CYCLIC DEFROST
FREE IN AUSTRALIA
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Editorial
Far from quivering anxiously in the corner, the 25th issue of Cyclic Defrost celebrates the joys of quarter-life, without the crisis. Given this magazine’s history it would be easy to think that we might skirt around some of the more prominent heavy-hitters from times past and present. Instead, this issue we’re proud to present our writers’ takes on musicians that have helped shape the contemporary electronic musical landscape.

Four Tet, Icarus and Severed Heads are all profiled in this issue, alongside new sounds from Dâm-Funk. Jennifer Moses provides an insightful profile on DJ Spooky, an academic, musician, and author who manages to articulate so many sentiments experienced at the quarter-life mark, almost unintentionally.

Our cover is provided by Dave Fernandes from HAHA Industries and Lucas Abela provides a brilliant take on Cyclic Selects towards the end of the issue.

There’s also plenty of web-only features to check out, including an interview with Pantha Du Prince.

As always, enjoy.

Shaun, Lex, Matt
Editors
Cyclic Defrost

Sleeve Reviews

Now all online at www.cyclicdefrost.com/blog
Discoteca Psychadelica

Dave Fernandes takes its cover into a realm of potential and positivity. Fernandes is a DJ and digital designer, part of Sydney design and promotional crew HAHA Industries, a team of five who aim to create unique music experiences for a city too often restricted by other live music venues. “Everyone is extremely dedicated and talented at what they do and together we make HAHA Industries. We’re not a nightclub or festival brand”, he says. “We like doing things a little differently, we like to change things so that Sydney doesn’t end up so monotonous.” The crew have brought acts from Optimo to Tim Sweeney to our shores, pulling in crowds to covert locations and warehouse spaces across the city.
The HAHA ethos could be anti-establishment, if the establishment consists of terrible music, over priced booze, gorilla bouncers and pretentious beauty queens: things Fernandes lists as characteristic of the mainstream Sydney live scene. “Primarily we need a platform and space for music to be heard and respected. We’ve dealt with a lot of venue owners who are concerned with nothing more than bums on seats and squeezing dollars out of every promoter, slowly annihilating Sydney’s artistic integrity and culture, and we just don’t stand for that.”

Speakeasies are common in the HAHA world - punters find out locations close to the performance date, by mailing list, Facebook or word-of-mouth. But far from being a nostalgic throw-back to the past just for the sake of it, the speakeasy is a method of promotion that allows Fernandes and the crew to bring together likeminded people in an environment free from venue restrictions and those who just don’t get it.

In terms of how this affects the visual design for flyers and promotional material, Fernandes finds it particularly liberating. “It allows me to design as open and freely as the music we are trying to express. Most nightclub and festival flyers have a commercial and general message, whereas with ours we try to communicate the message of creative sound and a unique atmosphere in order to attract an intelligent and switched-on crowd.”

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In 2008, HAHA hosted Tim Sweeney in the basement of a Spanish restaurant, at an event called ‘Discoteca Psicodelica’. “Tim’s radio show is called ‘Beats In Space’ in New York and he really pushes some great electronic music, reworked and experimental sounds and a lot of it does sound wonky and trippy, though still coherent, beautiful and makes you want to dance. That’s where the “Psicodelica” came from and “Discoteca” speaks for itself. Why in Spanish? It created another point of difference sound. The police sirens ringing in his second track was quite surreal.”

“I think I try and deliver something visually the same way one would hear it in the sound we are embodying – familiarity mixed with the new and in different expressive ways.”
that was still understood. It makes you think.

“The colour scheme has been commonly used to represent the bright contrasts portrayed with psychedelic states, the pink on blue together makes it a little hard to focus as your eyes are left trying to adjust.”

Throughout his childhood, Fernandes was taken by his brother’s involvement in graffiti, though he gradually moved from walls outside to one inside: a computer screen. He cites early influences like pop-surrealist artist Todd Schorr, Coop, Doze Green and Paul Insect.

“I didn’t aspire to illustrate like those guys because they’re ridiculously good, but the way they visualised things was mind bending and extremely engaging.” Previous digital and online influences included work from The Designers Republic, Tomato, Joshua Davis’s “Praystation”, Michael Osa and Hi-Res studio in the UK, which Fernandes still references from time to time.

“Locally I remember coming across the early Design Is Kinky and Australian InFront community portals. It amazed me that there was a community of creatives online, actively sharing thoughts and working together. They’re both now two of the biggest, if not the biggest online communities for the Australian design industry and ones that I am continually referring to.”

“I find influences in lots of different things. [Looking at] other artists away from design is really interesting. I like seeing how minds think alike yet produce in completely different manners. I don’t try to produce a particular style, I use what I know, or seek out what I can learn, to create what I need to communicate.”

“25 is a beautiful age, so young and full of potential.”

“Today there’s hundreds of influences that come in many shapes and forms and I love drawing from those, but in terms of design I still haven’t seen a studio compass to Universal Everything in the UK. They’re my all time favourite design studio whose crossover with design and art I have not seen anywhere alike.”

When Fernandes is designing for a particular event he likes to surround himself with music from that particular artist. “Obviously I work with electronic music so that has precedence but when I’m designing I go off a few different things. When doing commercial work it’s emotional, so I go by how I’m feeling at the time, or by the urgency of the job. On high rotation I have things like Jamie Lloyd, Flying Lotus, Julian Casablancas, Lou Reed, Optimo’s Sleepwalk, Massive Attack, Arthur Russell, Horace Andy... Also my background being Portuguese, I have developed a love for the Fado and Spanish Flamenco also which I find quite serious yet flamboyant.”

For this issue’s cover, Fernandes drew on the theme “Cyclic Defrost”, as well as the milestone issue number. “I used the letters from the name “Cyclic Defrost” as a basis to create the shapes used to generate the typeface and the number 25 for the 25th issue.

“The shapes are clean, geometrical and straight edged but overlapped and randomly placed to create the colour and pattern. They were constructed then left as they lay, non-specific to a grid that a lot of traditional design is based on. I also wanted the design to reflect the liberty of the music that Cyclic Defrost embraces.”

Black-and-white photography overlayed with monochrome shapes is something that’s prevalent throughout Fernandes’ work for HAHA, yet for this cover he has allowed colour to play its part. The photos, of sakura blossoms and a young woman, “signify that 25 is a beautiful age, so young and full of potential.

“Influences never end, and as long as they don’t you’ll never be short of something to create. I think that’s a beautiful thing.”

