, known by various titles including booty, electro bass, and ghetto tech.

Unlike the militant, socially conscious approach that labels such as Underground Resistance take to electronic music, ghetto tech is known for its foul-mouthed, often misogynistic lyrics. A mishmash of hip-hop, Miami bass, techno, and electro sounds played at the accelerated pace of drum n bass, the genre has gradually spread beyond the confines of the Midwest United States. Considering the intense impact Underground Resistance has had on Southern Outpost, it may surprise some that Southern Outpost is distributed by Twilight 76, which is co-run by DJ Godfather, one of the key figures in the ghetto tech and Detroit electro scene.

Yet at a closer look, both genres were birthed out of the same environment, by many of the same people, and share the same independent, do-it-yourself work ethic. These two genres overlap quite a bit and the manner in which Patrick connected with Godfather parallels his experience with Mad Mike. "The first time I came over to Detroit in 1998 I was into electro. (Except for AUX 88), I saw all of this electro stuff that I had never heard before. I didn't know all this stuff existed so I pretty much brought every single one of them and took them back. I just kept going back to Twilight 76, Databass, and Electrofunk. I was one of the people that initially started bringing all of these labels down to Australia. When we first started putting out records, I got in touch with Godfather and sent him a couple and he said he wanted to distribute them. I was impressed with what Twilight 76 was doing and decided to go with them."

While Detroit's influence on Southern Outpost is pervasive, how is their reception back in the D? "They freak out," says Patrick. "They're surprised that someone in Australia is making music that gets radioplay in Detroit. Many don't know Southern Outpost is an Australian label. They don't generally think of Australia as a big music outlet beyond Kylie Minogue or INXS." Although various Detroit

performers have made their way down under, it doesn't always work both ways, making Patrick's frequent trips to Detroit even more critical in promoting the Australian scene. Producer DJ Marquis says that before meeting Patrick, his thoughts about Australia were pretty much limited to pop music and the typical tourist attractions such as the Sydney Opera House. "It really is a small world. I didn't know his name, but after we first spoke, I realized that I knew about him from friends who had worked with him. He's like a long-lost family member. I became real curious as to how everyone hooked up and what the underground scene was like in Australia." Former Underground Resistance label manager Cornelius D adds, "Southern Outpost has been at the forefront of pushing Underground Resistance in Australia and keeping us aware of what's happening down there." As the Southern Outpost name spreads, producers are starting to seek them out. Digitek, who has released music on Twilight 76, Nu Flava, and Breakin', among others, tracked Patrick down, which lead to the current Southern Outpost EP, released under his Shadow People alias. Past releases have featured collaborations with the likes of Keith Tucker, Strand, and DJ Godfather.

By now, it should be quite obvious that the name Southern Outpost reflects the collective's desire to bring help bring the Detroit sound to the South

Pacific. However, Patrick makes it a point to emphasize that their influences move beyond Detroit, and Southern Outpost music draws upon their local environment and personal experiences. Southern Outpost hasn't neglected its foundation in Sydney, even if the electro scene there is small and definitely not a money-making venture. "We'd be lucky if we sold 60 or 70 records in Australia." Patrick contends that in general, Sydney partygoers lean towards more commercial sounds, which is influenced by factors beyond mere musical tastes. "The main problem hindering the growth of underground dance music is the lack of venues that will support (it). It's hard to find a club that will let you play what you want because the rent is so high it pushes up (cover) prices to make it worthwhile. There have been some parties where you can pull 300 to 400 people but you can't do that every week." Yet they plod on. The collective throws many of its own parties, including the recent Journey to the 10th Planet event. Furthermore, Patrick hosts the Dark Energy radio show on 2SER along with James Bond and Colour. The key of course, is balance: maintaining the home front and making a mark abroad.

"What we're trying to do is push our music internationally because that's the only way we can survive. Our whole agenda was to get our music overseas and basically get it out there with the other established labels such as Twilight 76 and

"Many don't know Southern Outpost is an Australian label. They don't generally think of Australia as a big music outlet beyond Kylie Minogue or INXS."

Metroplex. You have to be of a certain calibre to keep up with those labels and we don't want special treatment because we're an Australian label. I try not to categorize (our sound). Hopefully people listen just because of the music. We're just trying to make decent music that will appeal to a lot of different people."

Check Southern Outpost online at www.southernoutpost.com.

Domingo Yu is a Detroit-based DJ and writer. For more info check out www.domingoyu.com



www.bloodyfist.com.au

OUT NOW:

* FIST26 - Brained + C-Bus / Subsonic 12"
(Ball's Out NCL Drum & Bass Assault)
"...far too much testosterone. I mean, my girlfriend didn't know what to think..."
** - Glitterponze Magazine Aug 2002.

* FIST17 - Dog Control / Nasenbluten 3x12" / CD
(17 tracks of Kateful Amiga Industrial Hardcore Suggery)
"...ohh yes.. not as good as they used to be of course... and my girlfriend didn't like it much either..."
*** - Snow Magazine December 2001.

* FIST28 - Extol.Nihil / Epsilon 3x12"
(Twisted Breaks & Psychotic Industrial Hardcore)
"...whilst playing this at home quietly to myself, my girlfriend suddenly stormed in and started squealing and bleating as if the fucking sky was falling in. Thankyou Bloody Fist."
***1/2 - DJ Hankszene September 2002.

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 CANBERRA: LANDSPEED, GARDEN ARCADE : 02 62489220
 MELBOURNE: SYNÆSTHESIA, BLOCK PLACE : 03 96633551
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stasis duo - hammer and tongs
peter blamey - salted felt



nswarts



THIN 'N CRISPY



If you wanted to get dramatic, you could call it the Holy Grail of the internet. That elusive 'financial model' that pioneers Sir Amazon, Sir Barnes and Nobel and Sir Kgrind (may he R.I.P.), continually strive to unearth. To an Everyperson, it basically means that no one has figured out how to make money (and a lot of it) solely trading goods and services on the internet. The dot com implosion speaks for itself.

What has flourished however, is the growing number of 'hobby based' niche websites that specifically cater for a certain on- or off-line community. Running on spare servers and free time, these sites have been hailed a success, based on the fact they target a specific market with a narrow range of goods and services that are often unavailable to consumers through mainstream outlets.

Case in point: CrispyDisc.com. A Sydney based online distribution service for locally produced small-scale releases and CDRs. A joint venture between Adam and Bea Pierce and Jasper Russel (a.k.a. 5000 Fingers of Dr T and Chocolate Jelly), the site has survived as a small scale venture by distributing releases for the likes of labels Clan Analogue, Couchclip, Groovescooter, Zog, Spinwarp and associated independent artist CDs.

The site was originally set up to allow Australian electronic musicians to promote and sell their work independently of any major label or distributor. The idea first came about in an effort to try and shift a number of Clan Analogue releases that were "gathering dust under various people's beds". A relative success, the site continued.

But why not sell through bricks and mortar stores? Adam explains. "There are so many new CDs coming out all the time, it is impossible for record shops to stock them all. They tend to stock a title for a couple of months and then remove it. So one of our aims is to provide an outlet for this 'orphaned' music which is still good listening, but not available in the shops anymore."

Working as a niche operation, it is essential for a site like CrispyDisc to maintain a select and specific focus. There is a music policy of electronic music, one that embraces the obvious plethora of sub genres. "Techno, electro, ambient, experimental, soundscapes, dance and club stuff. We're fairly flexible with our definition. We don't take music that is obviously outside that area, for instance a metal band that use a couple of synthesizers don't really count as electronic. We are also reluctant to take stuff that is really awful, like DJ mixes from inexperienced bedroom artist wannabes. We figure that sort of thing would quickly fill our catalogue with junk."

As well as stocking standard jewel cased goods, CrispyDisc also distributes a number of 'unofficial' releases; CDRs manufactured on a per order basis. "It's simply the next step from stocking artists. Why not stock artists who are not even on a label? If the music is good, but

the audience is small it can make a lot of sense to release on CDR. It doesn't breach copyright at all. The creator of an artistic work has the copyright, that is the artist has the right to allow copies to be made. So as long as we have permission from the artist (which we do), then it's legally the same as buying a factory made CD. And it's better for the artist because there are less overheads. I don't have the figures in front of me but about a third of our sales are CDRs."

As for the technical aspects of the site, it is no surprise that CrispyDisc began operating "on a battered old 486 sitting on a network belonging to a friend who owed me a favour". Upping the stakes, the site now runs on "a battered old Pentium sitting in a cupboard at my house." The biggest challenge though has been trying to find a good, cheap place to host the site. "It [the site] is quite sophisticated with back end databases and encryption, more than your average BigPond account can cope with."

With low costs and all admin, tech support, sales and distribution kept (literally) in-house, the CrispyDisc venture is a successful self-sustaining hobby. And while the trio behind the site can't afford to pay themselves a salary, Adam hopes that "if sales keep improving the way they are, we might be able to melt some cheese over our baked beans next month."

See www.crispydisc.com for further purchasing pleasure



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Frigid's exciting summer series spreads across January and February with exciting international guests, new venues, and side projects. In January Frigid relocates to the Sydney Festival's Hahn Premium Bar at the Hyde Park Barracks for three audio visual spectaculars including special guest DJ/Rupture from Spain on the 19th. We return to the Hopetoun on February 2nd with guests in that month including Andrew Pekler (~scape, Germany).

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JANUARY 19

DJ/Rupture (Soot/Tigerbeat6, Spain)
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see www.snarl.org for further details, full listings and line ups and to subscribe to the email list

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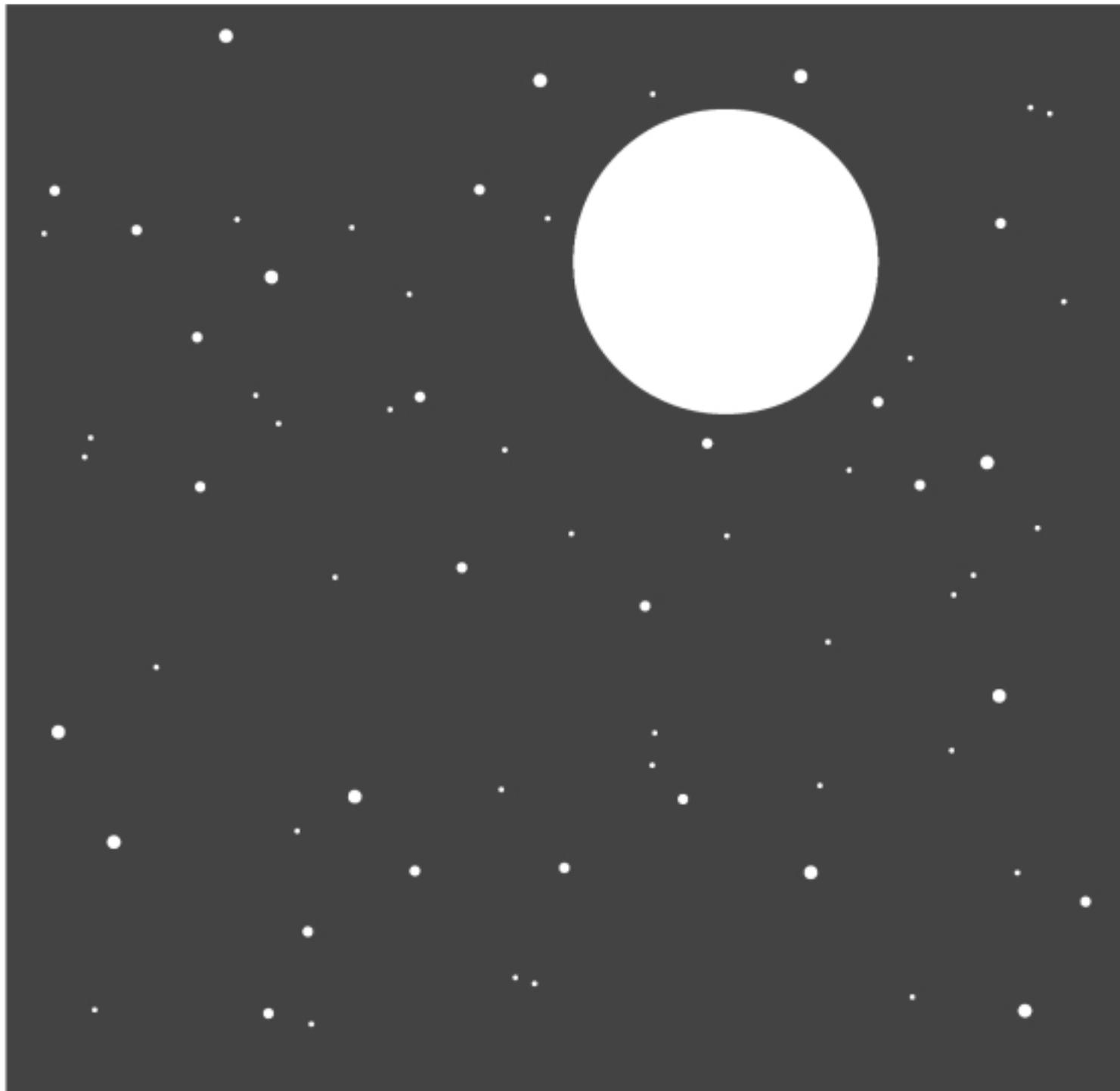


