

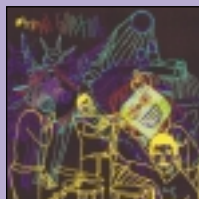


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issue #6

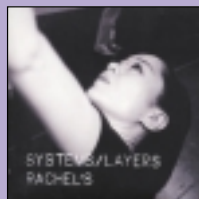
cyclic  
DEFROST

# fresh music for tired ears...



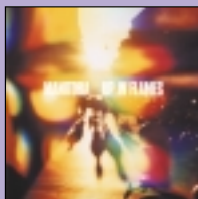
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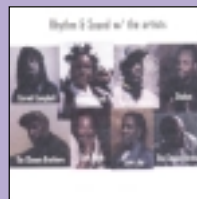
## Manitoba Up In Flames (Special Edition)

(Leaf)  
Manitoba's genre-busting, wide-eyed masterpiece is now repackaged in a slipcase with 8 track bonus disc including B-sides, unreleased tracks and two video clips.



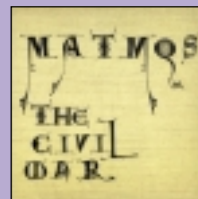
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TTT's debut on Morr Music is a non-purist vision of perpetual grooves. Combining classic jazz arrangements, the cavernous rhythm structures of dub and the sophistication of modern electronics.



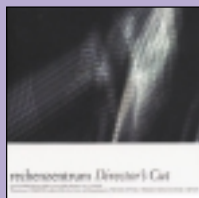
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(Burial Mix)  
A collection from the Berlin-based electronic dub/reggae production team's collaborations. Includes Cornell Campbell, Tikiman, Love Joy, Jah Batta, Shalom. Also available: The Versions.



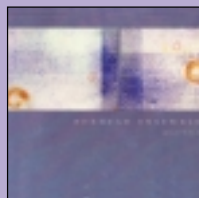
## Matmos The Civil War

(Matador)  
An amazing, hallucinatory album fusing cut and paste electronics, medieval English folk music and 19th century Americana. Guests include Radar Bros., Hrvatski, David Grubbs and Blevin Blectum.



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(Mille Plateaux)  
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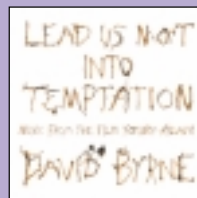
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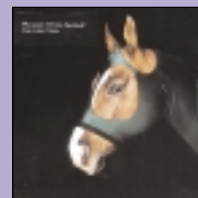
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(International DJ Gigolos)  
Ex-Mo Wax artists release a killer, expectation-confounding debut album. Pulsing electronic funk, lush pastoral pop and cinematic disco. Guests include James Yorkston and Siobhan Fahey.



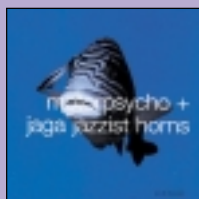
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Superb score by Talking Heads legend for cult Scottish film. Sweeping orchestrations and post-rock soundscapes made with members of Mogwai, Belle & Sebastian, Reindeer Section and Delgados.



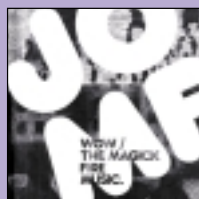
## Pluramon Dreams Top Rock

(Karaoke Kalk)  
Incredible new album from Pluramon, featuring Twin Peaks chanteuse Julee Cruise. Dreamy pop songs with a powerful wall of sound quality, drenched in ethereal electronic stylings.



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## Triosk meets Jan Jelinek 1+3+1

(-scape)  
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# CYCLIC DEFROST



## ISSUE 6 CONTENTS

- 4 **TÉCHA NOBLE**  
by Bim Ricketson
- 8 **ROBOKONEKO**  
by Angela Stengel
- 10 **DARK NETWORK**  
by Glen Martin
- 12 **JOHN CHANTLER/  
INVENTING ZERO RECORDS**  
by Melinda Taylor
- 14 **QUA**  
by Bob Baker Fish
- 16 **SONIC ALLSORTS  
COMPILATION**
- 18 **8-BIT/THE CALCULATORS**  
by Vaughan Healy
- 20 **REVIEWS**
- 30 **SLEEVE REVIEWS**  
by Alex Crowfoot
- 32 **SELECTS: HERMITUDE**  
by Sebastian Chan
- 34 **DEAR DEGRASSI**

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- ▶ Music downloads of  
featured artists

## ISSUE 6 EXCLUSIVE WEB CONTENT

Additional reviews  
Exclusive on-line giveaways  
MP3s of selected artists

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.



# EDITORIAL

So here it is... Issue #6. It's a bit of a milestone for us, as according to the original Australia Council grant this marked the last of six bi-monthly issues; the culmination of a year. But as you know, things changed, deadlines were blown out by opportunities, and *Cyclic Defrost* ended up not only travelling around Australia, but visiting overseas. Now we have finally completed what we'd set out to do and more – back before Issue #1 we promised to do a Sydney-wide magazine of 1000 copies only, but by the time we hit the streets we were already national and printing three times that amount. In some ways, Dale and I were looking forward to a break – *Cyclic* would be over, our weekly club night Frigid has closed down after seven years, and for Dale The Herd's touring stopped for two months. But like I said, things change.

Onwards to the future – we've decided to continue on with *Cyclic*. Our crew of writers is growing and there are more and more artists, producers and labels that we want to cover. To end it now would be senseless. But that means that now more than ever we need your support. If you're an artist or run a label, think about advertising – we've set up this magazine to be a space for independent artists and labels to affordably advertise their releases and events, and we feel strongly about keeping

*Cyclic Defrost* free-of-charge so that new people can find out about new music. And if you are just an interested reader, make contact with us – because you're the other reason why we continue.

On to more pressing topics, this issue's rather demented cover comes from Sydney artist Técha Noble, whose mixed media works are currently on show at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney, and who moonlights as a member of the infamous The Kingpins. Behind the cover you'll find a CD – you've probably already pulled out and tried to read the tracklisting. The CD is part of the Noise Festival and is a joint venture between Noise and SBS Radio Alchemy, and *Cyclic Defrost* has provided the means of distribution. Whilst you are listening to it, sit back and read the interviews with Melbourne producers Qua and Adam Fisher AKA 8-Bit, Canberra/Sydney duo Dark Network, Brisbane via Japan artist John Chantler, and Sydney's Robokoneko.

So what happens next? Luckily for you the next *Cyclic Defrost* is due in February, and will feature the same informed, interesting and incendiary content, with the added bonus of yet another free cover CD.

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# THE KINGPIN AND I

## Cover Designer

Interview with Técha Noble  
by Bim Ricketson

When Técha Noble bundles into my living room one Friday evening, I'm very soon left feeling exhausted in her presence. Racing from her day job as an illustrator to the Primavera exhibition at the MCA, and on her way to dance class, Técha had just received a hefty fine for speaking on her mobile whilst driving – but for someone with this much on her CV it's hardly surprising. Técha is an illustrator and designer for Mambo by day and member of the hilarious drag/performance art act The Kingpins and artist by night. She is preparing to tour a show around Asia and curate another at the ACMI in Melbourne. No wonder the girl was caught talking while driving – she has lots to organize and plenty to talk about!

Técha moved into the now defunct Surry Hills warehouse gallery Imperial Slacks in her final year of study, modestly attributing any present successes to the time spent living there. 'It wasn't all love and roses but still worth every stranger on the couch, every cockroach, every biff we had with the landlord ... the Imperial Slacks space started in 1998, motivated by Michael Schiavello and Léa Donnan, two College of Fine Arts students. Back then it was called Herringbone Gallery, named after the wooden struts in the roof, which were stitched together in a Herringbone pattern. This original name also paid homage to the building's original purpose as a clothing warehouse. Their intention was to open an artist-run space that provided decent gallery rental for emerging artists, forging a link to more established practitioners. It came in the

wake of the closure of some significant artist-run galleries, including Pendulum that Léa had been involved in. To be able to rent the whole warehouse floor and keep the gallery afloat and affordable for artists wanting to exhibit, they built the gallery in the middle of the space whilst live-in studios skirted the periphery. Originally there were four residents in the complex and over the five years it doubled to eight when we combined an east wing.'

Técha continues; 'I moved in during my last year of art school in the late 90s, a little apprehensive about living with eight people, but ended up loving almost every minute of it. During the golden years, the Projectroom was operating downstairs, with some of the people from Sydney DJ crew Sub Bass Snarl, electronic act Cindi (which subsequently spawned

Disco), JuJu Space Jazz and video artists Tesseract living and/or working down there. At the risk of sounding ridiculously nostalgic and woefully sentimental, it was an eventful era.

'After two and a half years of the Herringbone gallery residency, the artists involved and their partners had formed a tight-knit collective and wanted the gallery space to continue. In 2000 we re-launched the space as Imperial Slacks. We developed a very focussed curatorial program as well as trying to keep democratic and accessible for all artists to apply to use the space. The thirteen or so artists involved in the collective were from very different disciplines – sculpture and installation, performance, sound, video, painting – and this made for a pretty varied program. We also had Impermanent Audio every month, curated by Caleb K, which provided an interesting live performance and experimental sound element. I remember when he hosted this amazing guy from Spain who gave this wild performance which consumed the entire space in the sound of fire. It was so loud and intense that even when he was yelling at the top of his voice in his audio crescendo, we could barely hear it... that was definitely my favourite.