More of Dave’s work can be seen at www.hahaindustries.com
History is filled with creative artists whose cultural influence far outstrips the number of records they've sold, and when it comes to the last thirty years of popular electronic music, Sydney-based band Severed Heads certainly make that list. While the arena-straddling likes of Trent Reznor and Orbital have praised the band as a pivotal influence over the years, apart from perennially remixed dance favourite 'Dead Eyes Opened', Severed Heads haven't really had a 'hit', remaining a cult/underground act in the eyes of many listeners. That said, the above factor is perhaps at least partially due to Severed Heads' refusal to remain stylistically in the one place or repeat covering the same predictable ground. Over their lifespan they've been linked with a multitude of divergent scenes ranging from industrial through to noise, post-punk, synth-pop and ambient. It's telling also that Severed Heads fans are humorously termed 'Cliffords' – a reference to the band's retrospective collection Clifford Darling Please Don't Live In The Past – a statement that could perhaps describe the band's ever-shifting nature alone.

Throughout the last thirty years a number of different collaborators including Garry Bradbury, Loop Orchestra founder Richard Fielding and late dance producer Robert Rustic have passed through Severed Heads' shifting lineup, with founder Tom Ellard remaining the sole constant member. In many sensas, it's also Ellard's early integration of computer generated visuals that set the standard for other artists to follow, with the animations just as crucial to any Severed Heads performance as the musical elements. Given the band's cultural and artistic significance, it certainly seems appropriate that this year's 'Circa 1979' post-punk retrospective as part of the Sydney Festival saw Ellard presenting a talk at the Seymour Centre, as well as a recent well-attended farewell Severed Heads show at the Hyde Park barracks that marked the official end of the band as an entity after three decades of creative activity. With Severed Heads' farewell live set at the Hyde Park Barracks just a few weeks in the past at the time of this interview session, one of the first things I'm curious to ask Ellard about concerns the challenges faced by a band with such an extensive and stylistically diverse back-catalogue when selecting material for a one-off farewell set. Given the strict limitations of a one-hour live performance, were there tracks that he would've liked to include or emphasise that he was forced to leave out, and vice versa? As it turns out, Ellard's response is firmly in keeping with the opinions expressed recently during his talk for the Circa 1979 series regarding artificially manufactured ideas of nostalgia for ‘classic eras.’

“What was important was that old and new are not different,” he argues. “Whether 1982 or 2002 should not matter, the date a track was written has no bearing on the quality of the music, but that's how it gets described far too often by rock historians and I despise that kind of thinking which makes no sense in the confused culture of 2010. So we put tracks next to each other that were written 20 years apart and said – look it’s all one. A demonstration of timelessness, which I think is exactly the current issue in music.”

I suggest that this issue of ‘classic eras’ must be something that comes up quite often for an act that's moved through such distinct stylistic phases over its thirty year long existence, shifting from the early tape-based noise experimentation of albums like Since The Accident through to the more pop/dance-based tracks of the early nineties like ‘Greater Reward’ and ‘All Saints Day’. Indeed, over the years, I've heard a multitude of descriptions applied to Severed Heads ranging from industrial through to post-punk, all of which seem to only describe very limited aspects of the band's work.
"There’s no such thing as ‘classical music’. It’s all manufactured by people that need to box things in retrospect."
Chicago Underground Duo
International
by Kurt Iveson

ob Mazurek and Chad Taylor made their first album together as the Chicago Underground Duo in 1998. With the 2010 release of Boca Negra, they’re up to their fifth album together as a duo. They have also made five other albums with others in various configurations of the ever-mutating Chicago Underground Collective. And in between all this, Mazurek and Taylor have been heavily involved in other ensembles, from post-rock outfits like Tortoise through to other jazz and avant-garde acts like Mazurek’s Exploding Star Orchestra and Marc Ribot. Busy people!

Boca Negra contains the Duo’s trademark mix of atmospheres and styles. It opens with a raucous free improvisation, which highlights the sympathy and telepathy that has developed between these two players in their years working together. The rest of the album includes tight and frenetic grooves such as ‘Spy on the Floor’ and delicate, beautifully-crafted melodies and layered loops such as ‘Hermeto’. Typically for a Chicago Underground Duo album, Boca Negra also features a wide range of sounds and instruments. Mazurek and Taylor have continued to explore options beyond the cornet and drums which are notionally their first instruments. Here, they also make use of melodic percussion, woodwinds, piano, sequencers and a range of effects. And they’ve also deployed a range of interesting production methods, with Matt Lux (bass player for Iron and Wine, Isotope 217, Mandarin Movie and the Exploding Star Orchestra) on the boards.

To coincide with the album’s release, I had a chance to put some questions to Rob Mazurek about the recording of Boca Negra in Sao Paolo and its place in their musical trajectory.

I want to start by asking about the relationship between your music and place. You’ve been working together for years as the Chicago Underground, what does the ‘Chicago’ in ‘Chicago Underground’ mean to you guys?

Chicago is my home. I moved to the city in 1983 and have used this city as a base of operation all these years. I split time between Brazil and Chicago these last years but almost all my projects and recordings have come from the city. Early on in the late 80s and early 90s I spent a great deal of time learning the language of jazz.

“Brazil is all about sound, rhythm, melody. It is hard to walk down the street and not hear someone whistling a song or clapping a rhythm or singing something.”

ob Mazurek and Chad Taylor made their first album together as the Chicago Underground Duo in 1998. With the 2010 release of Boca Negra, they’re up to their fifth album together as a duo. They have also made five other albums with others in various configurations of the ever-mutating Chicago Underground Collective. And in between all this, Mazurek and Taylor have been heavily involved in other ensembles, from post-rock outfits like Tortoise through to other jazz and avant-garde acts like Mazurek’s Exploding Star Orchestra and Marc Ribot. Busy people!

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With such extraordinary musicians as Karin Prince, Jim Halliday, Dave Bloom, Billy Brimfield, John Weber, Erma Thompson etc. Chicago is home. Always has been home.

This was the first record you guys made outside of Chicago. What is about Brazil and its music that attracts you, why were you there?

I invited Chad to play with My Exploiting Dear Orchestra featuring Roscoe Mitchell in Sao Paulo Brazil where I was in residency for a while. I wanted to experiment with Chad and the other three drummers. It was a great success and enabled Chad and I to spend some time together, which is rare these days based on our schedules and the fact that Chad lives in NYC and I shuttling back and forth from Sao Paulo and Chicago. Brazil is all about sound, street and not hear someone whistling a song or clapping a rhythm or singing something. It has an extremely sound/music oriented culture that

you just don’t find in many places I have been. This of course puts you in a state of mind that is quite joyful. But on the other hand, we have been developing our own vocabulary for more than 15 years, so location is not everything.

So how are those elements of Brazil reflected in this record?

The thing is, Brazilian music is so much more than this stereotypical samba music, or bossa nova. There is a deep history in subversive, radical sound, especially during the time of the dictatorship. The underground movement in Brazil during the 60s and 70s was and still is intense stuff both in words and music. The music we made for this record is a sum or anti sum of our experiences up to this point in time in this world and perhaps beyond.

The name of the track ‘Hermeto’ is the only explicit Brazilian reference in song titles. What’s the story of this track?