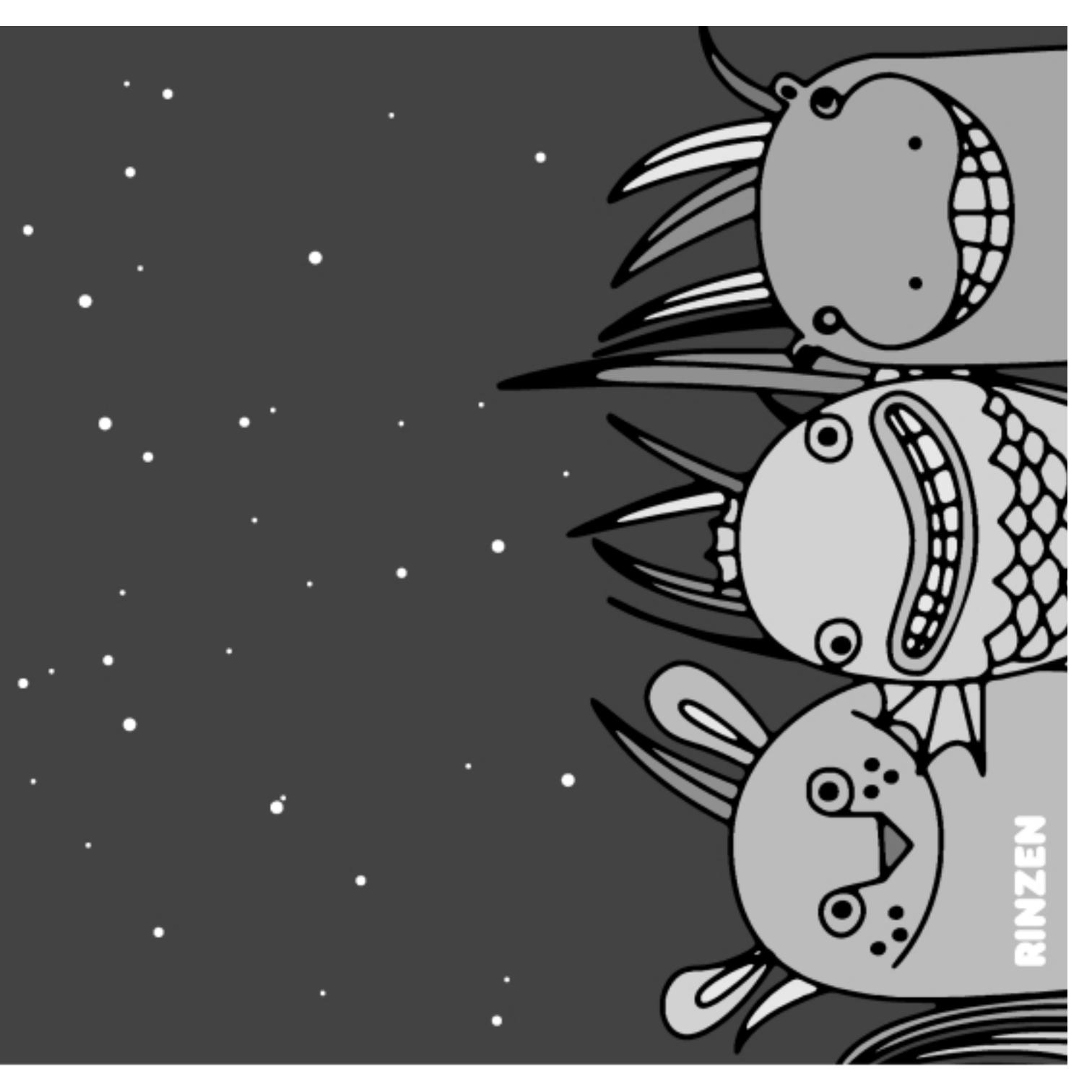
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RINZEN

BOWLING FOR COLUMBINE

Bowling For Columbine opens nationally on Boxing Day, December 26.
More information at <http://www.bowlingforcolumbine.com/>

Bowling For Columbine is Michael "The Awful Truth" Moore's latest film. A splendid dissection of America's culture of fear and obsession with guns. Extremely topical, a little gruesome but also very funny, Moore rips into the National Rifle Association and asks the hard questions like "why does America have so many gun deaths when just over the border in Canada there are just as many guns but only a fraction of the deaths?" Starting out with Moore opening a bank account at a bank that gives away "a free gun with every new account", and featuring a Trey Parker-produced cartoon history of America in the middle, the film paints a picture of country gone mad with fear and reaching for their guns at every imagined threat. Rather than pin the blame on gun culture, Moore's target is the media's fixation with "fear inducing" news footage, live crosses, and reality TV.

FREE SCREENINGS for CYCLIC READERS

Hopscotch, the film's distributor, has offered Cyclic Defrost TWO special free screenings to our readers ...

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Genre profile: **South Asian Pop Music**

by Miguel D'Souza

BOLLYWOOD DOWN UNDER

It was 1986 at the Melbourne Cricket Ground when India and Pakistan squared off for the final of the inaugural ICC World Championship, that South Asians appeared to announce their status on the public agenda. Not just as also-rans suffering bad decision after bad decision as one of the three teams in the 'World Series Cricket' (the series that brought pyjama cricket to the world), the Indians subdued Pakistan in a final that summed up the smaller nation's cricket status as the 'beautiful one day, on the take the next' team. But elsewhere in the world, migrant Indians and Pakistanis were concocting something far more potent than even the 'dream team' of the united subcontinent could wreak on the world. It happened in Birmingham, England, where young South Asians had resurrected bhangra, a folk music from Punjab, which had its roots in celebrations accompanying harvests, weddings, births, and most happy occasions.

Exposed to funk, soul, hip hop and reggae, but suffocated by both English racism and South Asian parental controls (exercised so strongly they surely must be the model somewhere for a future prison state), these youth were ready for as fucked up a sound as bhangramuffin. Originally, it was re-voiced versions of classics like 'Gidhian Di Raniye', pumped up with digital dancehall beats that came out on compilations like Oriental Star's *Pump Up the Bhangra* and the *Wham Bam* series. These early releases featured work by names that would go on to have a big influence on a music that would eventually be tagged with an almost anonymous moniker: Asian Fusion. Bally Sagoo, Mangal Singh, TJ Rehmi and Talvin Singh all did their time with bhangra outfits. Bhangra bands toured areas like the Midlands, Birmingham, London and then the world, playing Wembley-arena sized venues right down to private weddings and birthday parties.

Magazines like *Tan* and *Second Generation* took a critical and often humorous perspective on the emerging culture. These were monthly music, fashion and culture mags that sprang up and then disappeared fairly quickly, but lasted long enough for people to realise that the children of South Asian migrants of the 1950s onwards were ready to express. These mags covered the fragments of the scene that were emerging from the South Asian communities to become a parallel club scene for South Asians to sample from and feel something of their own culture.

Asian fusion isn't one particular style or sound, or limited to one musical genre. It seems to refer to the Asians themselves, as the catalytic ingredient in the music that is produced. Diaspora Asian



musicians are the 'fusionists', to steal a term coined by TJ Rehmi for a cut on his Mindfilter set, who are letting loose the same desire to recreate something identifiably as 'Western' as the Morris Oxford was to the Ambassador. (The Ambassador was a direct copy of the Morris Oxford, made and sold in India, modified and updated every year, in all but its shape, by the Hindustan Motor company since 1954.) Indians are enthusiastic early adapters, taking on 'foreign' influences and Indian-ising them, so

SPICE STORES

While almost all stores sell music, few stock large amounts of 'official' product. Local distributors have set up around the major city centres to distribute pirated CDs of Bollywood film soundtracks and bhangra releases. A rumour circulated amongst owners a year or so ago that the music publishing houses in India had collaborated to prosecute store owners who supplied pirated albums here, with a local law firm hired to take up the case. There even seemed to be a short period when the latest film soundtracks weren't available, but the spice store haul seems to have returned back to large selections of really cheap CDs. How cheap? Well, a copy of Punjabi MC's *Switchin* would probably cost you around \$40 to land here, legally. If you could find it. But for \$5 last year, you could get not just *Switchin*, but another PMC album *Legalised*, all on the one CD. But the high-turnover spice stores have had another consequence on the music scene. The rise of the spice store owner/promoter. And the dodgy bhangra gig.

LISTENING RECOMMENDATIONS

Nu-Skool Panjabi Garage/hiphop

RDB – *Rhythm Dhol Bass*

(untouchables.uk.com)

MC Metz and Trix – *Danger*

(untouchables.uk.com)

Punjabi MC – *Legalised, Grass Roots, Switchin', 100% Proof, Dhol Jageero Da*

Charged – Hero (Nation), *Elektro Panjabi Da-koo* (EP of remixes, a must have)

Swami – *Desi Nu Skool Beatz* (Nation)

Raag-tabla-fusion music

Karsh Kale – *Realize, Redesign* (Realize Remixed) (Six Degrees)

Cheb I Sabbah – *Shri Durga, Maha Maya, Krishna Lila* (Six Degrees)

TJ Rehmi – *Mindfilter, Mera Therapy, Raag*

Digital, Invisible Rain

Rizwan Muazzam – *Qawwali*

Local DJs to look out for

Akaash

Earthbrownkid

DJ Sam

Teaj

Schmidt

Amit

Vilas

TOP 10 Subcontinental Cricketers

By Miguel D'Souza
(in no order – all are recent
because the author is recent, too)

Rashid Latif

The honest man of Pakistani cricket. Voted sportsperson of the decade by Australian sports-writers because he stuck to the truth about gambling in cricket, lifting the lid on the scandal that saw cricket changed forever.

Manoj Prabhakar

An all-rounder with plenty of courage, Prabhakar was renowned for his fighting abilities (which easily outshone his modest talent). Prabhakar later distinguished himself in a similar way to Latif, blowing the whistle on Kapil Dev's match fixing.

Vinoo Mankad

The man after whom the term 'mankaded' (when a bowler 'runs' a batsman out for backing up too far) was coined. The film *Lagaan* made a subtle reference to Mankad, when an English bowler runs out an Indian batsman using this legal, but un-sporting technique.

Waqar Younis

The bowler who finally gave the Pakistani attack something that had eluded it since partition. Pace. Younis also introduced 'reverse swing' to the cricket and was alleged to be a chucker and ball-tamperer by opponents (all white). Ten years later, Glenn McGrath finally achieved the same trick and has been hailed as a bowling genius.

Imran Khan

A fantastic all-rounder from an era when the game was dominated by them.

Wasim Akram

Crooked, prone to flare-ups, inconsistent, occasionally ill-disciplined and injury-prone, Akram will probably go down as one of the great all-rounders in world cricket. Part of the best ever Pakistan bowling attack (along with Aaqib Javed, Waqar Younis and Mushtaq Ahmed).

Abdul Qadir

Well before Shane Warne there was Abdul Qadir, who holds the record for the most wickets taken in a district match in Victoria. Qadir was a leggie in an era of quickies, but paired with captain Imran Khan, was deadlier and more deceptive than any other leg-spinner, fat-boy included.



Sachin Tendulkar

Nothing really needs to be said. The best batsman in the world, on technique, mental strength and the fact that he NEVER looks like he's going to get out.

Kapil Dev

Proved himself to be a complete asshole after he finished his career by having a fundamental role in match fixing, offering Manoj Prabhakar money to under-perform in a match against Sri Lanka. In his day however, he was a devastating batsman and dangerous bowler with an incredible outswinger.

Muttiah Muralitharan

An off-spinner as penetrative and dangerous as any other bowler in the world today. He will end his career as the world's number one wicket-taker and by a long, long shot. Muralitharan has proved to have the toughest of character, after the patently racist treatment he received at the hands of Australia's umpires, cricket journalists and even some sections of the public when he was called for chucking by Darrell Hair. A bowling strike rate of a wicket every 23.32 balls suggests he will have no trouble being the first bowler to reach 600 wickets (he's on 430 now).

that they sound (to Indian ears) utterly Indian. Think sitar virtuoso Ananda Shankar doing the Stones' 'Jumpin Jack Flash'.