'Overall the gallery attracted a mostly warm and lovely crowd and we really felt we were contributing to a significant, exciting visual arts scene. The cross



fertilization of ideas, support network, sharing of tech gear and manual resources was what made it beneficial to our practices... plus the parties of course! Our most infamous and biggest breach of fire hazard regulations was a three level extravaganza that brought in a cast of thousands. I still meet people who tell me stories of their experiences on that auspicious night at our place.'

But during the same period Surry Hills was rapidly changing. Rents were rising, forcing out much of the younger artists and dodgy characters that gave the suburb life. Técha explains; 'over five years we saw a shift in Surry Hills to a more latte living Longrain (an expensive Asian restaurant/bar) lifestyle. Our particular building had once been filled with artists, digital wizards, bums and musicians and progressed into its current function of housing one of Australia's biggest casting agencies, Icon Films, major PR companies and a designer furniture warehouse. We were gradually feeling more out of place as we passed the likes of well groomed Miranda, Toni and 'our Nic' on the stairs, whilst taking out the rubbish in our PJs. At times it felt like Slacks was the last bastion of an old guard but the battle became exhausting, as did running a space that had another opening and install every three weeks. And the regular sound and performance nights and video art publications. By the time the rent was raised it was time to move on.'

'The final show we had, to celebrate the space, was called Slacking Off and included many of the artists who had been involved and exhibited over the years. We took out the entire warehouse floor and had installations in every room. It was quite an experience. We got a write-up in the paper that stated "tell your grandchildren you were there". That felt pretty special. It was a good send off to a special place that had been such a momentous time in our lives. It's now been a year since its close and it's still not been rented out.'

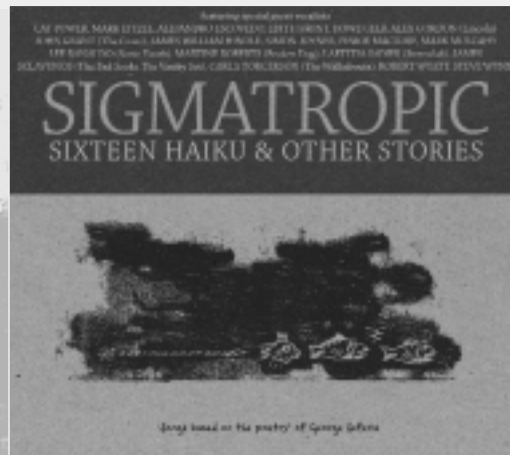
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## THE KINGPINS

It was during the Slacks period that Técha formed ‘death metal meets electro pop’ drag act / performance art group The Kingpins. As a vehicle for social and gender commentary, Kingpins are as politically incisive as they are funny and booty shaking. Técha explains, ‘When I was living with the other Kingpins members – Angelica Mesiti, and sisters Emma and Katie Price – we used to attend a club night called DKSY (Drag King Sydney) at Arq nightclub. We fancied ourselves as likely contenders for the major competition and entered our first heat with a bootylicious rendition of LL Cool J’s ‘I’m That Type of Guy’. A Guns & Roses metal extravaganza followed for the semi finals – Emma stage dived and spat beer on the audience! I got to be Axl and do the snake dance. We then went on to win the finals with Bodycount (‘Evil Dick’) and remixed with 2 Live Crew (‘Get The Fuck Out My House Bitch’) and NWA (‘World’s Biggest Dick’).

‘The name The Kingpins suggests a certain amount of bravado, which sometimes feels odd in the context of the visual arts. We became interested in the ideas that drag put forward in relation to art making. And the collage of constructed characters and sound and how that related back to media culture’s influence. So we have continued our little collaboration and brought it back to the visual arts by way of video art. We have found drag a powerful vehicle for exploring ideas of urban landscape and Aussie culture.’

Now crossing media platforms of sound and live performance, The Kingpins also embrace design and video as visual art tools. ‘Presently it is my love for music and its history that I feed back into the art direction for the Kingpins collaborative work. Old record covers are the best resource for layout and typography – Twisted Sister, Midnight Oil, Bay City Rollers, Betty Davis, David Bowie, Fleetwood Mac, Aerosmith, Ice T, Norwegian death metal – The Kingpins collect it all. Our costuming, gesture, characters, location for shoots are all drawn from music history. A lot of our production stills emulate album covers. We chuck it all in the blender and come up with our own re-inventions. This then flows on to the design and illustration for our DVD, CD Roms, badges and posters. For our recent work I’ve tried to



focus on less literal reference to music history and focus more on illustrating our own audio narrative. The main graphic elements within the Museum Of Contemporary Art exhibition Primavera is a vinyl decal that is the *Welcome to the Jingle* logo that looms either side of the video installation – shiny black vinyl on a matt black wall. It is a twist on the green, white and black Starbucks logo that contains a mermaid on the inside. We flipped it by replacing the mermaid with the head of a death metal wrestler – a comical attempt at suggesting the underbelly of an evil corporation. For the accompanying music we treated it like a [post modern mashup] soundtrack, almost like a ‘Bohemian Rhapsody’ technique, where it jumps from one genre to another. We chose the electro pop sound as it sat well with the ideas relating to *Welcome to the Jingle*. The work talks about homogenization of the city and corporate marketing and we wanted a catchy jingle-esque experience. Dylan Martin from Sydney production duo The Coven then mixed in elements of Jean Michel Jarre’s Oxygene. This almost twisted the track into a trancy sound, which was a little scary, but amusing at the same time.’

## OTHER WORK

The commercial nature of Técha’s other work as an illustrator differs from her art, driven as it is by client’s needs. ‘My own work differs from my commercial stuff primarily because it’s not to a brief,’ Técha explains, ‘With Mambo for example, I have to consider what’s going to look good on a garment. Mambo’s culture is based in humour and irony, visual devices and quirks. Working with Sally McDonald, head womenswear designer, is inspiring; she’s very clever. That’s certainly the most fun commercial stuff.’

She also contributes to the seminal *Geek Girl* magazine, providing illustrations for interviews. ‘I had always been a fan of the grrrl webzine and print mag; they were quite revolutionary at the peak of IT theory and the cyberspace boom. *Geek Girl* has been operating since the early 90s – I got involved whilst I was at Slacks, through Laura Jordan, who had done lots of collaborations with *Geek Girl*. Its purpose has evolved, but it is pretty content driven. Rosie X (*Geek Girl* originator and seminal Australian cyberculture thinker and activist) has always been interested in theories of gender and anarchy and used *Geek Girl* as a vehicle for subversion and conversation. She published really interesting interviews with people like Hakim Bey to my illustrations. I still regard Rosie X as my fairy godmother. She has done a lot for me and we are good mates.’

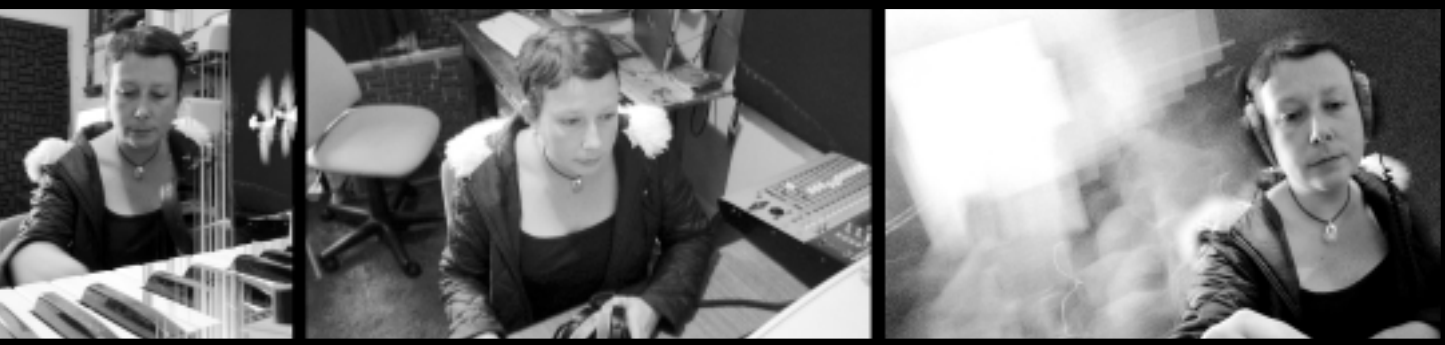
## THE CYCLIC COVER

‘I’d like to think that my own work is coming from personal influences and has the freedom of experimentation’ describes Técha, ‘I try to produce images that are more ambiguous and abstract in concept rather than executing something in a really literal way; that the illustration gives a suggestion of a story or situation and might be a bit disturbing or bordering on something disconcerting.’

A case in point is this issue’s cover illustration ‘My major inspiration is Osamu Tezuka, the Japanese artists who created Astro Boy,’ explains Técha, ‘I am particularly interested in a character he created called Princess Night, essentially a drag King, who is forced to parade as a prince in order to keep her kingdom. I’ve also tried to give the impression of a wacked out soft drink ad. Tezuka was a prolific visionary with a wild imagination.’ No wonder she’s a fan.