This is a song that Chad constructed based on some music that Hermeto Pascoal gave us at an airport in Brazil. We saw him sitting there and struck up a conversation. A few minutes later he is writing something down on some music paper and hands us this amazing composition. Chad took a part of this and made the song, while I floated colour within the cascading pianos on my mutated distorted cornet.

Boca Negra has a mix of improvised and composed tunes. What does ‘composed’ mean in your writing and recording process? How ‘composed’ is ‘composed’?

And what role does post-production play in crafting the final structure?

We have always enjoyed the idea of blurring the lines between composed and improvised music. So for example, ‘Spy on the Floor’ was a written bass line and melody. The idea on ‘Spy on the Floor’ was to find the Rhythm. The electric Mbira songs are a mix of improvised and fixed ideas. The idea on these songs was to find the melody. Not many things were cut in post production. A little bit on ‘Spy on the Floor’ and the rest was pretty much we played it in the studio.

Presumably you are both playing and composing all the time, but you both have so many different projects going on. What makes something right for the Duo as opposed to another project/group?

I am always thinking of the Duo. It’s the group that I have spent the most time with. Whenever I get together with Chad, some kind of magic happens. It doesn’t matter how long we have been away from it, things just flow. Pretty much all the sessions have been fully planned and half thought within the process. We try a lot of things and what works for us we use and what doesn’t work we throw out or perhaps use for other projects. The idea is finding the space between us that creates a kind of magic.

Like your other albums, this one is not just cornet and percussion, but electronics and computer, piano and flute and melodic percussion. Were there any particular instruments that either of you were working with for the first time here, that you reckon drew out some new ideas or approaches?

Chad has been studying the Mbira and this sound done in this way is very new to the group. Chad also rolled up the sleeves and got into the computer, programming some beautiful stuff. I stuck more to the cornet for this recording with some flute. I was more involved with the mixing of the record where we did some added things in post-production usually only act as an enhancement of the initial idea.

Could you tell us about your relationship to jazz? Do you both bring a jazz background (among other things) to your music, and if so your music but your albums don’t feel to me like “jazz records”, and I guess I find it hard to pin down why I feel this is. Is it something about focusing on creating atmospheres instead of displaying virtuosity? Or do you think it is something else?

That leads me to ask about how you find an audience for your music. Part of the function musical boundaries perform is not just to separate but also to find audiences for your music. How do you find an audience for your music, and what works for us we use and what doesn’t work we throw out or perhaps use for other music. This truly is our music.

We were both brought up playing jazz and still play jazz. My personal trajectory has moved into realms of noise (Italian futurists, Merzbow, John Cage, Kevin Drumm). The idea of silences as reflected in the perception works of James Turrell, or the paintings of Mark Rothko, piano music of Boulez, the minimalism of Chalemagne Adjaye in Palestine and the silent energy of Bill Dixon. I think our music relates to everything. This truly is our music.

We play, we record, we try to be as honest as we can. We are about the pure sound we are trying to project.

Boca Negra is released through Thrill Jockey.

“W e have always enjoyed the idea of blurring the lines between composed and improvised music.”

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“After working with Steve my whole rhythmic idea had changed a lot. I found that I'd moved away from a hip hop influence, into a different area.”

Different Drummer
Together with school friends Mark Hebden, from Mhar and Sam Jeffers, Kieran Hebden was the third member of UK post-rock band Fridge, releasing highly collectable records on Output Recordings throughout the 90s. The instrumental trio released four EPs for Output Recordings; two albums and a compilation of the vinyl singles, and flirted momentarily with Go! Beat! Records for two EPs before setting up their own Text Records and releasing two albums. Kieran Hebden sported an all-white look and enjoyed working on his own, and the first Four Tet EP under the early Text Records label came out the same year as the early Fridge vinyl single. “It’s been a progression from the very first release, alternating between his solo work as Sun A Sandwich” and Four Tet.

On the eve of the release of his fifth album There Is Love In You, I had the opportunity to chat with Kieran, and while the interview was meant to focus on the new album, it was too hard to ignore the last 13 years of his career, and I was quite certain he’d probably had endless interviews that only concentrated on the now, and part of understanding Kieran’s music is looking how he got there. The grueling interview was looking how he got there. The grueling interview was looking how he got there. The grueling interview was looking how he got there. The grueling interview was looking how he got there. The grueling interview was looking how he got there. The grueling interview was looking how he got there. The grueling interview was looking how he got there.

“I don’t want to spend all my time just plugging things in and messing around with cables, I just want to make music.”

technical finesse in the studio.

Kieran Hebden seems to take on this step further, releasing a more electronic sound as Four Tet, his solo project. “I’d always made music on my own, even before Fridge. I had a little four track at home and it was very normal for me to do this sort of thing, but having the studio allowed me to do things. Then we had the Fridge record out, and I was beginning to write on this solo electronic music just as an experiment, just learning how to work. Not that I was doing anything different. It was just that I was writing songs with a different idea in mind. I had the idea of working with the legendary jazz drummer Steve Reid. I’d actually always wanted to work with a drummer. It was after Everything Ecstatic came out. I put out three Four Tet EPs just before that, and after the last one I thought I just wanted to do something really different. It was that idea of working with a drummer. It was like something a little more scary and different again. I mentioned to a friend of mine in France that I was thinking of working with a drummer, and she wanted to work with me. I put the word out, and he got in contact with me, and he’s like, ‘I don’t know who you are, I’ve never heard of you, but I’m in touch with Steve Reid, and you should meet up with him.’”

He has embraced both creative avenues, which appears to have kept him well grounded; he comes across as a humble, passionate, and focused musician. For now he’s concentrating on his solo output as Four Tet. “It’s just a different experience, like you get the chance to really see things. It’s really pure and it’s really clear what’s going on. I’m not really into the rock sound, guitars, drums, bass, vocals always seemed tressis, nothing really grabbed my attention, and experimentation was what excited me, something fresh and original. When ‘post-rock’, ‘post-industrial’ or ‘experimental rock’ came into my attention in the mid 90s, it offered something different, not entirely original but fresh, with no obvious ties to what I was doing. I think that’s why it was so influential. I was hearing from what I thought was an authentic sound. Years of listen to electronic music had brought me back full circle, being excited about sounds that real musicians make. Fridge really seemed to have connection, distilling everything good about rock instrumentation, jazz experimentation, and the music industry.

“I made reference to the short ‘Pablo’s Heart’ from the album. ‘It is a heartbreak,’ Hebden confirms. ‘And another track was called ‘Friends’ and I think of it as a reflection of that song. “ ‘Friends’ was a sort of industrial rock song, a bit of a grunge sound.”