In Australia, Indian culture has a muted, restrained influence on the environment. Even the term 'Asian' somehow excludes reference to people from the subcontinent in Australia, an ironic twist to the situation in the UK, where 'Asians' are seen universally to be people of South Asian descent: Indians, Pakistanis, Sri Lankans and Bangladeshis. But then Australia's 20th century cultural panics were about South East Asia, and Indians, almost all first language English speakers, have been able to adapt to Australian culture. Quietly. But in large, inner city venues, as well as the ubiquitous suburban nightclubs, a less restrained side lets loose.

"The taste for experimentation is only just beginning to emerge", says Avijit Sarkar, a keyboardist and percussionist who has lived and worked in Australia for twelve years. A drummer with heavy-metal outfit Hammersmith back in India, Sarkar played the uni crowd in the late 70s and early 80s, continuing his deep interest in Indian classical music taught by his parents. "The influx of Indians in the last twenty years has brought Bollywood to Australia. Indian immigrants going to the US and Australia have only had time for making money, but it's only a matter of time for the next generation who have grown up here".

First there were 'community nights', where entire families all went to get down to bhangra, but this put serious curbs on the 'socialising'. With less of the restrictive parenting that marks some English Indian communities, there was never a need for the daytime bhangra parties in Australia. Bhangra moved straight to the nightclubs. Relying heavily on a few community radio shows playing the music, and with spice stores dotting the Australian suburbs serving as the perfect flyer spot, suburban bhangra clubs have sprung up.

The once a month 'curry' dance parties pull crowds of 1000 or more on the strength of fashion parades, bhangra and rnb, but weekend nightclubs have also dotted the entertainment landscape, most notably, Ashquie, in Sydney. First located in a bowling club in Sydney's west at Rosehill, Ashquie was a hit from the beginning. Curious bowling club managers would be overwhelmed by the capacity crowds that turned up to hear this strange-sounding dance music, as DJ Schmidt (Mohammed Schmidt) attests. "Let's put it this way," says the diminutive, but energetic DJ who served as chief selector at the club for many of its seven years, "These venues were places no-one would go and hire, and all of a sudden they were going from \$1000 dollar bar sales to \$6000 bar sales." Schmidt manned the decks through the club's migration across Sydney, through six venues, as violence eventually took the gloss off the night's appeal for venue owners. "Eventually, it was either that we were too big for the venue's capacity," says Schmidt, "or, you could say it was the troubles when alcohol or women came into play." Currently without a venue, promoters Michael Narayan and partner Renu are no doubt, on the hunt for a new space.

Australia has seen a slice of international action too, with Alaap playing Sydney's Hordern Pavilion, way back in 1995. Parmjit Pammi, whose 'Sarke Sarke' was amongst the earliest drum and bass-fused bhangra tunes, played to a thousand or so participants, friends and family in a hall in Coffs Harbour at the end of the 1997 Sikh Games. Easter 2002 saw Bally Sagoo paired with Kully, one of three brothers who make up RDB (Rhythm, Dhol and Bass), a garage/2step bhangra remix crew from Birmingham, in the UK.

This combination then went on to tour the country, drawing 1500 people to Sydney's OneWorld Sports bar, where, amongst the athletic memorabilia stuck to the walls, Sagoo produced a four hour set of bhangra and Hindi film tunes that included a reworking of his 1990 hit

'Mera Laung Gawacha', originally a dub-heavy lovers' tune.

The events these internationals play at are an update on the 'aunties and uncles' nights that originally gave rise to the bhangra scene in Australia. Melbourne's club nights originally featured a crew called Jawani, a collective of DJs who put on club nights midweek in the early 1990s. Today, in Perth, Panjabi MC can draw a crowd of 600 to city venues like Globe on a Friday night, with only a few mentions on RTR and a few posters in spice stores, Indian restaurants and university notice boards. It is in the big population centres like Sydney and Melbourne that South Asian dance parties are reaching a critical mass, matching the growing appeal of bhangra, Hindi film music, and even Asian 'underground' sounds.

Clubs like Sydney's One World Sports and Shark Hotel are built to cater to large volumes of people, and the Hungama parties can bring in a big crowd, a bar tab approaching ten grand and a generally peaceable crowd. Which is not to say that the partying is tame. The dancefloors are a study in the complex tastes of a crowd featuring Australians of Indian, Fiji-Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Mauritian, Kenyan, Ugandan, South African and Sri Lankan descent, as well as any other even more complicated ethnic and cultural mix. Probably for reasons of safety, the bhangra dance floor and the rnb room are sta-

ples, and while the music is a bumping mix of commercial hip hop and rnb on the dancefloor, in the bhangra mosh pit, it's mayhem.

Women aren't necessarily deterred by the groups of men Cossack dancing around the centre of the floor - they're usually brothers, boyfriends, husbands and so on. But the vigour, gymnastics, spontaneity and let's be frank, drunken revelling is infectious. At Panjabi MCs' technically troubled set in Sydney during May 2002, a burly, generously girthed Sardar (Sikh), wobbles amiably, shouting in Panjabi, with his arms outstretched. As Panjabi MC's 'Mundian To Bach Ke' plays, most around him join in on the chorus, some whirling, others dropping to their haunches and getting up again, all the time shouting things like "Ya Balloo!", "Chok There!", or "Balle Balle!" (think Panjabi for "yay!"). It's raucous, energetic and heaps of fun. The bhangra dance is an almost natural response to the rhythm of the dhol drum, a hefty cylinder skinned at both ends, played with both hands via sticks. The rhythm is a syncopated beat, the boom! of the drum's bass note matched with a patak! found at the rim on the other end. The rhythm can be slow, to blend with hiphop, or dancehall reggae, or sped up to match two step garage, or drum n bass beats.

In Sydney's Fairfield, right across from the cop shop on Smart Street, the curiously named 'Purple Haze' hosts a newer, younger sort of club, where the

music is entirely contemporary. Hindi film remixes get downloaded and burnt on to CD daily by selector Samlesh 'DJ Sam' Chand. One of the hosts of the Masala Mix, an Indian music program on Sydney's 2SER-FM, Chand spends his days working as an IT engineer, refreshing his repertoire for his Saturday night club, Klub Kyun. Chand, partner Da V, and Schmidt (moonlighting from Ashquie) spin a heavy, garage, and deep house based mix of Hindi film tunes, laced with fierce, rolling two-step bhangra, interspersed with generous breaks of commercial rnb easily sliced into the mix. The crowds tuck into the complimentary barbecue buffet for their ten dollar entry charge, and the dancefloor packs out with couples writhing close, while young bloods prowl the edge of the floor, eyeing out potential, real or imagined rivals for their woman. Its good music, energetic dancing, with occasional outbreaks of dancefloor hip and shouldering between overly-drunk punters, whereupon it's the door for anyone within an arm's length. DJ Sam keeps his brother's phone number, across the street at Fairfield police station, close at hand in case things get rowdy.

For more information, including a piece by Avijit Sarkar called 'So What's Different', see <cycllicdefrost.com>



THE NOTWIST

The Notwist is a masterpiece, seamlessly blending modern day electronica with bright and sunny pop, all woven together amongst guitar, drums, woodwinds, strings, and voice. Features members of Console, Tied & Ticked Trio, Village of Savoonga and Lali Puna.



NEON GOLDEN

"10/10 - my album of the year...this work of contradictions is a wonder" JUCE
"Beguiling sound that falls somewhere between Aphex Twin, Boards of Canada and To Rococo Rot" MIZK
"Neon Golden may be hardwired to a long musical tradition, but it sounds furiously modern" UNCUT magazine



Dread Garage Overseas Profile Interview with Zed Bias and Steve Goodman by Sebastian Chan

DUB STEPPAS

There's new movement in the garage scene. A new generation of producers, a lot in their teens, who have grown up with cheap computers and software production tools are emerging. The old image of UK garage as the preserve of conspicuous consumption, cocaine, champagne and nice clothes, is being replaced with a darker more overtly dub and dancehall influenced sound. Listen to Dirty Harry's 'Dirty Dirty' on Southwest – the way the bassline growls against the lurching stepper beat – and there are flashbacks to jungle producers like Ed Rush; or Dub War's dread soaked 'Generation' on Tempa which is pure submarine dub.

Dave Jones, better known as Zed Bias, explains what is going on: “thanks to the ‘bad element’ inside and outside clubs over the last year or so, most of the best UK garage nights have been closed by the police. The ones that do still exist want to book big ‘crews’ to appear at their venues, only to be shut down on the night. It’s not even just in London”.

One regular night, Forward, at London’s two hundred capacity Plastic People has become the latest centre for a new sound to develop. “Forward is great because it really does attract the best crowd possible for the music we play. They expect it to be different to what they’ve heard at other parties. I’d say Forward is the current Metalheadz.” This is an apt call to make, for many of the new 2-step tracks emerging on labels like Ghost, Soulja and Tempa, carry a lot of the aural characteristics of that classic Metalheadz period, 1994 to 1996, when the music was rough, edgy and possibly experimental but still carried propulsive imperatives of a dancefloor.

Steve Goodman, operator of the splendid online resource Hyperdub and a producer under the name of kode9, agrees, “in London, the only night of note is Forward. The DJs who are involved with the night have refused the musical compromises which most UK garage DJs succumbed to during the scene’s commercialisation. As such, the dub dominates, and vocals (as much reggae and hip hop oriented as rnb) have been stripped down to transitory glimpses as opposed to songs. The pirate [radio] stations are split between the dark crew based sound,

and an old school bumpin 4beat garage sound. London is currently in a phase of transition, you can sense that something new is bubbling around in the system, not yet fully actualised.”

As Goodman explains, the Forward night, Hyperdub, its sister site dubplate.net, and many of the new emerging labels are linked by Ammunition Promotions. “Dubplate.Net was set up by Ammunition Promotions in 2001 about six months after Hyperdub.com in 2000. Dubplate and Hyperdub, from unrelated emergences, have converged in a kind of scissors manoeuvre.



zed bias

Ammunition run Forward and manage loads of labels including Tempa, Shelflife, Bingo, Road and Vehicle. I run the site for them.

“With the collapse of many of the clubs, it is the main source for DJs and producers to hear tunes, not just from abroad, but also from within the UK itself. The Dubplate.Net forum has grown in a way we never really foresaw. In a way, it mirrors many of the problems which have bugged the garage scene, yet at the same time the site intensifies dubplate culture in its traditional sense. But I think it has more interesting potential to mutate dubplate culture in some way...

“Hyperdub was developed by me and a little crew of designers, writers and DJs in Brixton alongside a series of low key club nights. Hyperdub’s autonomous Softwar Agents are distributed globally, and contribute as and when they wish. I’m the editor, but not in the usual sense of a magazine. I don’t set deadlines or chase writers – they kind of drift our way. The current manifestation of Hyperdub is only phase one and nobody is really sure of its tendencies. All signals suggest that phase two will look like a record label launched in 2003, but such phase transitions may be volatile, and may result in some casualties.”

Informed by his earlier work with the CCRU (the mid 90s Cybernetic Culture Research Unit which also involved Kodwo Eshun and Sadie Plant) Hyperdub is much more than a website. It is a term that encompasses the transitions between early 90s ‘ardkore to jungle to drum n bass and now to garage, and draws on Paul Gilroy’s notion of the Black Atlantic. Reduced to its simplest terms, Gilroy’s Black Atlantic conceptualises a transnational culture built from the traffic of people and ideas between Africa, Jamaica, America and the UK. For Gilroy it is flows of people (slavery), goods (trade/commerce), and ideas (sounds, music, art) that demonstrate that Black cultures on either side of the Atlantic are transnational rather than nationalistic in nature.

Goodman brings digitisation and the communicative opportunities of the internet to update this, explaining, “Hyperdub is the cultural mutation that emerges where the analogue and digital oceans of sound collide. Black Atlantian rhythmic futurism is the most sustained and rigorous exploration of these cyborgian mutations. For better or worse, diasporas tend to be the most dynamic, sustainable modes of cultural composition in contemporary capitalism”. Think here the aquatic world of Drexciya, or the influence of Detroit and Jamaica on Berlin producers like Maurizio and his Basic Channel imprint.

Back to 2-step and there are new pan-Atlantic mutations taking place – Horsepower Productions do the remix of Jamaican dancehall kingpin Elephant Man, innumerable American rnb acapellas are plundered for sample sources, just as Timbaland and the Neptunes both feed into and plunder the rhythmic complexities of 2-step for their own

tracks. Whilst the music mass media ignore the new developments and focus on the easier electroclash (stars, songs, Europeans) and bastardpop (stars, songs, a bit of controversy), Goodman explains that other things are going on. “For sure copyright systems are currently under crisis, stretched both locally and globally. But I think the opposition between creativity and capital is misleading. Capitalism needs creativity [not just in a blood sucking kind of way] more than many people assume. The problem is as much the model of the individual ‘artist’, their ‘creativity’, and expectation of payment, as it is multinational media corporations. They are actually complicit models. The only way around this knot is through collectively developing pragmatic modes of organisation, adaptable tactics and strategies from the bottom up, which ensure that creativity is not stifled and necessary capital feeds back into the system to sustain it. There are lots of examples of labels/collectives who attempt to engage with the market in a way which sees past that binary opposition, either by swarming, for example Wu Tang or the So Solid Crew, or with trans-genre digital strategies such as Mille Plateaux [and their Force Inc and Ritornel offshoots]”.