For more on Técha Noble and The Kingpins  
[see cyclidefrost.com](http://see.cyclidefrost.com)





# + THE REAL LOUNGE MUSIC

## Robokoneko

Interview with Melinda Taylor

by Angela Stengel

Before its recent demise Melinda Taylor could often be seen standing at the back of the Hopetoun during Frigid selling CDs imported by Couchblip!. The label was founded by her, Luke Killen (Disjunction Reunion) and Jim Dodd (Blooq) in 2000. She is probably better known as Robokoneko and has recently released her first album, *Anembo*. All this from a girl who, as a child, spent a lot of time looking up at the stars. 'I did a PhD in Astronomy,' says Melinda. 'I got a job there as a research assistant but now I administer the computers which I enjoy more. At high school I decided that I wanted to do astronomy but I don't really know why. I didn't have childhood dreams of being an astronaut because I knew I couldn't as I wasn't American and I wouldn't want to land in a Russian space ship.'

Her childhood has inadvertently influenced a few things in her life. 'The name *Anembo* is the street where I grew up. In all the years that I lived there I didn't know what it meant. I didn't realise that the streets I grew up around were all Aboriginal words. I started looking them up and found out that *Anembo* meant 'a quiet place' which I thought was very appropriate for my album and the style of music that I do. It was bizarre that these things that I never thought about as a kid can have relevance to what I'm doing now.'

What she is already doing now, after the release of *Anembo*, is focusing on creating more music. 'I'm starting anew since releasing *Anembo* because this is the result of a couple of years work. Most of these have already been moved off the hard drive to make room for new stuff. The album was a long time coming as it was meant to be released in November last year, but I have added three songs since then. I think it's worth

waiting to release something you're happy with even if it takes three years, than to just release it straight away.'

The hardest task of all when creating an album appears to be deciding on the artwork and naming the tracks. 'I often think all of those beautiful astronomy images would be lovely to use on an album cover, but to me it's so corny and everyone at work would cringe. Or if you call song names after constellations and stuff they all sound really nice but it would just make me cringe. Choosing track names is actually a hard thing to do. When I need to save that's when I need to find a name for it. If I call it "temp" I'm never going to remember which is which. Most of the track names from the album are their original titles. I sit there thinking "what can it be..? I really need to save just in case the machine crashes". I like to pick up a book that's nearby and flick through it, take a couple of words out of context but sometimes it's a little obvious where I got the name from. Satsuma is

one I changed for the release. It was originally called a non-word which I made up. It started with the letter 'S' so I had to call it something really that started with 'S' so I went to my thesaurus and started reading. As you can see I got as far as 'SA'. Satsuma is just a tangerine but I thought it was a nice name.'

Melinda set out to discover how to make electronic music after being introduced to it at raves. 'I didn't actually meet many people who were making music at the raves; it was just from the artists that I heard at the raves which inspired me to find out more about their music and the way it was created. Artists like Aphex Twin, which is a cliché but y'know, he's one of the people who inspired me to start making electronic music. I began by ordering a Turtle Beach sound card, waited four months for it to come into the store, put it in my computer and started making music... it must've been 1997 or maybe earlier.

'The record label was an idea between the



three of us – Jim, Luke and myself. We just thought that there was nowhere in Sydney really releasing the music we were making or interested in, so we thought it'd be a good project to start. At the time there was Clan Analogue and elephant traks in Sydney, Surgery Records in Adelaide, but I didn't know of them at that time. The distribution work started when someone from overseas asked if I would be interested in setting up a distribution company in Australia. I thought about it for probably three months before I agreed to do it. Now I really enjoy it because I get exposed to so much new music and you meet so many nice people overseas. The only problem is that there is too much email to write. In fact, the hardest task is getting it out there and convincing record stores that even though they haven't heard of this label their customers are going to love it. There is a core group of stores throughout Australia that are very supportive of the music we are distributing. A lot of the labels we distribute are small labels and some are a bit more well known like Hefty (from Chicago), but still there's a

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I...found out that Anembo meant 'a quiet place', which I though was very appropriate for my album and the style of music that I do.

very small percentage of people who have heard of it. That is changing though . I don't really listen so much in record stores anymore because I have so much music in my lounge room that I don't get to listen to enough. We get so many people just wanting distribution in Australia. I think a lot of them don't even realise what a small market it is anyway. If it's a European based label they should really be heading to the US and Japan first and leave Australia until last. As far as we're concerned as a label, we do the majority of sales in the UK and Japan at the moment. I'm sure it's the same for most other independent electron-ic labels... As a label we get sent a range of music – some from people who have just done their first demo and sent it off, alongside some really well produced stuff. We've got some really interesting demos recently from Russia. There's a Sydney artist who's been regularly sending us demos and just from those sequential CDs we have heard his music production progress and change, his techniques for producing music are amazing so we think he's going to bring out something that we'll want to release soon.'

Playing a major role in a record label and distributor can have some good connections for one's own music as Melinda has discovered. 'I had a little pre-release on a Japanese label called Electric Avenue. The label connection was a guy who used to work for Rough Trade in Japan. He contacted me about getting our label stocked for Rough Trade in Japan and ever since then we've had a working relationship. Having the label does help to get contacts for my own music.'

Couchblip! are now being distributed in Japan by Plop. 'They do a pre-order system where they send out samples to all the shops to get pre-orders. I just got so many pre-orders for my CD that I can only presume it was because I've got a Japanese sounding name. That was quite bizarre.' Robokoneko is Japanese for robotic kitten and Melinda chose the name based on a project of the same name. 'I don't think the original Robokoneko project is really in operation anymore. It was supposed to be like the Sony dog but a lot smarter, it was meant to grow and evolve, its artificial brain was going to have over a billion modules in its neural network. They never built the hardware version but I think it still exists as a virtual 3D model and I've noticed the artificial brain software is still being used by other research groups.'

For more go to [www.cyclicdefrost.com](http://www.cyclicdefrost.com).

Robokoneko's album Anembo – Music for a Quiet Place is out now on Couchblip! They can be found at [www.couchblip.com](http://www.couchblip.com).

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## Dark Network

Interview with Bo Daley  
by Glen Martin

# + LATE, SET AND MATCH

In local electro legend there dwells a collection of stories concerning a minimalist analogue microhouse/kraftwerkian groove duo called Dark Network, and how they've relentlessly avoided their time in the sun. Forming in Canberra during the city's golden early-to-mid-nineties period of Clan Analogue-generated underground excitement, stories circulate of the act's somewhat lax application of their considerable talents to disc, and their aversion to playing by the unwritten rules of performance – indeed, one gig go-er recalls a story of arriving at a headline show and finding Bo Daley outside the venue, a DAT playing inside on an otherwise empty stage. Though they live in different cities now (Tim O'Loughlin, Dark Network's other half resides in Melbourne, while Bo calls Sydney home) their official debut LP *Late Set* has finally dropped, and it's fair to say that though the wait has been long, the record makes up for lost time.

When I say official debut, this hints at the existence of the LP circulating on Blatant Propaganda records, a record the duo recorded in Canberra during the late 90s. Something of a lost gem (though certainly more club friendly and a little less focussed than the new LP), rumours of its ditching circulate: perhaps the boys weren't happy with Clan Analogue's association with Festival Mushroom records? Or maybe they couldn't decide on a cover? As Bo tells it, the truth is somewhat more prosaic. 'I could tell you the story about how the master was stolen by an evil record executive who proceeded to lose it en-route to Barbados, but the truth is that we kinda ran out of steam sometime towards the end of the CD production process. Making a CD takes so goddamn long these days (especially for people who operate at the snail's pace that we do). So by the time we got through the recording and mastering stages and up to the release stage we'd already recorded another 5 CDs of material that we liked better! Really the best thing for it was to leave it to those Blatant Propaganda types to pick up the pieces several years later.'

*Late Set's* birth was also somewhat drawn out, though it goes some way to explaining the

strength of the record, its intimacy and avoidance of formula. The CD is a combination of live recordings and late-night sessions in makeshift studios in Sydney and Melbourne (wherever they happened to be at the time). The tracks were all done in a single take, direct to tape, with little or no planning, except to the extent that we wanted to give the album a rough and improvised live sound. Most of the tracks are excerpts of much longer pieces recorded in front of audiences in places like Klub Kooky in Sydney and Pony in Melbourne. On that sense of intimacy, the softening of their formerly Kraftwerkian feel and who is in control of what, Bo is characteristically modest. 'I think it's fair to say that the machines are the ones making the music – the human element is really restricted to a technical dimension (moving heavy objects, attaching cables, pressing buttons, adjusting levels, creating patterns, organising sounds). What sounds like 'humanity' or 'warmth' is really just the imprecision of the analogue circuitry we use. OK, so I read that in 'I Was a Robot', but it certainly does seem to apply to Dark Network too.'

Outside of the tunes, Bo and Tim are active in the Clan collective (Bo acting as executive pro-

ducer on the latest Clan comp 'Defocus'), and have an 'alleged' history in event promotion, beginning with the Panopticon forest parties of the mid 1990s near Canberra. On the subject of these events, their organic beginnings and the energy they require, Bo says 'I do think there's always going to be a place for events that take place outside the mainstream and on the fringes of legality. The "legitimate" music business is set up to exclude the interesting end of the cultural spectrum, so the best way to put on an event will always be to make it strictly non-commercial. That means not charging for entry, not selling anything to the audience and making use of whatever public space presents itself. In Canberra there are lots of public spaces that can be appropriated and turned into venues for interesting events. In Sydney there are still a few places hidden around the suburbs. In Melbourne there are vast areas of public infrastructure where low-scale events can take place. Of course we can't confirm or deny whether we know anything about any of these events.' Similarly, on the topic of major label electro versus its indie heartland, it's clear what side the lads are on- 'I do remember a time when it was looking alarmingly

like electronic music was going to replace indie rock on the Austereo Network, but I'm glad to say that never happened. At least now they've moved back to RnB and 80s rock where they belong, and the rest of us no longer have to worry about how many radio-friendly singles we have on the album. (hey, our tracks are so goddamn long that we can only just barely fit 6 extenuated filler tracks on our albums. There's no room for radio-friendly singles!)