Kieran Hebden has been a prolific artist, but one of the few American labels still pushing the boundaries of hip-hop. Kieran Hebden was using the sounds at concerts and things, it was a heartbeat,” Hebden reveals, regarding the sound dominating the back catalogue of remixes he has done and the program was heavily dominated by hip-hop. Kieran and I hung out with Egon and Madlib, and Madlib had just started working on the Madvillain record. “I’d actually always had the idea I wanted to release the Madvillain album. It came out, the first time they came to London. I think that stuff with Steve Reid and Plastic People, and I went and met them. I just pressed up this LP by this guy Koolau, I gave them copies of that, and they ended up signing him. So I was in touch with them, and I did this thing called the Red Bull Music Academy in Brazil, and I hung out with Egon and Madlib, and Madlib had just started working on the Madvillain record. It was a total collaboration,” Hebden confirms. “We ended up sending us all the accapellas from the whole album. I think we both ended up going home with one or two tracks that we wanted to choose one. Once we turned in so many remixes, we turned in 12 or 16 mixes, and they chose one, or 12 tracks. What was contained on those two EPs became a staple in many a DJ’s crate for quite some time, and Kieran would say ‘I want to see if we can play this.’”

The buzz hasn’t stopped there. A mysterious black label vinyl LP released in 2009 with minimal information. This time it was a joint effort with Steve Reid, which seemed like a perfect collaboration of like minds. Upon its release the internet was abuzz with debate over whether it was a split release or a collaboration. “That was quite a bit of hype around it. I think it was difficult. We didn’t do it by email, we worked together in the studio, we really wanted to do it that way. I want to school with him. When he put his mind to something, things just happened.”

“Steve and I met up and arranged a concert, we really wanted to do it that way. I want to school with him. When he put his mind to something, things just happened.”

The above record was a collaboration with an artist who I’m in touch with. I’m in touch with Steve Reid, and he wants to hit a new audience with it. ‘A lot are missing that thing of being able to bounce off people as well. I do enjoy working on his solo output as Four Tet. “It’s just a different experience, like you get the chance to really see things. It’s really pure and it’s really clear what’s going on. I’m not really into the rock sound, guitars, drums, bass, vocals always seemed

There is Love In You is available now in Domino Records, and you might just find a few minutes left at the first two 12” releases Love Cry and Sing.
In the last years of the 1990s, Icarus – aka English cousins Oliver Bown and Sam Britton – released two of the most incredibly detailed drum’n’bass albums in the literature, Kamikaze and Fijaka. The complex drum programming and sub-bass swoops combined with a willingness for sonic exploration which came to the fore over the next decade-plus of their career, during which Sam would complete a Masters degree in electronic music and composition at the prestigious IRCAM in Paris, and Ollie’s work in music performance software would take him to Melbourne to work at the Centre for Electronic Media Art at Monash University.

While their music these days retains the pulse of drum’n’bass, it sits more as a kind of folktronica informed by musique concrète, electro-acoustic music and free jazz. One seems (rightly or wrongly) to hear generative jungle rhythms produced by Ollie’s computer programs and snippets of modern composition from Sam’s other life.

But, as I put it to Ollie & Sam, the first two albums, in their production, seem to lie more towards the dancefloor end of drum’n’bass with the likes of Photek than with the drill’n’bass of Squarepusher.

Ollie begins: “we were certainly geared up for doing dancefloor music at that time, but we didn’t hang around in those circles. I never felt totally at ease in the basement of Blackmarket Records... much happier at [havens for IDM and electronica] Atlas or Ambient Soho!”

“But we were certainly convinced of the magnificence of vinyl and the great prestige of getting a track played by a well-known DJ. This was also the time that Warp / Rephlex-style avant-garde re-treatment of hardcore and drum’n’bass styles were emerging, artists such as Plug were very influential, and we considered ourselves broadly spread amongst those interests. Photek was a huge influence, but bear in mind that quite a bit of his music was not really that popular on the dancefloor (although we DJ’d it and freaked out to it all the time).

“The exciting thing about drum’n’bass which doesn’t really apply equally to any dance music that came before it is that the stuff seemed so multi-purpose: with the threes against fours and the wide range of time-scales, lightning-fast
drums and drawn out dopy basslines, you could pick and choose your own totally weird dance, juxtaposed with people around you. You could dance to the weird stuff even more weirdly, but there was also a lot of really dancefloor-based work that made great listening music, such as Danny Breaks or Paradox, who just got involved in these incessant beat chopping frenzies that basically provided the content for the whole track, save a couple of drops here and there. I mean, some of my best dancing experiences involved little more than standing in front of a couple of huge speaker stacks, feet firmly stuck to the ground, grinning and prodding a finger into the air. So I think it was really head music for me anyway. No wonder I've put on a bit of weight.

"Bottom line: Plug, Paradox and Photek are the 3 Ps of late 90s breakbeat wizardry." Both are still very enthusiastic about the d’n’b scene, particularly the Detroit minimalism that Icarus’s releases continue to dance to the drum’n’bass beat. “Yeah,” says Oliver. “It becomes more and more of an identity. In some ways it is an absurd pose to take, because you could take out that element and be left with something for a completely different genre: some of our tracks, and Oliver’s solo work, and both of our experiments with free improvisers, do exactly that. For the past five years I think we’ve been treating our music in that way, very introspectively, not as something which aims to be something, an end goal, more something which is how it is for a number of historical, personal and technical reasons. Then we play with that identity.”

Sam adds: “I also think there was a sense in which a lot of what we started off doing was finding crazy bits of records to samples – we would spend hours going through records and ‘digging in the crates’ for samples. I had inherited my father’s record collection which was about ‘digging in the crates’ for samples. I had inherited my father’s record collection which was about

“Bottom line: Plug, Paradox and Photek are the 3 Ps of late 90s breakbeat wizardry.”

Both are still very enthusiastic about the d’n’b scene, particularly the Detroit minimalism that Icarus’s releases continue to dance to the drum’n’bass beat. “Yeah,” says Oliver. “It becomes more and more of an identity. In some ways it is an absurd pose to take, because you could take out that element and be left with something for a completely different genre: some of our tracks, and Oliver’s solo work, and both of our experiments with free improvisers, do exactly that. For the past five years I think we’ve been treating our music in that way, very introspectively, not as something which aims to be something, an end goal, more something which is how it is for a number of historical, personal and technical reasons. Then we play with that identity.”