Zed Bias is using similar swarming tactics. With well over a hundred remixes under his belt and several different collaborative projects, it is about keeping options open and benefiting creatively from the input of other people. “Maddslinky isn’t so much a sound as a collective of very cool people I’ve worked with over the years, and I pulled everyone together for this project. DJ Rocca, Will White from Propellorheads, Juiceman and Simba, Kaidi Tatham, Kevin Robinson (ex-Incognito horns man) – lots of talented people have helped me to do this debut album.

“Phuturistix is more a studio-based affair, with an album coming out next year on [the softer drum & bass label] Hospital Records. The sound is soulful, but concentrating a bit more on songs, a similar concept to Maddslinky but a very different texture overall. DaLuq is a project set up primarily to make music we can push at the Forward nights. We have our first release on Soulja right now, and we’ve just remixed the classic [Kraut track and Detroit favourite] ‘E2E4’ by Manuel Gottsching. Henchmen totally focuses on MCs Juiceman and Simba, who appear throughout my catalogue. There are no plans for a Zed Bias single for a while, except for ‘Jigga Up (Ring The Alarm)’ a version of the old dancehall classic which is out on my label Sidestepper.”

Zed Bias is the bridge between the breaks and 2step communities. In Australia, breaks is extremely popular with Sydney promoters Fuzzy capturing bigger audiences than many UK breaks events. In Australia too, new microgenres are emerging with specific local relevance – ‘crankstep’ developed by car enthusiasts in western Sydney and ‘boystep’ to describe the progressive pretty breaks of Melbourne’s NuBreed.

Unlike the narrow media boundaries imposed from South London on the spread of drum n bass jungle in the 90s, Bias recognises a much more global opportunity. “I’d like to think that I’m helping that whole thing out right now. I’ve joined up with lots of overseas producers over the last few years - Gush Collective from Germany, Dinesh from NYC, DJ Abstract from San Francisco, DJ Rocca from Italy, and the Katana Cru from Tokyo) and there’s a little network of DJ/producers who support each others shit”. Goodman elaborates, “the emphasis on London has been because of its population density, the concentration of music media capital in the city, and most importantly its ‘scenius’ or collective intelligence, its continuing ability to incubate new sounds - something that happens everywhere - and develop them into collective movements - something that doesn’t happen everywhere. In the 2step scene, undoubtedly the best productions are still coming out of the UK, not just London, but Manchester, Sheffield and Milton Keynes as well, and there is some interesting stuff coming out of the US on a dubstep tip.

“As Kode9, I’ve DJed in North America, the Middle East and Germany and am playing in Norway next month. There are micro-scenes scattered all over the place, and at Hyperdub, we have contact with operatives in New Zealand, Australia, Tokyo and South America. As far as I am aware, if we are talking about similar tempos, breaks has a much bigger global presence than dubstep just now, but it seems like these scenes are fusing to a certain extent.”

But Goodman is not enthused about breaks, “the breaks scene was pretty manufactured in this country. For me, generally, the nu-breaks sound has always lacked something, like techstep without the speed, to drive it along. Or I found the breaks used so totally unimaginative that I never really went anywhere near it. UK garage has brought with it infinitely more rhythmic innovation than the nu breaks scene. The nu breaks/2step convergence is generally a positive thing. With what has been termed breakstep, the sounds have started trading, in that the breaks get the much needed swing from garage, and garage drifts closer to darker electro/drum n bass soundscapes.

“Zed Bias is the producer who has practically defined this exchange, for example ‘Supafine’ on Soulja 4, alongside other producers promoted by Ammunition like Darqwan. Check Darqwan’s ‘Confused’ and ‘Nocturnal’ on the Texture imprint. But to be honest, when it comes to that mid-tempo, 135bpm zone, I’ve been more excited by the rhythms influenced by dancehall on Horsepower and Ghost, the ‘boom-boom-clack’, rather than the breakbeat in its traditional form as rinsed in nu-breaks. With Timbaland, breakbeat science had already moved on into glitchy, stutter territory, leaving the breakbeat of old feeling a little jaded...

“Before we were humans or machines, we were colonies of bacteria. Time for some ribofunk...”

“It is unfortunate how the term ‘breaks’ has been reterritorialised onto only a certain breakbeat sound, generally known as nu-breaks...and in terms of electroclash, I love much of that dead-pan robot shit, especially Miss Kitten. I’d rather dance to a ticking watch than electroclash. I’m kind of dismayed by the general cultural drift away from the intensified body culture of rave back towards a dreary rock/pop aesthetic. The electroclash sound is really quite fun, but when it re-connects to the reassertion of pre-rave/rock/pop music, it produces some of the most rhythmically retarded dancefloors you’ll ever see.”

Strange confusions of styles and new technologies – as a result of computer power allowing real-time digital signal processing – are making for exciting opportunities. At the same time, the promise of a distribution revolution through mp3 has been slowed but not thwarted. Steve agrees, “The ‘developed world’ is a pretty leaky enterprise...it has holes in its core (where our sonic obsessions breed) and its escape routes around its peripheral channels. The internet has already begun to blur the limited channels of cultural drift and vibe migration, multiplying the channels of sonic proliferation. Whether this will undermine the closed circuits of dubplate culture, or merely accelerate and intensify it remains to be seen. We still need to assess the impact of the convergence of technologies like Final Scratch and Traktor with the mp3 revolution. With such technologies are we seeing the emergence of ‘hyperdub plate culture’? We need to take the analog and digital together, and this relationship is still in flux...I think we’re now moving into an era in which cyberpunk dystopia has seeped so pervasively into the everyday that a new wave of intensification is required, in line with contemporary reality warps. Before we were humans or machines, we were colonies of bacteria. Time for some ribofunk...”

See www.hyperdub.net and dubplate.net for more



TOUCH ME

Touch began in 1982 as a collaboration between designer Jon Wozencroft and Mike Harding. Both men were inspired by the do-it-yourself revelation of punk, and its opening up of various media forms. Their first release, *Feature Mist* was a cassette with a 32 page magazine, the composition of which was driven by “the notion that the dynamic of film can exist in printed and audio media: a form of storytelling that doesn’t need a multi-million dollar budget.”

Twenty years after Touch began they’re still not making a living from it – something which Wozencroft credits for the label’s survival. It’s also a symbol of their integrity, although many may find this odd in a climate of ethic-free commercial grabs. “Why do we do it? Why not see what is possible? That’s the beauty of it,” he explains. This approach requires ideals, a philosophy to keep them going through the long days, as well as the gratification of creativity.

Touch releases a broad range of music, none of which is concerned with what’s cool this week. This is reflected both in Wozencroft’s design, for labels such as Swim, Ash International, Sub Rosa and Touch, and in his writing. He seems particularly interested in the tension that has become a recurring theme in western cultures; how to participate in and adjust to the shift in our societies driven by the ever-growing role of digital technologies. To put it another way, “how is human interaction affected by the replacement of analogue with digital systems?”

Wozencroft is a designer who is engaged in a much broader cultural debate, and he uses design to explore his ideas and make statements. His work often needs thought, should you choose to participate. It’s also beautiful; As Wozencroft says “I want to make images that are seductive, but in being so, create a space for contemplation rather than insisting on the delivery of any fixed message.” Not surprisingly, he feels distanced from the “sensationalism and shock tactics” of market forces, public relations and advertising, and reckons the challenge is to avoid falling in with this.

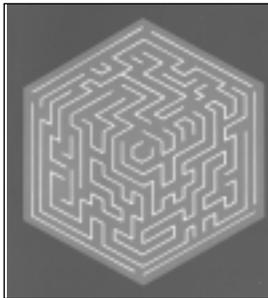
Wozencroft’s designs have some recurring themes over the years. He uses codes (*plus forty seven degrees 56” 37’ minus sixteen degrees 51” 08’*, Fennesz, Touch, 1999) and graphic conundrums or puzzles (*Ignotum Per Ignotius*, The Hafler Trio, Touch, 1989), as well as evocative photography (*Biosphere*, Substrata, Touch, 2001) video stills (*Scala*, Beauty Nowhere, Touch, 1996), obscure textures (*Hazard*, North, Ash International, 1999)



Mastery Of Money (Detail)
The Hafler Trio
(Touch, 1992)
Format: standard 5” CD with
16.5 x 14.5cm folder and booklet
Designer: Jon Wozencroft



Light
Hazard/ Fennesz/Biosphere
(Touch, 2001)
Format: standard 5” CD with 4
panel Digipak
Designer: Jon Wozencroft



Ignotum Per Ignotius
The Hafler Trio
(Touch, 1989)
Format: standard 5” CD with
16.5 x 14.5cm folder and booklet
Designer: Jon Wozencroft



Feature Mist (Re-released version)
Various (Touch, 1986)
Format: cassette with inlay card (original release
featured a 32 page magazine)
Designer: Uncredited, possibly Neville Brody

experimental typography (*Mesmer*, Ash International, 1995), and mirrored type (*The Sea Org*, The Hafler Trio, Touch, 1986). He’ll also contrast highly processed or digital musical content with organic, natural imagery (*Insulation*, Oren Ambarchi, Touch, 2000). You can certainly detect his interest in “the spirit behind a communication, the grounds for its composition, its emotional atmosphere.”

The printing of Wozencroft’s work is invariably immaculate, too – not surprising considering that his grandfather worked with woodblock and letterpress, and his father was a lithography fanatic. It’s this attention to detail that makes Touch releases stand out; the high quality and level of care is self-evident. His interest in print also shows in his exploration of packaging. For CD releases he works with various formats of printed packaging. Some of these, through his use of materials and construction, ask to be treated with the delicacy reserved for fragile, precious objects. Even with jewel cases he’ll often do something out of the ordinary: Indicate’s 1995 release *Whelm*, contains a set of printed cards instead of a booklet.

There’s no doubt that Jon Wozencroft chooses a difficult path in comparison to many designers, in the same way that Touch does as a record label. He’s also not afraid of the occasional foray into the sexual or explicit imagery, such as The Hafler Trio’s release *Fuck* (Touch, 1992) which features a close-up of the head of a penis oozing pre-cum. There’s another 1992 The Hafler Trio release, *Mastery of Money*, featuring a bare-breasted woman dressed as a nun being, well, something’s going on there with another semi-naked figure. No wonder Nike hasn’t called.

See www.cyclicdefrost for further information on Jon Wozencroft, including full colour examples of his work.



SLEEVE REVIEWS

By Alex Crowfoot



Oren Ambarchi

Insulation

(Touch, 2000)

Format: Standard 5" CD in printed cardboard slip case with graphic insert

Designer: Jon Wozencroft

Australian sound artist Oren Ambarchi gets the Wozencroft treatment on this release from two years ago.

The cover photography very much evokes a place and a feeling, and Wozencroft's preoccupation with light is also apparent. For the most part, the processed and sometimes abstract sounds are contrasted with figurative photography.

The cover features a group of people sitting in the shade of a tree. The colour is bleached out, creating a sense of distance, or memory. The uncoated paper stock knocks the colour back further, and lends an unfussy, organic feel, and Wozencroft's minimal typography keeps the focus on the imagery.

The reverse features an incredible shot of some (gardeners help me out here) plants. The organic patterns are echoed in digital imagery I have seen, yet with a subtlety and power I haven't seen equalled.

The graphic insert introduces a non-specific image the although light is still the star. A long-exposure shot of city lights trailing across the page places the viewer in an urban space that we can't actually see. This abstraction for me parallels Ambarchi's music, sourced as it is from the analogue (guitar/camera) but taking it into another space, making it barely recognisable.

The reverse of the insert features a hillside, and although it's quite enigmatic, it's hard to discern the scale of the vegetation. Ambarchi uses sound in the same way occasionally on this record. A natural urge to seek the familiar creates connections, and you might hear what could be a voice on one track, a bell on another. What's impressive about this sleeve is that there is a lot of depth from a seemingly slight graphic presence.



Various Artists

Lost For Words: a 17 track Leaf Label sampler

(Leaf, 2002)

Format: Standard 5" CD in jewel case with 4 page booklet

Designer: Non-Format (London)

A simple design that belies its sophistication, this sleeve is more about the attitude behind the label than the music itself. It would be a difficult task to represent the diverse contents of this compilation, so a conceptual approach is highly appropriate.

In terms of production values it's not impressive, a CMYK job with four page booklet. But that's easily sidestepped by the introduction of intrigue. A successful combination of minimalism, modernism and a pop-art sensibility, the sleeve takes as its starting point the title, *Lost for Words*.