In terms of independent electro, Clan Analogue figures large in both the history and the present of the Australian contingent, both as a label and perhaps more importantly as a support collective. After a dalliance with Festival/Mushroom acting as the distributors of Clan work, the label is back in the hands of the Creative Vibes distro folk. 'At the moment the Clan is going through a process of re-thinking where it's placed in the oz electronic music/art world. I mean, there was a time when Clan was the only really organised group standing up to rampant commercialism in electronic music in this country, and it had a real mission because of this. Now I think the Clan has more of a role in providing avenues for diverse and eclectic events, releases and other projects (there are lots of interesting projects in the pipeline and hopefully some of them will come off!). Festival never really treated Clan Analogue as a commercial proposition, so it was kinda like being in an indie framework anyway. Different distributors bring different things to the

process, but suffice it to say that our current distro partners have helped us a lot to get even our more niche-oriented material out to stores and to get the label side of Clan organised more like a professional outfit. They take a real interest in our material and that can only be a good thing for the label.'

Clan is now poised nicely after some of the label's strongest releases dropping recently: the Habitat and Defocus compilations, plus Pretty Boy Crossover's outstanding *Any Number Can Play* EP of last year. The *Defocus* sub-title of Lo Res Productions articulates the project's modus operandi – tracks produced primarily with analogue equipment, creating a warm, scratchy and human listening experience. 'Defocus follows on nicely from *Habitat* and *Any Number Can Play* – it has the diversity and atmospherics of *Habitat* but it also occasionally adds in a few of those beats that the kids get into these days.'

As for the inevitable final word on the future, the topic of Bo-based side projects come into frame, plus some ambitions on an altogether more visceral scale. 'Clone is kinda like a cover-all banner for a range of projects with wacky names like type\_face, Terry Nation and Sirkus of Sorts, all composed of myself and Kate Crawford (she of b(if)tek fame). The more observant readers will already have noticed that there's a Terry Nation track on the *Defocus* compilation. And Terry Nation has a full-length album due out early next year, just after the rush of Michael Jackson Christmas retrospective box sets

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'By the time we got through the recording and mastering stages and up to the release stage we'd already recorded another 5 CDs of material that we liked better!'

are out of the way. As for Dark Network, we've certainly been thinking about sending ourselves back in time a couple of decades and reconstituting the act as a Scientist/Prince Jammy dub tribute band. Maybe (the adult film houses of) Fyshwick are just the place to do it. More reggae makeout tunes please.'

For more on Dark Network go to [www.cyclicdefrost.com](http://www.cyclicdefrost.com)  
The Late Set is out now on Clan Analogue

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## + ZERO TOLERANCE

John Chantler

by Melinda Taylor

Originally from Brisbane, John Chantler has resided in Japan for the past two years teaching English, creating music and running a record label. Having visited Japan at the tender age of 14 he always wanted to return and just 'live it'. To this end Chantler has spent the last two years creating an album that reflected the pace and temperament of his locality – a small rural town of less than 10,000 people – and the result is the dreamlike *Monoke*.

'*Monoke* was made entirely in my apartment in Japan with the exception of some guitar on parts of 'Plastic' – which were recorded at my parent's house on Stradbroke Island while I was back here last year for a short tour and visit home'. Throughout the 8 tracks on *Monoke* John blends and fuses his post rock acoustics with environmental sounds and electronics in a way that is subtle, soothing and harmonious, an achievement few people attain when melding such potentially disparate sounds. I asked John how he achieves this sonic dreamscape, 'There is no set process beyond playing the instrument over what I'd already done and recording it – subjecting it to the same processes as other parts. *Monoke* has lots of actual "live takes" on it, whether it's acoustic instruments or it's from my SH101 or bass – often these live takes are layered over themselves, edited, stretched and pitch-shifted. All of the melodica in 'play.play' is played live – there are probably a couple of takes going on – and then it's got an automated EQ and distortion on it. There are also some bass harmonics on that track that were played – but then edited into a bunch of slightly different loops.'

John began his musical path with traditional piano lessons and later went on to teach himself

the drums. 'I played for about 8 years before selling my beloved kit. I played in rock bands in high school and a little at Uni. I can play a variety of acoustic instruments not very well.' While teaching in the local junior high in Misho Town, John discovered there were a variety of acoustic instruments at his disposal in the music department such as the acoustic guitar, vibraphone, marimba, Xylophone, and melodica all of which he embraced on his latest album.

'My purchase of a melodica was inspired by seeing 20-odd kids all playing them and marching together – I thought it sounded fantastic so I went off to the school supply store and bought one. Mu'm had a bunch of different types when they were here – I'd loved to seek out some others.'

John has been experimenting in the world of electronic music since 1999 when he first started to create music with computers. He saw the move into electronic music as a practicality and reveled in the newfound ability to control the whole process – the rhythmic elements as well as the melodic 'stuff'. 'A friend of mine was mucking around on his computer and we started to experiment with music together, which is much better than being the drummer in the band and never getting your songs played.'

Since those formative times John has preferred to work alone when composing music, but has recently started to experiment with collaboration and the diversifying nature of such an experience. 'The current music I'm doing I'm bringing in collaborators for certain things. John Parker is playing drums and percussion. Jason Elliott (from Lawrence English's blindingly good 'Ubique Trio') is going to play some guitar on a track and Beck Newham from Smear has done a bit of singing for me. It's still basically me writing the tracks by myself though.'

Although Chantler claims indifference to the aesthetics of CDs, as he states, 'I don't really care for CDs. I try and buy everything on vinyl', as an object *Monoke* is stunning to look at. Designed by Rinzen, its dark cherry red cover is matched with an hypnotic pattern formed simply from an arrangement of white dots (I recommend not staring at it for too long). The design process was quite collaborative and reflected the considered nature of the music 'I selected the card photos that were taken by a my photographer friend Verity near where I lived in Japan. I think Steve (at Rinzen) took inspiration for the dot pattern from those photos to an extent... I had the gener-



al idea of the colour and Steve took it from there. I think he did a great job.'

Though the more cynical critics might protest that the release should be about the music, not the artwork, they would be ignoring the potential for collaboration across media that the release of a CD affords – especially if the designer is considered an artist in their own right. When I asked John his opinion on the matter he mused 'I think good packaging makes a difference (in the over-saturated market of specialist/non-mainstream music) – both in good ways and bad. In some ways it makes it a more desirable object. I don't think I'd be conceited at all by saying that my CD looks fucking fantastic. The design is beautiful and the package feels great as well. If you're reviewing a whole stack of discs – it's going to pique your interest isn't it? There was a glowing review of the Toop/Scanner/IO3 disc on pitchfork that talked a lot about the fetish nature of the packaging – but also how the whole package had been very much thought out and considered – which is very true. I'm sure for that writer the discs stood out from the massive pile of stuff he had to review that day and he gave it some special consideration.'

'I'm very much interested in art and design as well as music – I think a lot of the people who would be interested in my CD are interested in those things too – and would appreciate packaging/design that is really well thought out and a little bit "special". When you buy a CD you buy more than the music – so it's good to have the whole package you buy be outstanding. The ::room40:: discs aren't so radical as to not fit in amongst the rest of your discs like the mego sleeves or the spezialmaterial discs and stuff... but they certainly look great sitting together in a little row on your CD shelves.'

John himself is no amateur in the designer packaging game, in 1999 he set up the micro label Inventing Zero Records, which specialises in matching exceptional music and quality collectable packaging (vinyl

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'I don't think I'd be conceited at all by saying that my CD looks fucking fantastic. The design is beautiful and the package feels great'

format only). Each 7" was released in hand made Japanese paper sleeves, individually numbered and stamped with releases ranging from ambient, electro-acoustic, electronica and instrumental.

'The sleeves were made at a factory called Ozu Washii, which is in a tiny town called Ikazaki-Cho in Ehime prefecture, Japan. The paper is made by hand in the traditional Japanese way. It's a custom paper stock – I selected the weight and colour especially. They then cut, paste and fold the sleeves – I assume by hand... though I guess I can't be 100% sure. It took roughly 4 weeks for them to make the first batch, whereas the Prop sleeves took less time as they'd already made the paper. All of the stamping and numbering was done by me. I also organised some little versions of the sleeves for a series of ultra-limited 3" CDRs that Lawrence English is doing for ::room40::' (Incidentally, there are 5 discs in the series, 40 copies each, 12 reserved for a special wooden box set collecting them all – John designed the stamp artwork).

'Inventing Zero is/was an experiment for me," John replied when asked what it is like to release and promote Australian music while being based in another country, 'It turned out to be a bit of a learning exercise. I wasn't strictly trying to release stuff "in Japan", more so just trying to put some stuff out all over the place. In some ways it worked and in others it didn't. I'm really proud of the sevens. I think they're great but they're really hard to get distribution for in any decent quantity unless you're pushing famous acts or you're an established label. The hardest thing for me was getting them in the shops.'