Sam adds: “I also think there was a sense in which a lot of what we started off doing was finding crazy bits of records to samples – we would spend hours going through records and ‘digging in the crates’ for samples. I had inherited my father’s record collection which was about ‘digging in the crates’ for samples. I had inherited my father’s record collection which was about
Icarus are fascinating partly because of this smudging of genres – outside of drum’n’bass
they fit awkwardly into many areas. In 2004 both Icarus and Sam’s alter ego Isambard
Khrushavlov renamed their band Four Tet on the My Angel Rocks Black and Flott single, a
highly effective collaboration and many people’s introduction to their work. Given this connection,
itself tentatively bring up the genre of the time, and
am surprised at Ollie’s acceptance: “Yes you can
talktronica. I quite like that term. I really like
folk music and I really like electronic music, and
obviously we do electronic music with acoustic
guitars, so it would be a bit of a waste of energy
to rail against a term like that. As far as genres go,
so, isn’t best to be disinterested but
also not to take other people’s categorisations
for granted? Create new genres, as many as
possible, and distribute them liberally.”
Kieran Hebden himself has suggested that
he sees (or saw, at the time) Four Tet as a kind
of hip-hop. It may be tempting to throw genre
considerations out the window, but with a
band as allusive as Icarus, straddling electronic
and acoustic, popular and academic, context
is important within the music, and becomes
an important consideration in listening to and
discussing it. Sam takes up the thread:
“I think it’s fair to say that, broadly speaking,
electronic music has a far bigger issue with
the concept of contextualisation than most
other types of music, which in a way is totally
exemplified by someone like Kieran. As a recent
Pitchfork review points out, he is someone who
considerably at Ollie’s attitude about how he wasn’t really too into the DJ and
shouting into my ear throughout the entire set
in a club where we had to set up in the middle of
the stage (sending MIDI to Sam who was ‘on the sampler’) – by the time of
In 2001 I remember playing live on a laptop
played live with a laptop and sampler (the laptop
just sent MIDI to the sampler, it wasn’t powerful
enough to play audio), and there weren’t many
people exactly improvising with breakbeats at
the time. It’s still a joke in 2010 that a live laptop
performer is probably just checking his emails.
In 2001 I remember playing live on a laptop
sending MIDI to Sam who was ‘on the sampler’) in a club where we had to set up in the middle of
the audience. There was a drunk guy incoherently shouting into my ear throughout the entire set
about how he wasn’t really too into the DJ and
hoped someone would play some more housey
beats. There was no way I could begin to explain
to him what I was doing.
Also, in those days, a band comprising of live instruments and electronics was, in my mind,
a bit of a dodgy fusion. Since then, the
musicians take to the stage and start performing
themselves? It seems to me that at a certain
point there was a conflict of interests and one
fact that the record industry was and is going
through this crisis of piracy and record sales is
exactly as a result of that conflict of interests. It’s
about a bunch of musicians saying, ‘We don’t
want to be dictated to by an industry that won’t
accommodate a new way of looking at musical
creativity’’. People say that’s all fixed now, but
if anything the current trend seems more like a
regression than a fix to me.
For our part, I think we realised quite early on
hoped someone would play some more housey
beats. There was no way I could begin to explain
to him what I was doing.
Also, in those days, a band comprising of live instruments and electronics was, in my mind,
always a bit of a dodgy fusion. Since then, the
was the source of the appellation. It was also the
point at which I think you start to think; electronic
music is becoming more and more versatile
such that I can program a computer to do these
types of things, perform live, generate patterns,
listen etc, and there’s no reason to think about
the creative process in such rarified cultural
terms. So the seeds of our interest in things like
improvisation and not wanting to be tied down
to a specific role as music makers came quite
early on and perhaps influenced the fact that
we remained pretty skeptical about the role of
record labels and the concept of categorisation
in the whole scheme of things. It’s nice to think
that people can now generally just go straight
to the source, completely bypassing that
whole mechanism.”
Although they also work with labels still,
Icarus have released their own music (as Icarus,
solo and in collaboration), and others’ on their
boutique “fantasy non-label” Not Applicable.
For their current Australian tour, Icarus have
self-released a live album called all is for the best
in the best of all possible worlds, which will be
available from Not Applicable after the tour.
Their previous album, sifo, and the earlier
self-released Carnivalesque, are edited from
live recordings too. Indeed, the live element
has always been a big focus for the pair –
surprisingly, all the way back to the drum’n’bass
days. Ollie recalls, “when we started out, we
played live with a laptop and sampler (the laptop
just sent MIDI to the sampler, it wasn’t powerful
enough to play audio), and there weren’t many
people exactly improvising with breakbeats at
the time. It’s still a joke in 2010 that a live laptop
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Also, in those days, a band comprising of live instruments and electronics was, in my mind,
a bit of a dodgy fusion. Since then, the
listening to the original style of music, but love
the derivation. If you look back at dance music,
that’s happened endlessly and it’s a testament
to a specific language and a creativity within
that language.
Given this, there are some interesting points
where the language and the mould of what has
been developed starts to become inadequate
to nurture the music that is being created.
For example, what happens when the people
producing the music step outside the arena of
producing 12”s and records tailored for DJs?
And secondly, what happens when electronic
technical conditions, and the kind of musical culture has changed so much. Dance music people, non-classical types, just discovered a lot of new stuff. The academic guys always get first dibs on the technology, but often it’s culture at large that works out the best stuff to do with it. Dub, No-hop and breakfast music innovated techniques and sensibilities that maybe just now are becoming appropriately absorbed into classical-academic music culture. We’re straddling both worlds (in our own very independent ways), but it’s far from a cozy combo, it’s quite messy, and that’s not a bad thing.

As for when their interest in the more academic side arose, “It pre-dated Icarus, but I didn’t think either of us were aware of how it was all going to pan out. And certainly for myself I set off on the wrong foot – I should have learnt how to program 10 years earlier. I would have absolutely loved it, but nobody had ever even suggested it to me! MaxMSP, an intuitive tool for musicians to use algorithms, broke open a vast area of unknown unknowns is how you’ll view what you’ve just been doing when you go off and learn some new stuff. You find new things you didn’t know that you didn’t know. “So I can say that I had a load of interests surrounding Icarus, but there are some ways in which life was more complete before “studying”, because you just did things, savagely. By this I mean all this studying and discovery wasn’t necessarily a great thing to happen musically, it just didn’t quite let you find the bar-lines. “Things calmed down again after that, maybe because I was already committed to a slightly different path, I find it hard to make music and do research. So the truth is the interface hasn’t really got there yet. Making software is not the same as making music.”

“Electronic music is becoming more and more versatile such that I can program a computer to perform live and there’s no reason to think about the creative process in such rarified cultural terms.”

Sam’s studies at IRCAM sound like the proverbial kid in a candy store. Quite unlike the snobbish attitude of the ivory tower Western Art Music academic, Sam declares, “the thing I remember the most was just hanging out in the studios all night making the most wigged out music you could possibly conceive of and then walking down the hall and hanging out with someone else on a completely different trip. Then on top of this, having this enormous resource just don’t quite let you find the bar-lines. “Things calmed down again after that, maybe because I was already committed to a slightly different path, I find it hard to make music and do research. So the truth is the interface hasn’t really got there yet. Making software is not the same as making music.”

“Ultimately, I kind of think it’s the way Ollie and I converse – so you, integrate so many concepts into your psyche, at a paint, it becomes difficult to just talk about them, you have to go and do it – you have to play the music.”
Searching For Funk’s Future

“Some of us real funkstas, we’ve always been here, you know?”