The booklet is comprised of four possible covers each with an almost identical design. The differentiating factor is the four messages, each with a word missing, set in a bold sans serif: *We Must _____, Let's _____ Forever, _____ Believe _____* and *_____ Me Please*. With the exception of *Believe*, they don't make any sense on their own, nor do they combine to form a rational sentence. All four, however, have a sense of urgency.

The back of the CD contains the track listing and all the credits, allowing the booklet to serve its conceptual purpose without interruption. The bright yellow CD label art follows through with the leaf motif, albeit chopped up. A nice surprise is the use of a yellow metallic for the illustration.

The tray inlay is left white, either a rare sign of confidence – anything in there would have altered the feel of treading lightly – or a desire to reduce costs. From a production perspective the label has tried to minimise costs on this mid-price release to maximise the return from what will hopefully be a relatively high volume seller for them. From a design perspective it's a lesson in how good ideas can more than make up for that.



Various Artists

Communication Problems

(Vibragun, 2002)

Format: 2 x standard 5" CD in printed 6 panel fold-out card sleeve with die-cut card box

Designer: Andrew Godfrey and Khan van Grecken (Dank Realms, Sydney)

Die cuts, metallic inks, spot varnishes, this design has the lot. Even the inside of the box uses a metallic gold. The outside is under-printed with gold, which adds a metallic sheen to all of the colours.

The design is a chaotic collision of lines, fragments of text and images. It's like a visual expression of information overload. Photographic traces of angular urban structures peer out from behind this precise chaos. The box also has a die cut at the open end, a minimally ornamented piece of functionality (it helps you get the CD sleeve out).

The inner sleeve continues on with its energetic kaleidoscope of colour and form, augmented by gold metallic inks and spot varnishes. The two CDs don't relent. Although they hold the track listing and credits they need time and attention to decipher who does what.

The typography is like David Carson's public readability experiments in *RayGun* in hyperdrive. The only easily readable words on this release are the designers' names and contact details. That may sound arrogant until I tell you that they are hidden on the flap that folds in to form the end of the box holding the digipak-style sleeve itself.

The title sets the tone for the design, and the music is a similarly "difficult" array of sound experiments. It's as if all the elements of conventional design and music have exploded. An appropriate union of design and content. Not likely to be picked up by browsing Moby buyers, which is as it should be. They'd get the shock of their lives.

More sleeve reviews can be found online at www.cyclicdefrost.com



REVIEWS

There's been a landslide of good releases in the past two months and we've not been able to cover everything – in fact we seemed to barely scrape the surface. This is the result of a phenomenon called 'indie christmas', where smaller labels flood the market with their new releases before precious shelf space is eaten by Britney Spears, Nelly and the like singing carols or doing stupid hip-hop 'operas' – not to mention the ubiquitous 'Best of' retrospectives. What it comes down to is that for small labels, if it isn't out by November then there's no point releasing it until February.

LOCAL RELEASES

I/O

Calm

(Room 40)

Brisbane's Lawrence English who runs the Fabrique nights at the Brisbane Powerhouse is behind this new pseudonym. Having worked with DJ Olive (captured on another release on his label Room 40), David Toop, and Scanner, Lawrence has been building a strong reputation for interesting sound experiments north of the border, deep in outdoor trance territory. Recorded over 2001 and early 2002, the influence of these collaborators on Lawrence's sound is unmistakable and Olive's deep ambient touches resonate throughout. Slow, deep, solemn washes of sound reminiscent of the early 90s deep ambience of Frankfurt's Fax label dominate most of the tracks with Ben Frost's effected guitar chime lending a lighter mood to 'Climatic Shift'. *Calm* is a deep listening experience that captures a summer across an isolated vista of northern plains, and is beautifully packaged in custom die-cut matte cardboard sleeves designed by Rinzen. **Sebastian Chan**

Snawklor

Rushes

(Marsupial Sounds)

A duo from Melbourne, Snawklor has been around for several years. *Rushes* is their debut album and catches them moving deep into laptop DSP territory. The stunning opening track 'Carbonated' begins with a recording of the fine spray of mist that hisses above a freshly poured glass of Coke before breaking down into a digital spray of microscopically chopped static and the slow chiming of gongs. The effect on this and the third track, 'Strettle', of gongs recalls moments of the infamous Coil 12" *How To Destroy Angels*. 'Strettle', the other standout track on *Rushes*, creates a digital African swamp out of sound. Digital insects and birds chirp and rattle whilst every so often a foreboding subsonic rumble,

perhaps a hippopotamus, rolls by. Elsewhere on *Rushes* the more traditional urban world, snatches of television and noisy static glitches, are the subject of Snawklor's field recordings and computer manipulation. These, whilst interesting sound experiments, finely mastered by Delire, are more what you might normally expect. **Sebastian Chan**

Various Artists

Habitat

(Clan Analogue)

After a fairly quiet release schedule this year, the folks at Clan Analogue now give us this long awaited 'follow up' to 1997's collection of aural landscapes, *Aphelion*, and it stands as one of the label's finest collections yet. *Habitat* is well over an hour of fantastically evocative mediations on various geographic settings. Featured artists include some of the cream on Clan's less beat driven cake: Kazumuchi Grime, Continuum, and the underground supergroup of sorts Clowns Smiling Backwards, contribute to a project which effectively mines the same territory as many other home listening chill comps, but with graceful artistry and an ear for detail. The urban click and crunch of Tolchok's opening 'Clkhp' offers a familiar sonic retelling of city living, while the rather spooky night time rural vibe of Soft Spoken Spanky's 'Grubbing for Truffles' is best experienced with company. The record stands up under a number of critical microscopes: as home listening it's quietly captivating, but as a study of mood alteration and the use of sound to create realistic replications of environment, it's eerily on the ball. Adding the quality of the sounds to the excellent design by Alex Tiers make *Habitat* a desirable package. Perfect summer listening that will last all year round. **Glen Martin**

If you are making music then send it in to us at P.O.Box A2073 Sydney South NSW 1235, Australia. We review all styles and have an ever growing team of passionate reviewers with their own niche specialities. If you would like to review for us then email a sample of your work, such as a review of your latest purchase, to reviews@cyclicdefrost.com.

Essendon Airport

Sonic Investigations Of The Trivial

(Chapter)

Essendon Airport were a standout from Chapter's stupendous early 80 revival post-punk comp *Can't Stop It* earlier in the year. That track, 'How Low Can You Go', joins another twelve mesmerising minimalist guitar/organ/drum machine jams on *Sonic Investigations of the Trivial*. The album is a document of a band waaay ahead of its time, named after the sought after 7" EP the duo released in 1979 on Innocent Records. And innocent it was too, of the convenience of sampling and sequencing, and easily laying claim to prior occupation of half Australia's avant-garde landscape since. Building from deceptively simple one and two bar loops, all played live, we quickly lose the one as David Chesworth (keyboards, electronics) and Robert Goodge (guitar) weave through the rhythms at will. The melodies gush with the simplicity of all great songs. Later, the jackets come off as singer Anne Cessna joins, but even her precocious teenage bedroom chants are fashioned into the infectious pop hooks that temper Essendon Airport's almost wilful quirkiness. **Jonathan Sykes**

Stasis Duo

Hammer And Tongs

(Impermanent Recordings)

As the Stasis Duo, improvisers Matthew Earle and Adam Sussmann explore similar conceptual turf to Onkyo participants Sachiko M and Toshimaru Nakamura. Like Sachiko M, these two performers explore the realm of the empty sampler, but they're hardly just lifting other people's sonic approaches. This album (recorded live on 2 April 2002 at Royal Derby, Melbourne) isn't necessarily about the typical (and beautifully effective) use of sine waves as pierc-



ing tones. There's a reflective nature to these recordings. Earle and Sussman seem concerned with creating subtle shifts in the nature of the waves. Each of the untitled twelve pieces on this disc seem to explore one aspect of their treatments – sometimes the sine waves are rhythmically harmonic ('untitled 6') while other times they're sparse and understated (moments of 'untitled 10'). In all, this duo create a commanding trek through the sine wave landscape. Sometimes you'll feel the harsh side of the sound environment you become buried in, but more often than not you'll thoroughly enjoy taking in the shapes and forms of what you encounter. **Lawrence English**

Peter Blamey

Salted Felt

(Impermanent Recordings)
Armed with a micro set-up of two mixers and an oscillator, Peter Blamey's *Salted Felt* is another example of what a touch of thought can do for the creation of complex sound works with the simplest of equipment. Over the nine pieces recorded for this disc, Blamey is able to create a formidable range of clicks, drones and chirps from his simple set-up. There's a good range of colour and variation within each of the tracks which tends to make this recording something that can be digested again and again. At times, there is a limit to what he seems to be able to generate and it almost feels as though this creative approach would benefit from a duo or trio setting. Still, the character of each of these pieces, from the choppy nature of 'Perforated Platelets' to the abstract rhythms and engaging waves of sound in 'Folded Silt' (certainly a highlight from the disc), is commanding. **Lawrence English**

SHELLING PEANUTS ◀

Demo Reviews

The Peanut Spell is a radio show that broadcasts every monday from midday to 2pm on Sydney's 2SER 107.3 presenting newly released and unreleased local music, from glitch happy lappys to ozhop and beyond. Shelling Peanuts aims to review some of our favourite demos from the previous two month's broadcasts. You can also cast your ears to the Cyclic Defrost website (www.cyclicdefrost.com) where you can listen to selected MP3s of the featured artists. You can also get in touch with us at thepeanutspell@2ser.com

Send Demos to
The Peanut Spell,
PO BOX 470,
Surry Hills,
NSW 2010.

Velure

Sampler

One of the finest demos we have received, Velure hail from Melbourne and have a sound which could be likened to Lamb and some of the more recent offerings from A Guy Called Gerald. Whilst the basis of most of the tracks have a strong drum n bass influence, Velure don't rely on the same old sound palette, interweaving subtle strings and guitar to create some lusciously textured music. The overall production quality is outstanding, complemented by the amazing jazz-vocal talent of Lynette Morgan. The highlight track would have to be the opener 'Lowride'. This has intricate drum programming, beautiful guitar motifs and vocals to match. **Richie Tee**

Hitchhyka

Promo

It's hard to describe exactly what Hitchhyka are or what they're trying to do. There's a whole bunch of sounds here, ranging from retro pop vocals hidden beneath layers of reverb, delays, choruses and other effects, to 808 sounding drum programming and emotive strings interlaced with tweaked synth melodies. Phew! It reminds me of dark pop experimenting inside a melancholy electronic whirlpool. Their synth plays an upfront role in their production but they display some nice instrumentation and aren't afraid to deviate from the expected sound design. **Tim L**

Lowrion

Untitled

Local producer Lowrion forms part of the Mofonics crew and recently released a 12" with labelmate Jonny Phive. Whilst in parts this demo retains the sound of his vinyl release, it also demonstrates Lowrion's love for party music, with a healthy serving of upbeat breaks and even some house. The CD opens with 'Straight Back Like That' a breaks-electro number with some MC licks thrown into the mix to add a little energy. The overall production is a little thin in parts but works well musically. The standout is the smoked out 'TTK' with simple keys over a dubby bass line and some beautiful vocals. The more upbeat tracks do tend to go a little overboard with the use of the 303, sounding like mid-nineties UK breakbeat, but overall it's a solid demo. **Richie Tee**

Solotaro

Bored of Water

This Brisbane crew comprises eight members and whilst their roots are in hip-hop, they have struck clear of predictable sample choices, resulting in a refreshing and unique sound. Mike Patterson's violin playing is a definite highlight throughout, with some memorable pizzicato moments. The laidback rhymes work well to the musical backing, with a few sing-along moments courtesy of vocalist Alicia. My picks would have to be 'Late Nights and Great Heights' and 'A Walk With Fate', both of which feature tight flows over solid breaks and some beautiful instrumentation, with razor cuts from DJs Kryptik and Sheep. **Richie Tee**

Aeteacix

When Radium Decays

Aeteacix (pronounced 86) - I'm liking this. The production is quite raw and the sounds aren't bright, but the selection of sounds is good. The drums and samples could be brought out in the mix more, but overall there is a sense of cohesion and grittiness that gives it a strong character. '2nd Hand Nike Kicks' has great percussive rolling sounds layered over the drums to interesting effect, whilst a droning electric guitar growls in the background. Aeteacix's flows are impressively tight and rhythmic; the lyrics are clear and enunciated with Aussie accents coming through nicely. Perhaps the vocals are low in the mix in tracks such as 'Paper Squares', but there is some cool lyricism, and cool concepts such as 'The Way We'; a track that begins by talking of the doom of the working week and leaving loved ones at home. Guests include Jeysa, Rukas, Thorts and Kapten Krook. **Tim L**

REVIEWS

Various Artists

Strewth!