Inventing Zero Records has done two limited edition 7" releases to date. The first release was by Ben Frost, recently signed up to Sydney's Quietly Suburban label for the release of his debut album. 'Ben sent a CD to Lawrence English and Lawrence forwarded one to me in Japan. I liked it so I got in touch. I chose the tracks and got Ben to do another one. Initially it was going to have additional locked grooves – but that didn't happen – though I still have the ones Ben made for it'. The second release was a 7" which contained John's favourite tracks from Prop's *Small Craft Rough Sea* release.

'At the moment – I'd love to release a record by the Ubique Trio (John Parker/Jason Elliott/Lawrence English) – hopefully I can make that happen. And i'm looking to do something with my friend Tori Kudo – record a piano composition of his when he comes to the UK later in the year. He's great – and such an interesting guy. Although Inventing zero is in a kind of nebulous flux at the moment. It might turn into something else – I'm still very much interested in facilitating the release of other folk's music – whether that will come under the guise of "Inventing Zero Records" in the next instance I really can't say at this stage."

*Apart from Monoke, which is released on ::room 40::, John has released a mini album, The Place Between Here And, on CDR. He currently resides in Brisbane and will be relocating to the UK later this year to establish the UK headquarters for ::room 40::*

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# THE YES MAN

## + Qua

### Interview with Cornél Wilczek by Bob Baker Fish

It's late into the business end of Saturday night at Revolver, a cool bar/venue on the fringes of Melbourne's inner city. We can tell it's cool because all night we've been served alcohol by someone who looks remarkably similar to the lead singer of No Doubt, kind of sporty and trashy, with an overextended cleavage and the words 'sick bitch' temporary tattooed above it. In the back room, there is the excitable chatter of inebriated punters as a DJ is spinning laidback jazz-infused house as everyone sprawls haphazardly across couches. In the front room meanwhile we've been treated to almost the antithesis,

a number of diverse interpretations of the electronic music form. Organised by participants of the local Symbiotic Collective, the idea behind 'Word to the Motherboard,' was to take the performers out of their comfort zones, to team them up with other artists and see what happens. Consequently we've been treated to the likes of Jason Sweeney (Pretty Boy Crossover) getting all 80s new wave with Two4k, Terminal Sound System and Digit Span Test aggressively locking in atmospheric beats and pulses, and Rhett Wade-Ferrell, Ai Yamamoto and Joel Stern battling feedback and getting abstract tones, wails and drones using all manner of instruments and techniques. For many though the highlight of the night came last, thanks to the intimate and uplifting squiggles of local electronic iconoclast Qua melding with the innocent tones of Architecture in Helsinki's Cameron Bird.

'We've only been able to rehearse for about five minutes so it'll probably be a little rough,' confessed a sheepish Cornél Wilczek (aka Qua) when I arrived a few hours earlier, however I shouldn't have heeded the warning as the resulting sounds were anything but. This probably has to do with the shared sensitivity both artists possess, despite their differing methods of achieving it. In their day jobs they both delight in delving headlong into bright, nice, tender melancholic sounds, and if it's possible for two separate worlds to evolve independently of each other, then somehow meet and coexist in perfect harmony (excuse the pun) it would be Qua and Architecture in Helsinki, a fact not lost on Wilczek.

'It's just a really nice halfway meeting point with a lot of the things we are doing,' he mentioned to me a week earlier in the back garden of his home in inner city Melbourne, a place he also shares with a couple of other sound obsessives, including fellow electronic artist Ai Yamamoto. 'It's just been a lot of fun. He's one of the few people I've ever worked with that it's so fluid, it happens so quickly and easily we've never had to discuss what we're doing. We did a track yesterday in three hours, we're gonna try to do an EP.'

Even amongst the more lauded overseas sub-genres Qua's sounds are something special. Unlike many electronic musicians Wilczek actually knows how to play regular instruments, starting guitar at the tender age of six and fooling around with his older cousin's four track from about ten onwards. It was from these four track experiments that he believes that he developed his arranging skills.

In his teenage years, after having played in a few bands in Adelaide, Wilczek found work as a session guitarist, even travelling to the US in an ill-fated attempt to break into the lucrative LA market.

'I pretty much walked away from all of that and was pretty disgusted with the whole environment there and came back and didn't touch guitar for literally five years,' he relates. 'I didn't know what half the sessions were. To be honest all the people I met there were dickheads: didn't like music. It was a job. They were more interested in the coke afterwards and the prostitutes. Seriously it was amazing, I've never seen anything like it. It was sex and drugs. I was 17 and I was not interested,' he thinks for a minute, 'hang on, I take that back, I was, but not in that context. I honestly went there for the music so it was pretty disruptive to go there and find out it wasn't about the music at all.'

The key to Qua's distinctive sound stemmed

initially from the discovery of some old four track tapes he recorded as a kid that he uncovered whilst he was packing for his move from his native Adelaide to Melbourne about three or four years ago. At the time he was quite astonished by their quality and expressiveness.

‘I was just really blown away at how articulate these songs were, even though they were very simple, very rough.’ He relates. ‘So I moved to Melbourne and really wanted to take on that. I guess it was a conscious effort to...; he makes lame voice, ‘...get in touch with my inner child. Actually to a degree that’s pretty much what it was, taking on a lot of those melodic structures that I used to work with at this age and having had musical experiences doing soundtracks and what-not I thought “what can I do with this?” “How will this translate now with the knowledge I have now in music theory and technology?” And that’s how it started reinventing things I did as a kid. So yes, it has that overly melodic child-like thing. I love it.’

More than simply taking and completing something from his past, Wilczek also partially attributes the development of Qua’s tender and emotive sound as a response to the sound art he was exposed to as part of a media arts course. ‘At one point all that I was hearing and seeing in Melbourne that was interesting was on the sound art side of things so I applied those techniques and that kind of philosophy to music.’

Clearly Wilczek is very different from your average electronic musician. Apart from his forays into session musicianship and the incorporation of his past into his current output, he is also a huge Yes fan. And immensely proud of it thanks to a heavy diet of prog-rock as youngster. When they toured recently he couldn’t believe his luck.

‘Seeing Yes two weeks ago was one of the highlights of my life,’ he gushes. ‘It was amazing. I actually went thinking I’m just going to go so I can cross them off that list because they meant so much to me as a kid. They literally started me playing music. Technically it was all there plus more and that was very surprising. I didn’t expect them to go that far, but musically overall it was just really genuine and quite sincere. And it didn’t feel contrived or surgical in any way. It had that earthiness. And I met them afterwards and they ended up being the nicest guys I’ve ever met.’

He now has a photo with Rick Wakeman that he swears he will put on his website regardless of what anyone thinks. And this is partially the key to Wilczek. Just becomes he makes electronic music doesn’t mean that he either listens to it or has forsaken his past.



‘I like keychanges. It’s almost like it’s bad to do key changes in electronic music these days’

‘I think I’ve worked out what I like to listen to and it’s got nothing to do with the actual sound sources. My main focus and my main passion has been arrangements, I like complex arrangements in music; I love it, that’s why I listen to Burt Bacharach and things like that. I’m not a fan of model-based music. I find a lot of electronic music is based around that, and that’s fine. I just can’t connect to it. I like keychanges. It’s almost like it’s bad to do key changes in electronic music these days.’

Then again it’s almost like it’s bad to make prog-rock these days and this hasn’t stopped him either, playing baritone guitar with members of Little General, who have evolved beyond their post rock ways, added Wilczek to their fold, renamed themselves Maersk whilst skirting dangerously towards a prog rock vein yet again. Clearly much to Wilczek’s delight.

Wilczek’s debut album as Qua, entitled *Forgetabout*, was a minor revelation. A truly amazing, engaging and emotional musical document that more than held its own with its local and overseas contemporaries – it was a mixture of electronic sounds, real instrumentation and yes, actual key changes. Currently at work on the follow up, Wilczek reports that it’s an album that has grown out of his live laptop performances over the last year, where he is regularly forced to make important arrangement decisions on the fly. In fact this is why enjoys playing in a live setting, because regardless of the gravity of the situation for good or ill he only has a split second to decide how the music will be structured, whereas in the studio typically these decisions could be laboured over for weeks. ‘There’s so much that I want to do to it now and I don’t really have the time,’ he laughs. ‘Sometimes finishing things

immediately can be nice. I was reading an interview with Martin Scorsese where he said that sometimes he needs the film distributors to take the film out of his hands because he’ll just keep on working on it. And it’s getting to that point now.’

One noticeable departure for this album is the use of live collaborators, as the last album, though it featured guitar, xylophone, drums, bass, keyboards and thumb piano, they were all played by Wilczek. On the follow-up his intention was to again use as many live instruments as possible, perhaps turn it into more of an orchestra than an electronica album, he has also enlisted some vocal assistance from Pretty Boy Crossover’s Jason Sweeney on a delightfully childish track as well as his aforementioned sparring partner Cameron Bird. Wilczek explains the development in terms of coming in from the cold.

‘The only reason that Qua hasn’t used other musicians in the past is because when I first moved to Melbourne I didn’t know anybody. So it was a way to kill time and get familiar with an environment by doing this stuff that made me feel like I was active. Now I know people so now I feel like I can play with them. At the moment I’m writing a lot of stuff with other people.’