Los Angeles’ boogie funk sovereign Dâm-Funk is mining genii’s past for a way forward. Damon Riddick doesn’t see himself as a “bridging artist”, nor a missing link between generations. His palette of vintage synths, drum machines and expanded, bass-driven, funk jams may seem of another time, but the man behind the Dâm-Funk guise understands his work as anything but retrospective. “People sometimes talk about my work as if it’s a throwback,” he offers, pausing as if for emphasis. “I like to consider it a continuation.”

Chatting from across town in his local neighbourhood of Leimert Park, bordering South Central LA, Riddick’s logic flies in the face of much of the hype and hyperbole surrounding his expansively proportioned and equally celebrated debut album, the five-LP Toeachizown – commissioned and released by Peanut Butter Wolf’s increasingly dynamic LA alt-hip hop imprint Stones Throw in late 2009.

While fans and pundits alike have hailed the record’s distinctly 80s, synth-washed sound, complex chord structures and earnest, romantic lyrical direction as a kind of celebratory reflection on early Prince or the post-disco R&B of the BB&Q Band and Change, Riddick himself – who is best known in his hometown for his weekly Funkmosphere night in Culver City – considers his output as anything but retrospective.

“My music has a certain kind of sound, sure, but it’s the evolution of that sound,” he says. “What I’m trying to do is remind people that the sound never died. It just kind of went on hiatus, if you will.”

“Maybe some of the labels didn’t pay attention to it, or maybe it got hidden in G-funk or in some of the rap songs or samples or whatever, but some of us real funkstas, we’ve always been here, you know?” he continues. “So it’s sort of my way of saying that, you know, you can listen to other stuff like techno, trance or have hip hop thrown down your throat 24 hours a day, but there’s room for other types of urban music. That’s what I’m trying to do; I’m trying to open the door again.”

If there’s one aspect that marks today’s affable encounter, it’s the seriousness with which the quietly spoken Riddick takes his music. In fact, it’s the whole reason we’re chatting on the phone. After planning to convene at Stones Throw’s offices in Echo Park, Riddick rescheduled at the last minute to afford himself
were long, you know, listening to a lot of double.

I'm of that generation. I grew up on songs that

You don't have to be into that, but I am man.

coming up now, especially the kids, a two-minute
discovered, the world around us passes down to

these traits where, even if we haven't had them
disorder," he continues. "Even I've fallen victim to

props – but I don't do that kind of funk. I do

sophisticated funk. Teena Marie, you know what

people where I come from; it never stopped.

You see, modern funk never died with the

he urges. "I don't do retro – I do modern funk.

no laughing matter.

keytar solo), Riddick's deep funk excursions are

synth washes (not to mention the odd lengthy

City/Galactic Fun

Burgundy

is all too often viewed with a sardonic smirk.

his choice of instrumentation and aesthetic

"I always record – I never stop," he says proudly.

barely 11am and he's already done hard time.

"I actually heard it on the radio, you know?

For Riddick, the key to the record is the

human touch. It feels real and that's why I'm trying to record," he says. "Even if I do choose to use some of the more modern recording technologies, I'm still going to give it a human feel. So if I do get some new equipment, I'll still

\begin{align}
\text{Everything's just fast, fast, fast. For people coming up now, especially the kids, a two-minute track to them is pure genre. All they need is a two-minute beat and they think they're geniuses. I like to listen to things. Things were different two, maybe three minutes.
\end{align}
Sound Borders

DJ Spooky
International
by Jennifer Moses
“Sound is one of the hardest things to quantify in our culture as the dominant media of our time is visuality.”

He agrees there are pluses and minuses to not specialising – that perhaps he doesn’t get structurally deep into any one thing. “I just kind of glide on this postmodern pond of the seductive information. So I just kind of accept it and feel like a fish swimming in these ocean currents.”

Miller thanks everyone for turning out, introduces himself and others in the audience, already making links and supplying connections and begins “Welcome to the Sydney - New York, remix, here we go!” Miller has connected a diverse array of people or “36 egomaniacs” as he calls them, who present us with their ideas on sampling, digital music and culture in the 21st Century. Sound Unbound seats Brian Eno next to Maty, Chuck D next to Steve Reich and Scanner next to Daphne Koller.

“Think of it as a virtual dinner party, or maybe like one of Spencer’s ‘happenings’ getting a whole bunch of people together, naked, who would never normally be in the same room?” Sound Unbound jumps and cuts between diverse ideals from diverse voices and the main thing that connects the stories is Miller’s notion of the ‘collage aesthetic’.

Fittingly, the book Sound Unbound comes with a CD soundtrack selected, mixed, scratched, re-worked and produced by DJ Spooky. It takes classic works and words you know and repositions them to music you may also know. Miller takes a host of pieces from the Sub Rosa label, a Belgian record label which has released celebrated avant-garde artists since the 1980s. Diving into the label’s catalogue he has selected works classified by the label under “Youth’s ‘Audience’ and “Hommage a John Cage” and you’ll even hear a DJ Spooky remix of Sonic Youth’s ‘Aural Documents’. Works by Marcel Duchamp has selected works classified by the label under the ‘collage aesthetic’.

With 45 tracks there’s room for a bit of experimentation on the experimental side of the pond and you’ll even hear a DJ Spooky remix of Sonic Youth’s ‘Audience’ and ‘Hommage a John Cage’ from Niam Joon Park. “The whole thing here is that the CD is like a kind of Naray college in its own right – so you read the CD and ‘listen to the book’.”

You’re on notice here; DJ Spooky wants to...
Grandmaster Flash invented techniques to create the groove. Switching the mixer between records, extending the same fragment of music on each turntable and a mixer he could isolate the orbit of a disco ball. By using duplicate copies of the 'Backspin Technique' under the flickering lights, keeping people grooving while perfecting his York clubs in the 70s, with Grandmaster Flash brought to a wider audience in the Before Google age. Before Google age reels of heavy, bulky magnetic tape containing music could be converted to an MP3 file and downloaded to the other side of the planet in a matter of seconds.

O’Sullivan’s ‘A Non-E’ changed the hip hop music industry and required any future sampling to be cleared by original copyright owners. Keller argues copyright law needs to stop lagging behind cultural change and technology shifts in music to ‘Promote the Progress’ in the 20th Century Dadaism and its collage culture to, taking from the ideas of others and building on them, mixing them or reinterpreting them is essential to the evolution of art, science and even culture. Keller’s essay explores the current state of US copyright law in relation to music, sampling and hip hop.

With the onset of digital technology, the After Google age reaps of heavy, bulky magnetic tape containing music could be converted to an MP3 file and downloaded to the other side of the planet in a matter of seconds. Take that newly uploaded MP3 file, and software allows you to isolate snippets of songs digitally, grab them and replay them wherever you like. Keller tells his audience “because I rework samples so intensively that they become virtually unrecognisable.”