(Synaesthesia)

This compilation of digital sound from Australia and New Zealand is best heard as a snap-shot of the digital audio scene, a glimpse of the best from those making abstract sound in and around Melbourne - all but a couple are either from Melbourne or are New Zealanders who stopped over there on their way to bigger and better things. *Strewth!* is 18 tracks of some of the most pervasive of those bunkering down with the computer-mediated approach, from Ambarchi to Auiguigui, from Philip Samartzis to zy'z x. The CD is a showpiece for just how good experimental can get, and all from down here. The more processed and stripped back approach is preferable, but some of these tracks take a digital audio approach which veers around, introducing all too briefly a new sound before it is jettisoned for yet another synthetic texture. There is simply no time to smell the flowers. The more repetitious gesture of Workman, Parlane, Ambarchi or Thomas is of more interest to these ears. A worthy addition to the growing catalogue of experimental local releases.

Caieb-k

Machine Translations

Happy

(Spunk/Inertia)

Greg 'J' Walker has been making uncategorisable music as Machine Translations since 1997's *Abstract Poverty*, which conjured up visions of a hybrid Tom Waits crossed with Portishead, Velvet Underground and early-to-mid Pink Floyd. Walker is a multi-instrumentalist in addition to handling the vocal duties. A post-rock experimentalism complements Walker's ear for classic indie songwriting, making Machine Translations some of the most exciting song-based music to come out of Australia. The new album is no exception, marred only by the abominable packaging. Pop songs like 'Amnesia' and 'A Most Peculiar Place' are produced to perfection, with the jangly, weirdly out-of-tune refrain of the latter giving way to back-masked strings and lush strumming reminiscent of Jim O'Rourke's 'Insignificance'. On 'No Hip' a female computer vocal sings a surreal lyric. The highlight, however, is the glorious 'Happy', in which sampled vocal fragments circle around a wonderful chord sequence over a muted breakbeat. It's pure brilliance, putting Mouse on Mars' experiments with Stereolab to shame. I've had it on repeat for weeks.

Peter Hollo

Decoder Ring

Decoder Ring

(Hello Cleveland)

On their debut album, Decoder Ring let the rock take the foreground. Analogue keyboards chug along with guitar riffs in a very agreeable way on the opener 'Welcome Shoppers', while the vibes with funky drums and bass on 'Superego' evoke the best of Tortoise - although this is by no means pure imitation. 'Mysterious Liquid' briefly evokes Boards of Canada, but its beautiful nostalgic sound is all its own. And my favourite track, 'Kunji' takes a repeated piano pattern that could come from The Necks and grafts it on to a steady guitar riff, itself giving way to piano while a steady beat keeps it all together. Decoder Ring embrace post-rock's dangerous affinity with '70s prog rock, but I'm not complaining. And UNIX aficionados will enjoy the final track title 'rm -rf /'. **Peter Hollo**

The New Pollutants

Hygene Atoms

(Self Released)

The New Pollutants can be summed up by vocalist and producer Mr Speed's penchant for wearing a 'hygiene' mask, both on and off stage. This is at first off-putting, but like all subtle satire, the ridiculousness of it eats at you until you eventually find yourself laughing. When asked by a punter in Newcastle what was in his gas mask, Mr Speed's response was to point to where the tube from the mask was attached to his crotch and say "coxygen". Yeah, kinda puerile, but nonetheless indicative of the fact that underneath exterior wack(i)ness there's a set of values and sensibilities that are unique, somewhat abstract and ahem, a little bit bent. Musically, *Hygene Atoms* ranges from straightish hiphop to grainy soundscapes, with both Mr Speed's vocals and DJ Tr!p's scratching marking contextuality rather than making a direct impact (or being as upfront as in their live shows). With all the elements sitting elegantly together, the tracks, no matter how lo-fi or harsh to the ears, have an immediate appeal that mostly develops to enjoyment. The duo is also unafraid to let a piece develop before smearing their grubby, gritty influence all over it. **DH**

Morganics

Invisible Forces

(Morganics/Creative Vibes)

Possessed of a multitude of talents ranging from beatboxer, MC and b-boy to entertainer and educator, Morganics is an artist who by any standards has paid his dues. After performing for more than ten years it's a big ask for a debut solo album to capture such an impressive body of work, but *Invisible Forces* at least is able to capture Morganics' unique spirit and also comes close to communicating the obvious joy that he gets in performing and teaching. That said, the production is a little on the quirky side on some of the tracks and the album at times sounds like a group of half finished sketches mixed in with some well-crafted hiphop tracks. 'Tactics' is a lovely song - with Sam Dixon on bass creating a bouncy paen to love; The Anything but Roy mix of 'Fascination' is electrifying; and Morganics' judicious choice of co-conspirators is never more eloquent than his collabs with Elf Tranzporter on 'Medicine Channeller' and Wire and the fabulously named Haille Suspicious on 'All U Mob'. **DH**

ollo

Sleeper

(Creative Vibes)

With a gestation period normally reserved for pachyderms, ollo's debut has stretched from being highly anticipated to downright mythical. Rumours abounded as to the long lost album, all the while they were doing their regular DJ spots downstairs/upstairs at Frigid, entertaining punters with their unique musical vision in relative obscurity. With the release of *Sleeper* the final piece of the current puzzle is placed. The album runs through a number of styles and sub genres without ever resorting to cliché or obvious gestures, from the summery breaks interrupted by a late storm of 'late/shift' to the 80s electro stabs and dubby skanks of 'Goats Milk Silk'. The release is nonetheless united by the fact that the tracks are constructed from similar building blocks and the inclusion of tiny sketches between tracks, mostly idiosyncratic vocal samples and field recordings. Perhaps an indication on one level of ollo attempting to settle into a singular musical voice, but more likely an indication of their catholic musical taste and smiling indifference to other people's narrow tastes. Though some of it will no doubt find its way onto 'chill out' compilations because of its inherent laid-backness, there is always electronic detritus, rips and snares that prevent it from being completely agreeable to the blissheads. A strong debut. **DH**



7s, 10s & 12s [LOCAL]

Frost

'Bleeding the Sacred Heart'
(Inventing Zero)

It's hard to believe that this little 7" is Frost's first "official" release. In the twelve months since he took Sound Summit by storm selling out of the 70 or so copies of his demo, playing a tremendous live show and getting props from both the hip-hop and electronica fraternities he has been incredibly quiet. It's a shame really, given that the particular brand of dark hop/glumtempo that he plays is shared by few in Australia and only selected outposts worldwide (artists like Mick Harris, Ocosi and NOS and labels like Montreal's Hushush and Tennessee's Manifold) and that his take on it is significantly more accessible without compromising its intentions. The reason for this is hard to pinpoint, but it may have something to do with Frost's ability to layer sounds with lyrical aplomb – for instance, the continuous piano loops in 'Poking Holes in Your Research' are arranged in a call and response pattern, with tension created as one is filtered away to nothing leaving the other without its partner...Released in a limited run of 500 and in handmade covers, the only downfall is the slightly less than desirable pressing which is quiet and has a few 'clicks'. **DH**

Brass

How Significant We Are
(A Little Boat)

Brass

Oneclearday
(A Little Boat)

Two self-released 7"s that show the increasing maturity of the Australian hip-hop scene. Brass, who has lost the Knuckles suffix somewhere between this release and the last Celsius release, has always been the renaissance man of the 'real' Sydney hip-hop scene. Wearing dresses and furry pants in front of a room full of cap-wearing, hoody-shirted boys takes the same kind of courage that it takes to self-release two 7" at the same time without record company support... *How Significant We Are* is the more traditionally hip-hop of the two, with Realistix producing some of his strongest beats, their typically electro overtones mellowing Brass' sometimes spiky and invariably obtuse lyrics (though a lyric sheet is included). *Oneclearday* on the other hand is a lovingly produced and in memory of his father, they are strong releases that belie Brass' unique sensibilities. **DH**

Koolism

The Season
(Parallax View)

The best hip-hop crew in Australia right now, Koolism have come on in leaps and bounds both in production and the confidence to stride the gap between making the helpless hip-hop gestures of self-importance that other lesser crews fall foul of, and being able to use the full potency of the powers of communication that the art possesses. *The Season*, though released a few months back, is an essential summer soundtrack. From the opening moments of the first two tracks 'Sea Breeze' and 'The Season', the Danielsan's laid back funk stylings and Hau's relaxed vocal approach suggest languid afternoons, the clink of ice on glass and the delicious feel of an afternoon storm – and manage to bypass the brazen realities of crotch rot, sunburn and sand in yer undies. With a couple of instrumentals and a blinder of a final track in 'x10', with its proto jungle bass line, it is a well rounded package. It's also an indication that the reggae and jungle influences of UK hip-hop have evolved here separately – and provide just as much excitement. **DH**

INTERNATIONAL RELEASES

Spectre featuring Sensational

Parts Unknown
(Quartermass)

Spectre is the blunted and paranoid fever dream of Wordsound label boss and 'Illbient' svengali Skitz Fernando. New York is a big city, and in the wake of terrorism it seems that the sense of enclosure is all the more tangible. This claustrophobia is characterised by Spectre's liking for fuggy samples and his lo-fi approach to music, and furthered by the unquantized beats that never seem to quite hit the one. Saving it from jumping at shadows is Sensational's flow, which is, if anything, even more mumbleicious than ever. He rides beats like a cork in quicksand and literally dribbles lyrics down his shirt, all the while sounding like Tom Waits doing Quasimodo impressions. The problem really is that after all the layers of introduced grime are wiped away there's not much else – just a sense of foreboding dis-ease. Through all this stylistic pondering you really have to wonder what the point is, especially when it just sounds like Skitz has just been getting the ferry over to Staten Island and rifling through the RZA's trash. **DH**

Jaga Jazzist

A Livingroom Hush
(Smalltown Supersound/Ninja Tune)

Jaga Jazzist is a ten-member Norwegian supergroup, combining stalwarts of the jazz improv, rock and electronica scenes. A preview 12" from this album featured an irresistibly funky 15 minute post-rock remix by Kim Hiorthøy and an insanely chopped-up digi-funk one by Jazzist drummer Martin Hornrveth. It's something of a shock to find those elements not just co-existing with the live jazz on the album, but prominent in the mix. Digital studio trickery meets post-rock guitars and production in a fascination with living room jazz that Tortoise surely share. If a glib generalisation could be made about their sound, it's a sort of live-big-band Squarepusher. The most slippery and fascinating thing about this album is how the songs sound so live, and yet almost as soon as the first track has started, the drums start glitching and everything breaks down. A heady mix of just about every element you could think of in progressive contemporary music, first-rate musicianship combining with first-rate production. **Peter Hollo**

Autechre

Gantz Graf
(Warp)

Packaged as a dual DVD/CD release single, *Gantz Graf* is not quite as alienating as some of Autechre's recent work. What makes *Gantz Graf* particularly interesting is its video clip, which appears on the DVD. Directed by Alexander Rutterford the video is a wild epileptic blur of computer graphics that would have taken months of detailed rendering and complex editing to assemble. But beyond the computer trickery and the spectre of technological determinism (and quick obsolescence) that lurks behind many video clips that rely on animated worlds, Rutterford's video manages to accomplish a rare feat. Watching the animation unfold there is a strange synaesthetic effect – the digital machine in the video and its perfectly synced glitches appear to be generating the soundtrack. A little like the hidden sonograph image embedded within some of Aphex Twin's work, it's as if the image and sound are in essence the same, which is quite an incredible feat. **Sebastian Chan**

REVIEWS

Nettle

Build A Fort, Set That On Fire
(theAgriculture)

As the opportunities for collage recordings become more and more detailed and intricate, artists like DD and DJ/Rupture, who make up Nettle, are in a prime position to create collaged beatscapes the likes of which just weren't possible ten years ago. Digesting a wide range of music between them, Nettle bares the marks of two love affairs with sound. Each of the group's members bring with them a large record collection, which has been sampled and laid out into free flowing cut-ups. There's eastern and 'world' influences, gabba kick drums, dancehall grooves, one off hip-hop vocal lines, processed drum n bass grooves and seemingly countless other reference points that map out this duo's artistic background. The end result of this collision of sound objects is hard to summarise. Like the artwork on this disc lifted from Goin's 'Nuclear Landscapes', this record is the aftermath of a musical explosion – it's the remnant soundscapes that exist post a studio fallout. They're alien and sometimes eerily unfamiliar, but there's a character to them that's truly unique and fascinating. **Lawrence English**

Masami Akita & Russell Haswell

Satanstornade
(Warp)

An almost sculptural storm is created on this EP. It is hard to describe why this stuff is so interesting, the academics are going mad for it at present, bringing in a touch of Lacan and post-Marxist who - ha, whilst missing I feel much of the point in their attempt. This isn't about resistance, it is about the joy of noise and texture, about sucking in your breath and enjoying the burn. Akita's work as Merzbow is at the heart of the Japanese noise scene and has been so since the early 80s. In recent years, Akita has picked up a laptop and in this set is joined by Russell Haswell, a Mego-aligned British electronic musician. The addition of Haswell makes for a more melodic noise wall than you might expect. Full of texture, grain, noise, static and general overdriven madness it is a much "easier" listen than much of the Merzbow catalogue, there are even what pass as bass lines at some points. **caleb-k**

Asmus Tietchens

Gamma-Menge
(Ritornell)

For over 35 years, Asmus Tietchens has been creating avant-garde music. Originally fascinated with tape compositional works, his move to digital electronics bares many similar approaches to his earlier work. Tietchens says of this record "My music is composed of aesthetic and extraordinary events which make statements for themselves, but there is absolutely no message." So, with piercing spectrally altered sounds, Asmus Tietchens welcomes you into his realm of processed audio called *Gamma-Menge*. It's an unusual realm to wander through. Just as you get a sense of one of the audio environments he creates, the tables are turned and you're introduced to something unfamiliar. Even within each of the pieces on this album, Tietchens jumps, even if subtly, between layers and textures. 'Teilmenge 18' for instance, clunks along, set to a soft undertone before coolly erupting in the middle with a buried sound of feedback and distortion. It's hard to know what to make of this record. As a listening experience, it's rewarding in that each piece on this record appears to explore a similar pathway, through some unknown world of sound objects and other mutant sonic fragments. It's beautifully unusual sounding, welcoming and in the same moment foreign and unfamiliar.