Having recently completed remixes/ reworkings of B|if|tek, Machine Translations and Architecture in Helsinki tracks, performing occasionally with housemate Ai Yamamoto and local weirdo Quokenzocker in an improvisational mini disc field recording/found sound ensemble, whilst also contributing to Maersk, collaborating with Bird, and playing solo Qua shows, Wilczek is certainly making the most of a thriving artistic community that surrounds him. He’s like the veritable kid in the candy store, though unlike the kid, he’s a little choosy about which candy he’ll take.

‘After the first album I got to meet a lot more people doing electronic music,’ he reflects. ‘First it was insular. Now that I’ve met more people I’ve slowly found out that a lot of people making that music because they never played any instruments, that it opens up a whole world to people who don’t have the training is fantastic. What concerns me is that they didn’t want to make music until a computer came along. Why not? So I guess other people that make electronic music that I do relate to and I am working with and doing collaborations with are those that played instruments anyway, and that aspect I’m really enjoying. Music never started because a computer came along.’

*Qua’s album Forgetabout is out now on Surgery Records. More of this interview is at [cyclicdefrost.com](http://cyclicdefrost.com)*



# WAGGING TONGUES

## Sonic Allsorts Compilation

### Interview with Brendan Palmer

The disc that accompanies this issue of *Cyclic Defrost* is more than just a random selection of sounds, it is representative of an often neglected and yet essential (and precious) part of Australian cultural wealth – the fact that nearly all of us come from somewhere else... In contemporary Australian society there is a tension between what is represented as ‘typically Australian’ and the actual reality that most of us face – *Sonic Allsorts*, and the magazine it’s inserted into, are both borne out of a need to represent other less emphasised elements of Australian culture, and to reclaim from the rampant parochialism and jingoism the very idea of being ‘Australian’. Resulting from submissions to a national competition run in conjunction with the annual noise festival in which young artists were asked to submit multilingual tracks, *Sonic Allsorts* was overseen by Brendan Palmer, producer of SBS radio’s nightly Alchemy program.

#### What was your main motivation in compiling *Sonic Allsorts*?

The home of Alchemy is SBS Radio, which is the most multi-lingual radio station in the world – sixty eight languages, compared to the forty-something of our nearest competitor. Basically the multi-lingual agenda is strongly woven into the roots of Alchemy, in particular our tuesday and friday night shows are very ‘language other than English’ focussed. The other focus of Alchemy, at least for me, is a strong support of local music on a national level with an emphasis on linking those people in various parts of Australia. When I looked at these two elements I realised that most of our multi-lingual stuff was from overseas – so we decided to instigate this project. We had no idea what the results would be.

#### How many entries did you receive?

After a bit of hassling of those we knew who were dabbling, or potentially dabbling, in language tracks, combined with others who simply entered, we received a total of thirty four entries, seventeen of which made it to the disc.

#### How did you make the final cut, was there much discrepancy between the various judges?

The six judges were all given a blind copy of all the tracks (ie with no track listing or artist name) and were asked to order them. They all had quite different musical backgrounds, but there were definite acts and tracks that rose to the surface. The Curse of Dialect track actually achieved top score by quite a margin, plus Ila Familia and Tufa were also very popular.

#### There are quite a few hip-hop tracks on the album, was that something you expected? Do you think this has more to do with the increase in vitality in the oz hip-hop scene and/or the fact that hip-hop is a primarily verbal subculture?

Maybe the Australian hip-hop wave is a factor, but I see it as more a global thing. And yes, the fact that hip-hop is the most active lyrical modern music form is definitely a big reason for the ‘emphasis’. That said, I think hip-hop is also a style that allows the un-represented to be represented, and that’s especially important for crews with various language and racial backgrounds.

#### Recording or performing a song partially (or even fully) in a language other than English is often considered a political statement, but is that all there is to it, do you think?

It can be just a pure political statement, but in most cases it could also be as simple as ‘this exists – please take notice’. Australia doesn’t take its cultural diversity seriously enough, I dream of an Australia where most people speak between two and five languages and this aspect of our cultural diversity becomes one of our strongest assets, both culturally, and even perhaps commercially.

#### Very few acts that perform songs in languages other than English ever receive much airplay. Why do you think this is?

The old school Anglo-English dominance of media and the sub-conscious pressure on Australian society to assimilate. Once again an indication that the celebration of our cultural wealth is still to be realised. Don’t forget that



Alchemy and other stations and programs around the country actually do give this stuff attention, but yeah, it’s our objective to make it the norm!

#### The interpretations of the brief vary considerably on the album, were there any tracks that took you by surprise, and why?

The biggest surprises I guess were Morganics doing his ‘Multi-lingual MC’ track, Creator from Tassie, Horny Keung once again and Vir Asan the Punjabi drum and bass master... I’m real happy with what’s been evoked, and from my perspective, I’ve found things in myself that I haven’t ever made contact with before.

#### Finally, why did you decide to partner up with *Cyclic Defrost*?

It mainly came through the Noise collaboration – but I’ve been a reader of *Cyclic Defrost* since the old photocopy days. I feel the magazine is probably the most appropriate for this project – its motivations are closely aligned to Alchemy’s in that focus on local talent, and linking it all into an international context.

*The Sonic Allsorts compilation comes free with this issue of Cyclic Defrost.*

*The noise festival happens annually in October, see [noise.net.au](http://noise.net.au)*

*Alchemy is on SBS radio from 11pm every night, see [sbs.com.au/alchemy](http://sbs.com.au/alchemy)*



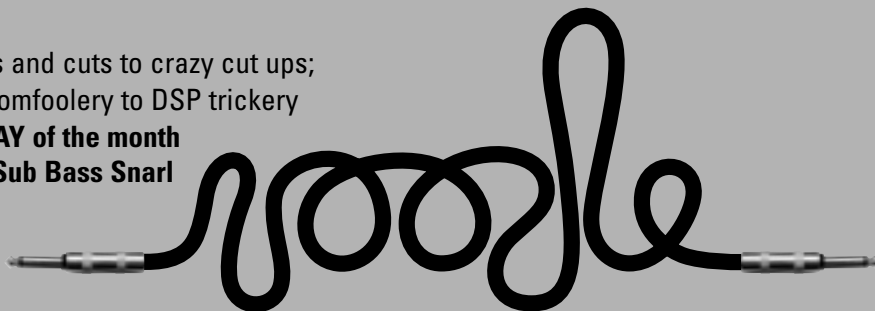


## Noodle:

From clicks and cuts to crazy cut ups;  
from IDM tomfoolery to DSP trickery

**1ST SUNDAY** of the month

hosted by **Sub Bass Snarl**



# SUNDAYS

## HOPETOUN HOTEL

416 Bourke Street, Surry Hills

**6pm – 10pm, \$5**

**COMING UP:**  
*Sunday December 14*  
*Apsci (NYC) (TBC)*

Co-presented with



## Motormowf:

Musical mowf to mowf resuscitation for  
headz drowning in mediocrity; making  
hiphop live again...

**2ND SUNDAY** of the month

hosted by **Urthboy & Rok Poshtya**

## Satta:

Bass heavy journeys to the outer limits;  
first stop Jamaica, next stop the moon...

**3RD SUNDAY** of the month

Hosted by **Sir Robbo** and **Prince V**



**COMING UP:**  
*Sunday November 23*  
*Mark O & Bongo Caveman*



**COMING UP:**

*Sunday November 30*

*Triosk & Roam the Hello Clouds*

After 7 years, 4 venues, more than 100  
international acts, almost 400 local  
acts and countless punters (not to  
mention beers) **Frigid** called it a night  
on September 28.

Rather than die a quiet death, the  
corpse has instead fertilized a new set  
of monthly nights, focussing more  
specifically on musical genres and the  
tastes of the organisers, rather than  
the eclectic nature of previous times

Of the four main nights, **Noodle** is  
dedicated to electronic music, sound  
art and the outer edges of dance music  
culture; named after the MC's greatest  
asset as well as his or her downfall,  
**Motormowf** is a hiphop night with the  
emphasis on collaboration and live  
expression; **Satta** is all things reggae  
and dub, from oldies through to heavy  
roots, 80s digital to the latest riddims;  
and **Friendly Fire** is Jazzgroove's  
attempt to recast electronic music  
within a live idiom, replete with 'proper'  
and not so proper instruments. In those  
months with a fifth sunday we'll host  
**The 5th Sunday**, a night of improvised  
film scores performed live on the  
big screen.

And it's still only  
five dollars

*5<sup>th</sup>*  
*the*  
*Sunday*

Co-presented with



## Friendly Fire

Music taken to unexplored  
spaces, dropped off, and  
forced to find its own way home

**4TH SUNDAY** of the month

hosted by **Jazzgroove**

# RYTHMIC ARITHMETIC

## 8-Bit/The Calculators

Interview with Adam Fischer  
by Vaughan Healey

Not so long ago, some funky electro and techno was playing on a shop stereo, and a shopper remarked to the shopkeep just how good the music was. They got to talking about music; as it turned out, the retailer was a big fan of electro and techno music, but was dismayed that one of their favourite DJs had gone from playing great techno music to DJing at a commercial hiphop and RnB club.