Many hip hop artists were directly affected by the landmark copyright ruling against Biz Markie, including Public Enemy. “If you look at Public Enemy’s first album ‘It’s an amazing chaos of sound and in fact you couldn’t make an album like that anymore because of copyright law,” says Miller. Public Enemy has always embraced new technology in its politically charged music and in 1999 signed to the independent, web savvy, Atomic Pop to be one of the first artists to release an MP3-only album, a format relatively unknown at the time. Public Enemy are currently using another web-based project ‘SellaBand’ to fund its upcoming album. SellaBand invites fans of artists to donate capital to help musicians fund new albums and the stogon of the company is “You Believe in the Freedom of Music.” Chuck D, Public Enemy’s lyricist, has a powerful, booming voice, the kind that makes you sit up and listen, like a believer in a pew listening to a preacher at the pulpit. A teenager growing up in Sydney’s suburbs now is just as likely to call back “Fight The Power” to Chuck D as an African American teenager would have in Brooklyn in the 80s.

With sampling in the digital age you can hold a series of sourced sounds in your hard drive and create a new composition out of bits of other people’s songs in moments, which is what experimental sound artist John Cage, an inspiration to DJ Spooky, did in the analogue era with tape. Although it took Cage a year to record and splice untold reels of tape to make his famous ‘Williams Mix’ – which at just four minutes long only just eclipses the quintessential three and a half minute pop song. But artists selling new digital compositions of found sound could be criminal according to current copyright laws. “I’ve never been sued,” Miller tells his audience “because I rework samples so intensively that they become virtually unrecognisable.”

Taking from the ideas of others and building on them, mixing them or reinterpreting them, what experimental sound artist John Cage, an inspiration to DJ Spooky, did in the analogue era with tape, makes you sit up and listen, like a believer in a pew listening to a preacher at the pulpit. A teenager growing up in Sydney’s suburbs now is just as likely to call back “Fight The Power” to Chuck D as an African American teenager would have in Brooklyn in the 80s. 

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“Just kind of glide on this postmodern pond of the seductive surface of our culture, ya know?”
of Chuck D’s vocals backed by Public Enemy’s beats that something big is going down.

Chuck D’s contribution to Sound Unbound is “These Places” – an acoustic version of the intro “I saw God” from the Album “The 'Unfinished' Side of God” and two rhymes, ‘Hip-Hop vs. Rap’ and ‘Race, Raclity and Technology’ “Rap, race and reality are mistakenly mixed up”, he says. This way Chuck D introduces the title to his final rhyme in Sound Unbound.

The written word and copyright gets a look in with Jonathan Lethem’s essay, ‘The Ecstasy of Influence: A Flagrana Mosaic’. Lethem is a New York Times best selling author and brings to Sound Unbound the idea of ‘gift economies’ and ‘cryptomnesia’. He begins with the synopsis of the MIT Press. In the Nauru contribution to the album he is out now through Quadrophonia.

“A human being and the knowledge they make mixes to your friends”.

Don’t despair if you weren’t there. You can always, like 75,000 people have since Christmas download the iPhone application and get mixing.

“Instead of just being passive and just pressing play, go home and make mixes of this and send those mixes to your friends.”

“Sound is one of the hardest things to quantify in our culture as the dominant media of our time is visually.” By witnessing the combined visual with the aural for this project we are invited to meditate on the bizarre colossal and economic history of a remote Pacific island.

“There is an update coming that will let you import your iTunes library and record your mixes, but right now you can visually beat-match music on a mobile platform - forget bringing records to a party, now it’s all about sound files and doing DJ tricks on your phone.”

Miller took a mobile recording studio to a barking dog when you remove the cover that goes from a good dog to a bad dog with a German Shepherd on the cover that is bright yellow, but removed from the case the sleeve is bright yellow! It was a complete surprise. The design style was evidently from the 90s that I had seen used many times before, commonly with the grunge movement. Unbeknownst to me did I realise that the design was produced by Stefan Sagmeister, a world famous designer and creative director in New York whose style is very cut and paste of handwritten text with ink and photographs pasted with vector graphics. Stefan had originally created this effect for his own book with a Garman Shepherd on the cover that goes from a good dog to a barking dog when you remove the case.

Lou Reed - Set The Twilight Reeling [1996]

Lou Reed needs no introduction; you like him or you don’t. He’s laid back and just downright cool to listen to, one that gets love from time to time and this album is one of my favourites. This is a later album recorded in 1996 that I found at Sydney’s Glebe markets, second hand for $10, and it jump ed out at me because of its deep blue plastic CD case. The case acted as a UV screen which made yellow only showing Lou’s dark face through the cover but when

Sleeve Reviews

by Dave Fernandes

Sleeve Reviews

with the blood-like liquid texture: so vibrant. There’s nothing that what the photograph is of, but you get the feeling quite well.

Quadrophonia - Quadrophonia [1991]

I can pin down when this record came out. It was ‘tastefully’ to my older brother and I remember when he played it to me. Even though I didn’t know the context of which dance music was played in, it still sent me a little bonkers with its grand enchanting sound, produced by Dutch men Oliver Alblas and Lucas Froot. It was released when many 80s to early 90s Italian and Chicago dance records sported computer aided hypertextually designed sleeves using basic shapes and patterns, solid colours with lots of type out of standard computer fonts. This is a change design style I have seen reverberating again in a more modern way, using 3D graphics, more
If I had drunk a bottle of bourbon, greased my hair and was on my way to get a peacock tattoo, I’d be listening to this. Soma recordings released this compilation series as a spin-off to the Sci-Fi Hi-Fi techno series. Andrew had the privilege of creating Volume 1 and produced an all rockabilly, 50s and 60s rock’n’roll mix which were influences to him as a producer of his band The Law Lone Swordsmen. The sleeve illustrations were produced by Crimpton Fury & The Headless Truth with Andrew’s direction described as a “B-movie sci-fi crossed with the sin and sleaze paperbacks of the 50s and 60s”. I have played this CD on every road trip since I first owned it. It’s a very raw but yet fun feel, very different on the ears after hours of techno.

Andrew Weatherall - Sci-Fi Lo-Fi [2007]

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Four Tet - Ringer [2008]

I found this LP about a year ago, even though it had been out for a while. Four Tet’s “performances” were becoming more and more apparent to me as sound art. He’s more a sound designer than anything else, even though he has many 4/4 beat tracks and is played widely by DJs all over the world. His sounds are very loose and looped, dreamlike and light-footed, each being in their own atmosphere.

The design was by Matthew Cooper and Jason Evans (who has photographed Herbert & Franz Ferdinand among many). This particular sleeve comes on a grey and rough textured stock with black-and-white photography of circles and lines, what looks to be a cross between a paper cut-out and a close up of cells in a lab. As simple and layered as the art is, so are the sounds contained on the record, again finding it a great representation of the sound. Four Tet - Ringer [2008]

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Grace Jones - Nightclubbing [1981]

It’s no surprise really that Grace Jones is wearing (and as stated on the sleeve) a ‘Jacket Giorgio Armani’ and ‘Painting by Jean Paul Goude’, a French graphic designer and illustrator born in 1940. I found this record in Reno on my way to Burning Man in 2008 and has some real solid tracks that always get a few people nodding, including ‘Pull Up To The Bumper’, ‘Nightclubbing’ and a cover of Bill Withers’ ‘Use Me’. Admittedly I’m not much of a fan of Jean Paul Goude, but the designs produced for Grace are pretty damn cool. I’ll give him that.