Lawrence English

Stars of the Lid

Avec Laudenum
(Kranky)

Put simply, this is a lovely album. Initially released on Sub Rosa in 2000 it has been re-issued by Kranky. From the opening 22 minute track entitled 'Atomium', we are lulled into a space of slow burn frequencies, mostly guitar based. Stars of the Lid are a duo (Brian McBride and Adam Witzie) from Austin, Texas who play drawn out instrumental guitar infected drones. The tracks play out in a kind of floating haze, the sounds are full and clean though mixed down very quietly. Sounding like fellow guitar experimentalists Rafael Toral and Oren Ambarchi in a contemplative mood, it is also sonically reminiscent of local electronic duo Minit. The final piece, 'I Will Surround You', is a track in which stretched tones are drawn together to produce a simple and beautifully slow melody, yet the track could easily go for longer than ten minutes. The piece is full of overtone patterns and simple changes. *Avec Laudenum* is nothing new but it is lovely all the same. **Caleb-k**

Various Artists

Floating Foundation II
(Sub Rosa)

Floating Foundation II is middle of the road, nice enough but nothing exciting, wonderful or new. That said, it makes a good start with a fragile repetitive guitar piece. Looping guitar phrases make up the layers of the track 'Bad Day for Wasps' by Disjecta (Mark Clifford, formerly of Seefeel), before turning more electronic in sound as it progresses. There is certainly nothing new from the two big names on the release, David Toop and Scanner. It is exactly what we have come to expect from them and is plain at best. 'The Hard Sleeper' takes us a little further: understated, slow moving, quiet with a few well-timed and unexpected additions to mark the path. Interestingly this piece turns to a chill feel, with snapping clicking sounds played over bass lines to form a semi-abstract high end rhythm. Ending on a floater, Carl Michael von Hausswolff creates a track of slightly oscillating slow burning bass sounds. **Caleb-k**

Killa Kela

The Permanent Marker
(Jazz Fudge)

My suspicions are always raised whenever music is judged for its novelty or the brilliance of its players rather than its broader aesthetic. For that reason I approached this album, beatboxer Killa Kela's first on DJ Vadim's Jazz Fudge imprint, with extreme caution. Alas, many of my fears were immediately founded when on the first track, accompanied by cod applause, Killa is introduced by an over the top Mister Normski and then proceeds to show a few of his wares. Nevertheless, Killa Kela has more than one trick in his bag, and the processed beat boxing transcends the "ooh er" effect with some passable and well produced brithop – so well produced that the headphone experience is a little disturbing, many of the sounds are extreme panned so that snare sounds are literally spit into your ears. The tracks where the trickery (both live and multi-tracked) takes a more supportive role (as in 'Boom Accessory' with Fallacy and Harry Love on lyrical duties and 'Step Then' with the Audio Cooks on keys) are the strongest of the set – although there are some other highlights, particularly the mobile phone skit 'Jeff'. **DH**

CYCLIC DEFROST ***

Buck65

Square
(Warners Canada)

With each album Buck65 drifts further from the canonised version of American hiphop. Now up to album number six, and freshly signed to Canadian Warners who have funded the re-pressing of all previous five albums as well, Buck brings his most complete and essential work since *Vertex* (which is still one of my all time favourite albums). Like most of his albums, it comes as several long untitled tracks that are, themselves, split into unnumbered, untitled subtracks – imagine four short fifteen minute DJ mixes. And what a series of mixes they are. Buck is the only MC I know that can scratch, cut and DJ whilst he rhymes, and so each section features several instrumental interludes which break the vocal pieces nicely. Buck's flows are dirty, grimy, languid, sometimes whispered draws and his clutch of intimate stories, and fantastical tales manage to avoid typical MC braggadocio by concentrating on the art of straightforward storytelling. One of the best hiphop releases of the year, this is pretty hard to track down and can only be bought from Canadian record stores online, so head to www.buck65.com for direct links. It is well worth the extra trouble. **Sebastian Chan**

Hrvatski

Swarm & Dither
(Planet µ, 2002)

Until now, Hrvatski's single album back-catalogue has meant he is unfairly eclipsed by Kid 606 and the prolific Venetian Snares in the US laptop scene. *Swarm & Dither* should set it all to rights. The greatest track Kid 606 never wrote, from *Kid 606 and Friends*, features here as 'vatstep dsp', with the hilarious computer vocal finally decipherable via the liner notes. Tracks go back as far as 1994, with the trademark hyper-distorted nano-programmed drum n bass beats never far away. But there's much more to Hrvatski, and the newer tracks combine post-rock guitars with bouts of stuttering samples and Fennesz-like ambience. Many of the tracks will be familiar to east coast Australian ears from his tour last year, and the liner notes state that some MC202 parts were recorded at "The Luke Dearnley Estate, Sydney, Australia". The 12" version is much shorter but contains the unmissable "revision" of 'Gemini', on which a glitchy Rhodes is augmented with subtly chopped jazz drums and chiming guitars – utter bliss. **Peter Hollo**

Horsepower Productions

In Fine Style
(Tempa)

Horsepower Productions is a crew of young producers including the wonderfully named Benny Ill, and the less flamboyantly named Nassis and Lev Jnr, and their debut album *In Fine Style* brings together a series of their 12"s for Tempa and Turn U On (Not U Turn's garage offspring), as well as the remix/dub of Elephant Man's 'Log On' (thankfully with the homophobic chatter removed). There's some lovely darker dub sounds and dread vocals on 'Gorgon Sound', 'The Swindle', 'Rude Boyz', 'Fat Larry's Skank', and others that skirt a border between 2-step and more rolling breaks. Not all of it is outstanding or groundbreaking, but that is to be expected with a compilation of 12"s, and the fade out edits on the CD version are more than annoying. However this is a definite indication that a shift is happening – a little like that moment when techstep emerged from jungle. **Sebastian Chan**

MC Paul Barman

Pallelujah
(Coup d'Etat)

There's never really been a hiphop comedy genre despite the pillaging of Richard Pryor and Black comedians' recordings of the 70s for samples. Now along comes Paul Barman, a white, Jewish, college-educated, self proclaimed nerd, with his debut album *Pallelujah*, which follows several early EPs and collaborations with PM Dawn and Princess Superstar. With such luminaries as Prince Paul, Masta Ace and MF Doom on the beats, it's hard to imagine that in reality this is kind of the Twelfth Man or Footy Show of hiphop. *Pallelujah* oscillates between the frat boy humour and imaginary sexual conquests of 'Cock Mubster' with its fabulous couplet "I would jazz early inside Liz Hurley", or the toilet sounds of 'Burping & Farting', and more serious left-leaning political awareness underpinning other tracks. 'N.O.W' looks at the sexual politics of protest marches, where politics can sometimes take a back seat to getting laid. 'Anarchist Bookstore' is an engaging story of the characters that inhabit the local bookshop and a call to support local stores over globalised corporate stores like Barnes & Noble or Amazon. There is a sense that this is hiphop made for those just like Barman – white college nerds, and for some critics this is seen as disingenuous and somehow brings "hiphop into disrepute". Paul Barman's wordplays are almost too clever, too witty, and certainly just too ridiculous for it ever to be suggested that he wants to be taken seriously. **Sebastian Chan**



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REVIEWS

Lemon Jelly

Lost Horizons
(XL)

Lemon Jelly burst into the downtempo marketplace two years ago with their cheerful, bright, primary colour folk-inflected breakbeat pop on their debut album *KY*. Packaged in a fold out digipack with design to match the cheery music, *KY* became an instant hit, after a series of crate digger 10's. Comprised of two British musicians who have worked on the backing tracks for some of the cheesiest chart pop, Lemon Jelly return with another album, this time called *Lost Horizons*. Containing much the same elements as those that made *KY* charming, Lemon Jelly return with some bright summery cookie-cutter tunes. Folk guitar loops, kooky children's book spoken word samples, breakbeats that drop as you would expect, and, of course, big melodies – it's exactly what you would expect, but like a soft, worn out blanket, it is oddly comforting and totally safe...and sure to be heard in every beach-side café soon enough. Once again the packaging is lovely and is sure to be praised for its new levels of 'tastefulness' by *Wallpaper* readers...I'm not sure whether that is a good or bad thing. **Sebastian Chan**

Depth Charge

Spill
(DC Recordings)

John Saul Kane is a bit of a folk hero in these parts. Partially the impetus behind the screening of those old Shaw Brothers films at Frigid 'back in the day', his work in recent times has moved deep into industrial electro, although he keeps up his fascination with cult movies by re-issuing rare soundtracks on his DC Recordings label – Alain Goraguer's much sampled *La Planète Sauvage*, *The Hanged Man* TV series, and recently Piero Piccioni's *Puppet On A Chain*. Although Kane received quite a bit of attention with his *Nine Deadly Venoms* album in 1994, he had been behind some of the fantastic film sampling delights since the late 80s working with Bomb The Bass and Eon. This new Depth Charge release is a collection of rare tracks from the fertile mid 90s and covers his two obsessions of the time – kung fu and sex. Featuring 'Legend Of The Golden Snake', 'Sex Sluts & Heaven', 'Hubba Hubba Hubba', 'Queen Of The Scorpion' and a few unreleased tracks 'Good Driver' and 'Sasscoll', bubbling synth lines and bass punches, rough breakbeats and cheesy film dialogue is everywhere. Interestingly, you would expect this to not have aged well but like a lot of Kane's material, it has improved with time, with only 'Number 9' and 'Poison Clan 95' sounding their age. **Sebastian Chan**

Amon Tobin

Out From Out Where
(Ninja Tune)

'Delicate death metal' is what first sprung to mind when I was listening to this new Amon Tobin album. *Out From Out Where* builds on the production of the last album in 2000, *Supermodified* – highly detailed and intricate spatial sound production, dense layers of sample upon sample, and increasingly industrial anti-funk drums. On crappy gear or reasonable headphones a sound world springs to life. Tinkles of piano, strums of guitar, little flourishes emerge from behind the previously impenetrable murk of drums and Slayer-like swathes of bass riffage, themselves rendered into clarity by better listening equipment. Gone is the obvious 'jazz' sampling of his early records, and in its place comes a much darker feel and although light touches permeate, this is not supposed to be an easy listening experience. Make sure you have good gear. **Sebastian Chan**

Sybarite

Nonument
(4AD)

At just over forty-five minutes, *Nonument* arrives and then gradually and gracefully drifts into the audio sunset without drawing too much attention to itself. 'Secropia' and 'The Fourth Day' announce the overall mood with things being well and truly mellow and groovy. 'Renzo Piano' introduces the Mouse on Mars style detuned melodies and dub elements with what sounds much like a distressed whale on lead vocal. 'Water' kicks in with a fantastic laced house rhythm and understated vocals that keep the song from drifting into an aimless and angsty wash of moody but glorious instrumentation. 'The Accidental Triumph' and 'Leap Year' are pleasant enough as musical statements, but don't quite evolve to a level that would allow repeat listening. Both mix atmospheric electronic textures and live instruments (trumpet and strings) with interesting results, but ultimately the reluctance of the arrangements to move beyond introductory playfulness leaves the listener yearning for something more solid and dynamic. 'Three Sided' closes the album perfectly, with graceful and delicate guitar manipulations scattered amongst a bed of frail, almost inaudible percussion. *Nonument* is a beautiful and emotional album that bravely chooses to exist beyond genre boundaries. Though, it is precisely this lack of focus that inspires the thought that this is a potentially magnificent album that just possibly spreads itself a little too thin. **Barry Handler**

Pellarin

Tangible Abstractions
(Couchblip!)