It's a story familiar to Adam Fischer, not least of which because he is the aforementioned DJ. As 8-Bit, Adam has been an integral part of the local techno movement over the last ten years, touring artists like German post-techno experimentalist Atom Heart and Jammin' Unit, as well as running Club Filter, and later the Phoney club through the 1990s. Despite allegations of bling-bling demise, 8-Bit lives on with the release of the *Hound Dog* EP on Bug Records. Spanning a couple of years of output, it starts off with harder, rock flavoured glam-techno, slides through heavily deconstructed glitch and emerges on the B-side with a reformed pop aesthetic: part West Coast bounce G-funk, part European obsessive compulsive technological neurosis. You might say Mike Ink and Rodney Jerkins in equal measure: not the total mis-match it might at first sound.

When Adam vanished from the Sydney map and relocated to Melbourne in 1998, the move piqued a developing ear for different ideas in music. 'I got very bored with the way Techno music was heading. "DJ tool" techno records killed everything that was interesting about the music for me. It became very uncreative, and at the same time, I was starting to really get into hiphop and RnB programming, hearing things like Timbaland and The Neptunes.' It's no secret

that as modern electronic music became codified, the new signatures and rules gradually became walls, fencing music into genres with fixed ideas. Interesting things were happening elsewhere.

As a response to the changing landscape, 8-Bit teamed up with Nathan Pokorski (formerly of glam electro group Down Town Brown) and Chris Arkley-Smith (formerly of Frontside) to form a production team known as The Calculators. The first job was a remix for Melbourne indie rockers Pre-Shrunk, later moving onto artists as divergent as Who Da Funk, Dawn Robinson, Tom Craft and The Faint. Their remix of 'Posed to Death' appears on The Faint's *Danse Macabre* remix album. Sitting alongside treatments by Paul Oakenfold and Photek, it stands out by the proverbial country mile. The Calculators have turned the original storming rock-out into a glitchy analogue groovy tech-funker, stuttering towards a crescendo of synth-wash that would sound at home on a Trevor Horn record.

The genesis of The Calculators is evident on the 8-Bit EP. But where the emergent grooves on



*Hound Dog* are still cut rough, listen to The Calculators and the first thing that strikes you is how refined it is. The second thing that strikes you are the amazing vocals, and the astonishing transgender register and timbre they are sung in. The Calculators vocalist, Ruth Rogers-Wright, landed in Australia about ten years ago – fleeing bad weather and English food. Adam continues: 'When we first began The Calculators, we really searched for vocalists and MCs and it actually stopped us from working on music, until we met Ruth.' Rogers-Wright has a startling voice and brings a depth of soul to the already melancholy lyrics – and this will be the third thing to strike you about The Calculators: these guys write amazing songs. There is a discreet sculpturing of lyrics and melody: sounds being matched to words and melodies and being structured within traditional pop arrangements. These are songs that tell stories.

'The song writing is a group process, we don't really have demarcated roles. We would usually



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‘Pop music has grown a new skin, which involves trying to be edgy and come up with new ideas. I am not talking about all pop music, but there is a healthy dose of challenging pop music coming out’

start with a basic groove as an idea and then we build it up from there, Nathan, Chris and I get a basic instrumental structure and Ruth may take it home to work on lyrics and vocal melodies, or we all work on a concept at the studio. At other times Nathan may just come up with a song on the acoustic guitar and bring it in. The approach is always changing.

‘Even though we don’t have particular roles we each excel in different areas. For instance Chris is a master of melody; soundscape and bass sounds, he is a fiend for bottom end. He is also great at string arrangements. Nathan is the most musical and plays several instruments and is a killer song writer, he is also a drummer and a great drum programmer as well. Ruth comes up with lyrics and vocal melodies that nobody else would think of and sings them divinely. I find myself being the studio engineer most of the time. I love technology and outboard gear and do a lot of drum programming and mixing.’

The technological savvy behind The Calculators is evident. ‘I actually began buying equipment before records, but then spent way too much money buying records. I just decided to stop, as I much prefer making music than spinning it.’ Back in 1996, Adam used to lug a 303 into 2SER each week for his radio show, wrapped up safely in an insulated Pizza Hut pizza bag. Eight years later and The Calculators have some heavy studio gear at their disposal: Pro Tools HD driving a Neotek Elite 40-channel desk provides the meat, with outboard and instrumentation from Altec EQs, an SP1200, MPC, Mini Moog, Jupiter 6, ATC1, SE1, Sonor drums, guitars and bass plus ‘some serious monitoring’. ‘We have so much studio equipment it’s crazy. We are getting pretty close to a Jerkins style complex in Australian terms, so it’s a very nice set up, world class. We each bring our own flavour to the equipment list as well as musical

ideas. It’s all in a warehouse with some other studios as well, so look out Rodney!’

The Calculators sounds like it is created by a group with a clear vision, and the skills to realise it. The music isn’t weighed down with dense arrangements, but instead subtle embellishments and accents. ‘Another Story’ kicks off with crotchet set of piano chords, ‘Chopsticks’ with a twist. The vocals begin: ‘This is just another story / Another way to tell it nice / OK / Alright / Like others that I’ve told at night.’ Then the rhythm track drops from another planet: a thick, analogue squelching mass; rich with atmosphere and texture, articulate and intelligent. ‘Those pop structures provide that combination for me: experimental programming, great songs, mind blowing production and something you can remember. Pop music has grown a new skin, which involves trying to be edgy and come up with new ideas. I am not talking about all pop music, but there is a healthy dose of challenging pop music coming out.’

There are some obvious antecedents: like the 8-Bit EP, this is music with one foot in the ideas of underground electronic genre-music, and one foot in the dazzling mega-studios of commercial hip-hop producers. While this comes across in the Calculators as a cautious nod to production techniques and values, the current 8-Bit club night, OREO, is an unabashed celebration of all things playadilistic. On the second Sunday of every month, Melbourne’s Alia bar is turned into a Gangsta’s Paradise; a shizzle palace for pimp juicin’ and shizzlin’. It’s a million miles away from the scruffy techno rebel grunge of Club Filter. How does someone reconcile these dramatically different aesthetics? ‘I am doing what I love, a combination of all the things I like about music. Music isn’t about purism, it’s about love.’

‘You have to follow your heart with music and it leads you in a direction if that direction is purist New Orleans swing, or maybe it’s glitchy experimental techno then that’s cool. All I am doing is combining the things I love about music... I mean you spend your life making music because you love it.’ While 21st Century hip-hop tech-funk appeals to both ironic hipsters and suburban secretaries in equal measure, there is a darker side. For a generation raised on music underpinned by a new, progressive and idealist politic, money worship and bling-blingism is something a little hard to digest. ‘I get very bored with all the bling-bling in the music. That said, we’re not making tracks about how many Lexuses and gold-plated mixing consoles we have, and we’re also not saying we’re better than anyone else. The hip-hop and RnB producers that I love: Jay Dee, Timbaland, Neptunes, Just Blaze and artists like Busta Rhymes, Slum Village, that sort of bling-bling isn’t so much in what they are saying. With those guys, it’s more about the music, the rhythms, structure and melodies. But it’s all cool: most of the time it’s an 8 or 9 out of 10. But when you hit a rocking track with some humility then you got 10 out of 10.’

Bling-Bling or not, interesting music opens up in the most unlikely places. Reconciling wildly separate motifs and themes is just part of the adventure.

*The Hound Dog EP is released on Bug Records in February. The Calculators will have a record out soon. Check OREO on the 2nd Sunday of every month at Alia, cnr Smith and Gertrude Sts in Fitzroy.*

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# REVIEWS

A few changes this issue – most notably a Top 10 section called, strangely enough, **Grandma's Picks**. We figured every music mag needs a top 10 list, and Grandmas are pretty special – so why not combine the two? This month also sees the welcome return of the **Demos** section, and of course, **Alex Crowfoot's** regular exploration of sleeve art.

## CONTENTS

- 20 LOCAL RELEASES
- 22 DEMOS
- 24 OS RELEASES
- 28 DVDs
- 29 SLEEVE REVIEWS

### Bradbury

*Ruffini Corpuscle*  
(Dual Plover)

Since 1979 Sydney based Gary Bradbury has been producing strange and abstract electronic-based music. Along with Tom Ellard he was part of the duo Severed Heads, and in recent times he has concentrated on producing theatre soundtracks (2001 King Lear) and his solo material. *Ruffini Corpuscle*, adorned with his unique collage-style artwork is an example of the strange, diverse and intriguing roads he has travelled over the last few years. Whilst initially quite challenging, the compositional care taken to structure the works remains a unifying theme. Utilising gentle melancholic drones ('Distant Elk'), glitched-up digital scraps of static ('Filmcore Honey'), strange childlike melodies and repetitive vocal samples ('Big Man on Campus'), *Ruffini Corpuscle* is a personal journey that regularly shifts focus and repeatedly tests out new sonic theories. Despite *Ruffini Corpuscle's* meticulous nature, Bradbury has produce fourteen atmospheric worlds where the laws of nature no longer exist – and where chaos is kept at bay by Bradbury's odd and innovative logic. **Bob Baker Fish**

## LOCAL RELEASES 20

### Dsico

*Punk As Pussy EP*  
(12 Apostles)

Throwaway pop becomes throwaway pop electro with this latest five track EP from Dsico. In a bit of a diversion from his usual bootlegs and DSP mashups, he has taken five well known tracks, the best mutation of which is Nirvana's 'Smells Like Teen Spirit', and given them the vocoder electro pop treatment. Although 'Smells Like Electro' was first released for download on Dsico's website about nine months ago, the newer version is considerably stronger and punchier and deservedly rocks. Others on the EP are not so good and feel a bit unfinished (a little like the first download version of Smells Like) – especially the Moroder-isation of Beyonce's 'Crazy In Love' which just ends up being horrible, capturing the spirit of neither Moroder nor Beyonce. Properly positioned as a vinyl only release, this 12" would do wonders for the careers of aspiring Mobydisc DJs spinning the best of the 80s and 90s at weddings and bar mitzvahs (if they still used vinyl, that is), but in the interim we'll just have to leave it to the 'irony' set. **Sebastian Chan**