Grace Jones - Nightclubbing [1981]

All this week on the BBC radio 1 show “Art of the Mix”, as a part of the BBC’s “Underworld Vs The Misters” series, I had joined Matt público from the BBC’s 1Xtra show, for an Underworld special. The idea was to bring together tracks from ALICIA COITRANE to MANHATTAN ORCHESTRA to DETROIT EXPERIMENT to MODOYMAN to SOFT WALKER TO RICKY MUSIC. Also included in an exclusive track from BRIAN ENO and KARL HYLDE. Inspired by their sessions at the LUMINOUS FESTIVAL in Sydney, 2009.

3D Worlds / Trespass / Tens of Arrows / JUE MUNA THE WORDS “slick, sophisticated and genetically rather greasy.”
These are some of my most sentimental or favourite records listed in order of when they came into my life. After reading back stories I sometimes neglect to really describe the records or the music thereon bonding itself to your memories. In these stories I sometimes neglect to really describe the records or the music thereon bonding itself to your memories.

As silly as this might sound, INXS were my first record. My first record. Olympic fervour was abound so please take my advice and have a listen. It's the first record. It seemed the world was starting to unravel piece by piece. First in the early 90s I was performing the track ‘Pumping Ugly Muscle’ at Ashwood’s which made me blush, spitting obscenities into a monkeys face to “let me the fuck go”. And he did by hurling me down the fire exit stairs where more security bounced me out of the door. Although I had just seen the previous show in the country that was to become the most memorable. Good friends unwavering ja combination of Phlegm and the Mu Mesons were playing their opening support set when the Metro’s house soundturd took it upon himself to close the band early bringing down the lush velvet curtains on the band mid-set. Mark Harwood and I took extreme offence at this blasphemy and decided with just a simple look at each other we had to make it right. Rushing either side of the stage we pulled the curtains back as the band kept playing. At one point we punched 12” it was my Neighbours moment, for his service to the country. It’s my dream to give him the Order of Australia medal or something for his service to the country. My dream to give him the Order of Australia medal or something for his service to the country. My dream to give him the Order of Australia medal or something for his service to the country. My dream to give him the Order of Australia medal or something for his service to the country.

I finally found a café willing to let me use their scissors and I quickly removed my hair and I quickly removed my hair and I quickly removed my hair and I quickly removed my hair. And I was dragged to the door while screaming back as the band kept playing. I finally found a café willing to let me use their scissors and I quickly removed my hair and I quickly removed my hair and I quickly removed my hair. And I was dragged to the door while screaming back as the band kept playing.

As early as seven, I was already dreaming about being a rock musician. I was a shy child and didn’t teach me anything was possible, I’d give up. I finally found a café willing to let me use their scissors and I quickly removed my hair and I quickly removed my hair and I quickly removed my hair. And I was dragged to the door while screaming back as the band kept playing.

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creative efforts of amateur lyricists and the song sharks who prey on their ambition to break into the music business, or something like that. Under the guise of a co-writing ‘partnership’, accompanying music would be hastily arranged to basically any lyrics sent in - for a fee! ‘Peace and Love’ better known as ‘Blind Man’s Penis’ is a great example of song/poem shark Ramsey Kearney’s ability to spot a great song, sincerely choosing only the best lyricists to work with! These obscure recordings were pressed in small quantities and would normally be lost forever; I guess a lot of it is lost. Luckily for us, song/poem collectors like Tom Ardolino and Don Bolles (who first indoctrinated me into the world of song poems) have spent countless hours searching through record bins for these artefacts. We have them and other hunters to thank for the MSR (named after one of the strong arms in the industry) madness series of compilations on Carnage Press, which are the quintessential collections of the genre.

These albums separated the obviously awful from the gloriously unique tracks so we wouldn’t have to. Digging out the gems of unbelievable madness that results when you pit the naivety of aspiring song writers from across North America with bored overworked sweatshop musicians. Popular themes for songs would be politics, fads, religion and possibly the most overly repeated theme of Christmas (enough for its own compilation, Is Santa Really Six Foot Four?) and then you have the unimaginable tracks like ‘Human Breakdown of Absurdity’ & ‘All you Need is a Fertile Mind’, an anti-porno ballad about wanting! Incredibly I discovered these companies still exist to this day and I’m now working on a series of singles titled ‘Lyrics To De Rock Hits That Didn’t Travel Well As Reinterpreted By American Song/Poem Companies’. I’ve got some dude in LA right now writing music to ‘The Radiators’ ‘Gimme Head’!

Bill Orcutt - A New Way To Pay Old Debts [2009]

After Harry Pussy split up in 1997 after an apparent relationship breakdown between Drummer Adris Hoyos and Guitarist Bill Orcutt, Bill was so heartbroken that he didn’t play live or record music for 13 years. Well at least that’s the lowdown I was given at last years Colour out of Space festival in Brighton’s before I had the good fortune to witness his magnificent return to the stage alongside drummer Paul Hession.

Orcutt’s blistering atonal 4 string guitar twang swarmed like a fine August day in New Orleans over Hession’s showy improv polyrhythms. As much as I enjoyed the set, my ears were totally focussed on Orcutt and if I could have had it my way he would have performed alone that evening.

Later as I was squeezing my way through the crowd en route to the pub to drink my sorrows away, my set at the festival was awful, equipment failing me spectacularly a hand reached out to mine. It was Orcutt wanting to congratulate (or maybe commiserate) me on my set, casually handing me a copy of A New Way To Pay Old Debts. I thanked him for his show and gave him Rice Corpse in return, before a stream of others vying for his attention forced our brief meeting to a close.

Once at the pub, Mark Harwood, (who for some reason keeps popping up in these stories) snatchesthe record from my hand exclaiming “How did I get this?” - apparently Orcutt refused to sell him a copy earlier as he only had a few copies left - before rigorously demanding I give him my copy as he’s an archivist record collector and I’m an irreverent nomad who couldn’t possibly understand such a treasure. I almost gave in to his begging, so desparately wanted the record, and in a way he was right as I have tons of unlistened to gifts piling up at Dualplover HQ. But this wasn’t an ordinary trade, the sincerity in the way he offered me the record without thought was endearing, and coupled with the new found fact that he could have sold all his last copies easily made our interaction all the more special and my sentimental side took over.

As I write this with Bills almost-country noise blues trailing out from my speakers I’m fucking well glad it did.

Lucas Abela is curating the monthly Auraltered States performances, showcasing weird and unusual NSW acts throughout 2010. Check dualplover.blogspot.com for details.