Despite his homeland being the southern-most Scandinavian state, Danish producer Lars Pellarin has definitely captured a sense of Arctic chill, and expansive beauty, on this, his first full-length album. The mental images are forged by the album's opening cuts, 'So Far' and 'soas mah', their programmed kick-drum beats, static crackle and low-frequency bottom end set the Pellarin rhythmic template, and then whisk the listener off to watch the flickering glow of the *aurora borealis* (a gorgeous melancholy recreated by synth-drone textures and tinkling melodies). 'Polite' only heightens that sense of escape, as a wind whips in off the frozen tundra and brings with it a shimmering counterpoint to the stand-out track's simple, melodic, and very Múm-ish beauty. Elsewhere, 'Community' clicks-and-cuts its way through haunting ambience; 'Auxil' and 'Belarus' feature the most robust moments, rhythmically (the latter playfully diving deep into your bass-bins, before tweeting in your ears); and 'Norec Samrec' takes you out under the northern lights again, listening to the ice-pack creaking around you and the snow crunching underfoot. It's lovely stuff indeed; a sonic journey made all the more memorable by virtue of its release on the Sydney-based Couchblip! label. Don't forget to pack headphones, and thermals. **Anthony Williams**

Various Artists

Lost For Words
(Leaf)

A CD single-priced overview of the highly regarded Leaf label, *Lost For Words* opens with the swooning Asa-Chang & Junray piece 'Hana'. Somehow they have managed to gate vocal snippets with a tabla solo, and the Nitin Sawhney feel crops up again in Susuma Yokota's delirious, rolling pluck-outs and Gorodisch's pure Pink Floyd sketches. Manitoba clangs a wrong note with a tacky porn sample, and urgent breaks barge in later, but overall the vibe is cavernous Weill-esque melodies spiced with clipped synth beats, none more so than Murcof with two superb tracks of sly, cleanly synthesised tones, wide spaces, and glorious gear changes. Doseone of Anticon fame appears with Boom Bip, his irritatingly weasel whine becoming quite endearing after a while. Later the Sons of Silence rescue the tender craft from self-absorption with a wildly funky break, passing the baton to the Sofa Surfers' surefire rehash of Eardrum's 'Low Order'. A widely varied set that hangs together through some top-notch sounds, **Jonathan Sykes**

JUDGEMENT JUKEBOX

WITH YOUR HOST, AM

Another month and another sojourn to the den of iniquity that is The Judgement Bar. The rigours of writing this column are many, dear reader, and between visits I find need to retreat to my country house to convalesce. There, in bucolic splendour and under the able care of my private nurse, the primly pert Miss Fanshaw, mind and body are rejuvenated once more. Often I withdraw to my private study and its world-renowned collection of Colour-Field paintings, to spend hours weeping in semi-religious ecstasy. Immensely cathartic.

Let's turn our attention to this month's Judgement Jukebox. For those of you who have come in late, let me acquaint you with the rules of our little game. Each issue I challenge members of the contemporary music world to choose three tracks from the Judgement Bar Jukebox, a wretched task indeed. I have made of the Judgement Bar a crucible in which the alchemical secrets of pop music are revealed.

I am delighted to introduce the poor saps who took up the challenge this month: Lorna and Mako, hosts of the Top Shelf radio program on Sydney's 2SER Radio, recently nominated for Best Radio Show in the Australian Dance Music Awards.

LORNA

Lorna came to DJing after a stint working as an assassin for a shadowy organization known only as The Jade Lotus. A former knife-fighting champion, she is immediately recognizable by her wooden leg and glass eye, as well as her tasteful selections of innovative house, electro and much else besides.

The Divinyls

'Pleasure and Pain'
"I remember one of my friends was a pole dancer with The Divinyls; she went on tour with them. She had the full school uniform and danced onstage. As for the track, well, life is very much like that, pleasure and pain. This was made obvious to me recently when I lopped off half my finger in a grating accident".

AC/DC

'You Shook Me All Night Long'
"I chose this because I'm still waiting for someone to shake me all night long. I went to school in Campbelltown and this one was a bit of a blue-light disco classic. I remember pashing a guy on the dancefloor during this song and it was the first time there was full tongue action." Mako laughs, "A tonsil tickler!"

LL Cool J

'Mama Said Knock You Out'
This is early 90s, time of raving. I remember Pee-Wee dropped this track at a Sweatbox party, back when Pee-Wee rocked, playing lots of styles. I loved the "aa-aa-aa-aa" vocal and then the killer break. It was just so tough compared to other stuff." Mako counters, "Compared to the Easybeats."

Lorna's Beverage of choice:
West Coast Wine Cooler

MAKO

Mako spent five years in a Red Chinese prison after his spy plane was shot down over the Gulf of Tonkin. Brainwashed, he was sent back to the decadent West where he awaits the signal to begin Operation Cloud-on-the-Mountain. His once flimsy cover as a DJ and producer has gained legitimacy and critical acclaim, most recently with his remix of Dance Music Awards nominated 'Newbie' by Multiball.

Easybeats

'Friday On My Mind'
"It's the pinstriped suits and the haircuts I can never have. Groupies like I'd like to have. An Australian icon, our big export to rival the Beatles and the Stones. It's a little fluffy."

Blondie

'Heart of Glass'
"I chose this because I wanted to come across as all old-school and nu-wave and electro clash. Nick Toth is obsessed with this track. He dances around holding his hat when he hears it." Lorna adds, "I used to copy Debbie Harry's two-tone fashion when I was seven years old and living in Glasgow."

Snoop Doggy Dogg

'Gin and Juice'
"This is all about me wanting to be a gangsta and wanting money to buy gin and juice. It reminds me of summer in Sydney and pretending to be black. This is a real video juke selection. The clip is all bitches, guns, and cars. I love the big gangsta bass line. Produced by Dre of course." At this point Mako's eyes glazed over and he was only able to mutter, "Produced by Dre", over and over. I made my excuses and left.

Mako's Beverage of Choice:
Reschs Pilsener

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DEAR DEGRASSI

A REGULAR DOSE OF IRREGULAR POP CULTURE

Yeah, I bitch n' moan about England but God I love television here. After digesting *7 Days That Shook the Spice Girls*, I'm offered *Biggie & Tupac*. Not since *Kurt & Courtney* have I seen such side-splittingly tragic documentary making. That's because Nick Broomfield is the formulaic film maker behind both flimsy pieces of celluloid. While he couldn't get a D in an evening class entitled "The Complete Idiot's Guide to Making Crap Documentaries" he is certainly eligible for a scholarship to the L'academie de Comedie. Yet again he talks to a string of inarticulate "relatives" and "friends" who don't know whether they're being interviewed for a piss weak, self serving doco or a Social Security Number. Still, given that Tupac's crack ho mom wouldn't allow his tracks to be licensed to the soundtrack, it's infinitely better than it might have been.

Anyway, on to those gripping questions that clog my inbox on a daily basis:

Dear Degrassi,

Which do you rate: *Fame: The Movie* or *Fame the TV show*?

Mocha Chudnofsky

That's like asking a parent which of their twins they would save if they only had time to save one. For me, *Fame: The Movie* could only ever be second best as I'd discovered the TV show years before the film, and in many ways it is better. I mean, they all graduate in the film, whereas in the show some carried on studying, seemingly forever, rivalling the 90210 crew for title of Longest Serving High School Geriatrics.

Until the series of *Fame* graced Australian televisions in the early 80s, *The Partridge Family* was the only television show which featured regular musical numbers. They only managed to incorporate the songs when the family performed or rehearsed, whereas *Fame* was the first TV show I'd seen where they worked the songs into mundane situations. We're talking love songs punctuated with the full stop of a kiss between characters seated together on the piano stool. I really thought that life would be like this – much the same way that I thought I'd be able to find a straight guy to marry me who could dance like Gene Kelly.

Fame only notched a year and a half in the NBC bedhead back in 1982. It was then syndicated from 1983 to 1987, seeing mainstay cast members making way for new-comers such as Fran Dresher (*The Nanny*) and Janet Jackson (let's see... *Poetic Justice* which also starred Tupac Shakur). Not content to let things lie, in 1998 the show was exhumed and revived in that weird, necromantic way that the things buried in Stephen King's *Pet Sematary* (sic) come back: the same, only different in an evil, unwashed and ill-conceived kind of way. This monster was called *Fame LA*, but I'm not even going to go there...

The real *Fame* was set in New York at the High



School for the Performing Arts, or as I used to call it, Fame School. Here talented youths would skim over readin', ritin' and 'rithmetic so that they could get to dance/singing/drama/stand up comedy/music classes. Despite this seemingly dire lack of attention to academic pursuits, English teacher, Mrs Sherwood (Carol Mayo Jenkins), was a prominent character. This was probably due to the fact that Leroy's illiteracy was a major story line in the film, although it magically disappeared in the series. Whatever the reason, Mrs Sherwood was great value due to her sassy, take-no-shit disposition.

You cannot go past the dance teacher Lydia Grant, played by Debbie Allen. Her monologue at the beginning of each episode inspired many thousands of lycra-clad hours in front of the mirror: "You got big dreams? You want fame? Well, fame costs. And right here is where you start paying in sweat." While billed as one of the "stars" from the film, she only actually clocked up one scene. Sister to Phyllicia Rashad who played Clair Huxtable on *The Cosby Show*, Debs now runs her own version of Fame School called Lydia Grant's Dance Academy. Did you hear that kah-ching? Sounds like someone's cashing in!

But hey, it's the kids that we tuned in to see, and just as Fame School had high standards, so too did the producers of the show. Hell, even Madonna didn't make the grade, although having seen her audition tape, I'm not at all surprised. Just as well she married a director!

The early years of the show poached characters (and in some instances, the actors who played them) from the film. Who could forget the man who made the cornrow and sprint-short ensemble famous – Leroy Johnson (Gene Anthony Ray)! Boy

could he dance! Evidently that's all he could do because besides playing Leroy in both the film and the show, the only other acting credit I could find was as Man Friday in a Dino DiLaurentiis (*Barbarella*) TV adaptation of *Robinson Crusoe*. Let's just say that he did for the loincloth what he also did for sprint shorts.

Then there was Coco Hernandez (Erica Gimpel) the girl I longed to be, but alas, I didn't have the fundamental motor skills necessary to sing with gusto whilst flinging a leg behind my head. Unfortunately the only time we've been able to hear her sing since *Fame* was as a guest star in *Babylon 5*, however some rather impressive acting credits include bit parts in Hal Hartley's *Flirt* and *Amateur*. Perhaps she didn't pay with enough sweat back at Fame school. Then again, a tiny role in a Hartley film is worth ten starring roles in a Ron Howard film.

Although she was lumpy, bumpy and frumpy, I really liked aspiring method actress Doris Schwartz (Valerie Landsburg), especially after the episode where she pretended to be a prostitute (a method acting exercise), got herself into trouble and then took one of the "street walkers" who helped her out home, like she was some sort of pet. And then when the hooker-with-a-heart-of-gold didn't make it into Fame school after singing a woeful version of 'Blue Moon', we never saw her again because Doris reunited her with her estranged parents when she realised she couldn't turn her into a star.

I saved my favourite until last: Danny Amatullo (Carlo Imperato). Just like I can't explain why I was in love with Patsy from *Happy Days*, I don't know why I had a pre-pubescent crush on Danny. Perhaps it was his obligatory great sense of humour required by all aspiring stand up comics. It appears that his greatest achievement since *Fame* has been, um, well, procreating...it really is the only thing that Carlo's done since the show besides gaining a black belt in karate. In that case, I'll lay off the guy.

So there we go. I do find it somewhat ironic that the kids from the early years of *Fame* never did do what their characters worked so long and hard for. Perhaps it's a curse, perhaps it's just poor casting, but whatever the reason, those kids inspired me to dedicate years of my life to music lessons, and now I just put CDs in the stereo. Life imitating art, or what?

For more on *Fame* characters Mr Crandall, Mr Shorofsky, Bruno Martelli and Julie Miller, go to www.cyclidefrost.com





Disturbance

'Most of the tunes here start out with innocuous, engaging melodies, before building up into great unstoppable juggernauts of merciless bass and machine gun beats that wouldn't be out of place in a Bad Company/Ed Rush and Optical set...'
Mix Mag ****



Dub Combinations chapter one

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Realtime

Now relocated to Melbourne from their native Christchurch, Shapeshifters album "Realtime" is a document of some of Aotearoa's finest Drum & Bass. Blending live breaks and instruments with programmed sounds and loops "Realtime" floats from beautifully atmospheric moments to driving peaks and intense rhythms.
"****" Coda Magazine (France)