### Scott Horscroft

*8 Guitars*

(Quecksilber/Inertia)

For many, Scott Horscroft is a name associated with the studio space Big Jesus Burger in Sydney. As a part-owner in the studio, Horscroft has engineered and produced countless records over the past few years. In tandem with this work, Horscroft has also been composing a range of works for guitar (and other instruments) and it's one of these pieces that's captured here on the accurately titled *8 Guitars*. Beginning with a gentle flow of processed guitar, Horscroft's primary concern appears to be repetition and layering. The early sections of the piece are created with the most meagre of arrangements – he builds up and strips back the composition with a subtlety that's almost subliminal. As one guitar begins to shine though in the mix, your attention is ushered to another overtone or sound element and it's this process of concentration and release which makes *8 Guitars* engage its listener so fully. Parallel in some senses to parts of Glenn Branca's catalogue and likewise the minimalist composers of the 60s, Horscroft never opts out for the simplistic tricks of extremes in volume or density. Rather he gently sculpts out a rich texture of sound that moves with a pace, almost like driving down the Nullarbor – the richness exists in detail rather than absolute form.

**Lawrence English**

### Hilltop Hoods

*The Calling*  
(Obese)

Coming from the fertile glades of Adelaide, the Hilltop Hoods are perhaps the most universally respected of all the oz hiphop crews, managing to avoid much of the in-fighting and bitching that comes with scrounging for too few crumbs of the music industry pie for far too long. As an album, *The Calling* is a reflective and almost melancholy adventure exploring the notion of hiphop as a set of ideals. Although the phrase 'keeping it real' has been relegated to cliché, the Hilltop Hoods see hiphop not as a genre, a set of elements or a marketing tool, but as a framework for living – and this speaks volumes about their dedication to their art/s. A statement of intent, the opening track 'Testimonial Year' is part roll call, part CV and part thank you. The beats on the album, particularly those produced by Suffa, are sumptuous jazz/groove beds over which Suffa and fellow MC Pressure alternately sow their elegantly realised flows. With repeated listens the arrangements reveal their hidden complexity – and a song writing talent that is often missing in hiphop, overtaken by three-verses-and-a-scratch-solo mentality. It is this that makes *The Calling* so strong – almost inadvertently they have created music that is both lyrically and compositionally appealing to both sides of the hiphop continuum, and is potentially able to be understood by novice listeners – especially if the odd moment of boysey crassness is forgiven, **DH**

### Hydatid

*Awash With Even*  
(self-released)

Brisbane's Hydatid has been quietly experimenting with Max/MSP for the last few years, occasionally venturing south of the border to play live – notably at Electrofringe. Working professionally as an audio engineer for broadcast television, this is his first non-CDR release. Largely a collection of ambient works with soft synths that bring to mind early 90s ambient techno, it is augmented by processed field recordings. *Awash With Even's* best moments are when it breaks out of being too backgrounded – the distorting static on 'Hellas Plantila', and the crackling beats of 'Negative Space'. Unfortunately, the drum sounds are the record's weakest link and have little variation in timbre or pattern throughout the entire album. Previous CDR material and live sets have offered more variety and demonstrated a broader palette of sounds, so it's disappointing to see this not carried through to *Awash With Even*. The album is self-released and available through various Brisbane shops and online ([www.halftheo-ry.com/hydatid](http://www.halftheo-ry.com/hydatid)). **Sebastian Chan**



# GRANDMA'S PICKS

## DAVE MILLER (Background Records)

### Caural

*Blurred July*

(Chocolate Industries)

Lovely organic sample based hiphop, melodies that make you float away to somewhere better.

### Triosk

Unreleased Album

(Demo)

Fantastic album from the Sydney trio, hopefully released on somewhere, the sooner the better.

### Twerk

*Living Vicariously Through Burnt Bread*

(Mille Plateaux)

Twerk loses his square kick and cold minimal techno and creates some warmth.

### DJ Collapse

*Jawfunk*

(Soundlike)

Crazy collaboration between Herbert and Mouse on Mars. Completely nuts.

### Rhythm & Sound w/ Jah Batta

*Music Will Hit You*

(Burial Mix)

Maurizio does it again with a more reggae influenced track than previous Burial Mix 10's, killer.

### The Tied & Tickled Trio

*Observing Systems*

(Morr)

Electric Miles jamming with Duke Ellington with hints of electronica and dub for flavour.

### Bus

*Keep Life Right*

(~scape )

Definitely the most 'party' I have heard from the new school of 'dub-hop'. Lots of fun.

### Four Tet

*As Serious As Your Life*

(Domino)

More awesome gear from the recent album – with an epic 23-minute version of the title track.

### Paul St Hilliare & Rene Lowe

*Faith*

(False Tuned)

Heavy dub basslines move underneath washy hissy chords. Beautiful stuff.

### Jorge Lopez Ruiz

*De Prepo*

(What Music)

Free-jazz reissue with some South American flavour. Fantastic stuff.

# LOCAL RELEASES

## Meem

*The Big Hoo-hah*

(Non/Inertia)

By a strange twist of fate Meem happened to be born in the wrong place at the wrong time. Though I bear no ill will to his parents, somehow they managed to pop him out 30 years too late and a couple of continents away from his true calling as an NY house pioneer, a dreadlocked Larry, or a smiling Francois...

Instead he continues on in relative obscurity making music that retains its air of freshness – perhaps because the packet has yet to be opened. Possessed of an uncanny ability to make the dull thud of a house beat sizzle with swing, his rhythmic inventiveness is second only to the intricacies of his arrangements. Though the tracks on *The Big Hoo-Ha* resemble dancefloor fodder, they are in fact layered like fine baclava, your ears peel away the fine pastry to reveal the sticky sweet sonic syrup. Meem is also somehow able to avoid using dancefloor cliché while retaining an inherent funkiness. It's just a shame that the great majority of people whose socks would be rocked off at hearing this probably never will. I suppose it could have been worse – he could have been born in NYC with a calling for penning oz rock classics. **DH**

## Object

*Pandemic*

(Quartermass)

Object is Lawrence English in 'hiphop' mode – although the ::room40:: honcho is more post rock than Pete Rock. His sparse off-centre beats are offset by hiss, howls and squalls and are notable for their absence of movement in the lower end. The ambiguity of the artist name suits the content, as a change in emphasis in pronunciation enigmatically places the project between artifact/art (an object) and expression of negativity (to object). Whether this is deliberate isn't clear, but certainly many of the tracks on *Pandemic* exist in an uneasy compromise between exploring boundaries of hiphop/downtempo, while at the same time refuse to resort to 'funk' or groove. This is most evident when veteran MC Quro guests on four tracks, falling foul of the ambiguous and uncentered nature of the accompaniment – despite his prodigious lyrical ability and propensity to push boundaries, Quro seems ill at ease on 'Subtext (Courage/Hope)' and 'Fluid Note'. 'Fallout', the album's closer, shows that given the right circumstances this clash of ideals can create gems – a sparse piano line captures the aching melancholy of Quro's almost whispered lyric perfectly, **DH**

## Prop

*Cook Cut Damage Destroy*

(Silent/MGM)

One of the more interesting live acts around Sydney for the last seven or so years, Prop are very slow at making records, no doubt due in part to a large lineup and constant side-projects. *Cook Cut Damage Destroy* is a series of remixes of their 2001 debut album, *Small Craft Rough Sea*. The define the term 'remix' pretty loosely, and in most cases there has been either serious re-playing, rewriting or both by those at the controls. 'Mount Zero' is turned into a thin pop theme for a 60s beach movie by Stereolab; Telemetry Orchestra also add vocals to their mix of 'Portal'; Burnt Friedman turns the original 'Landing' into a watery dub; whilst Oren Ambarchi puts 'Low' on a stoned turntable and records the varispeed results; Decoder Ring pull out all the 80s stadium synth rock stops on their mix of 'Camp David' and so on. The weakest mixes are those that move too far from the art-rock and downtempo palette – with Mako, Presets, Paul Mac & Dirty Cub, and Pnau all trying to push for the dancefloor. Like most remixes the strongest tracks end up sounding close to what the remixers themselves produce...which all confirms my ambivalence about most remix records. Still, there are some excellent tracks here, and the best of them add substantially to the originals. **Sebastian Chan**

## Robokoneko

*Anembo*

(Couchblop!)

At first listen Robokoneko's debut is a dead ringer for a lost Warp classic, paced and placed somewhere between the melodic sensibilities of Garbage era Autechre and the subtle rhythms of Seefeel. Far from being crib-note electronica however, it is an assured and measured journey that takes in many stop. These are as varied as the elegant creep of 'Eerie Ash', the glass droplets and minor melody of 'Miyu Saga', the half-remembered soundtrack to a non-existent 80s teen flick ('Alef One'), and the stately and regal pomp of the album's finisher, 'Interlude', which is anything but. With repeated listens it reveals itself as a collection of delicately woven tapestries that manage to unite the scratchy fibres of software processing with a woolly analogue warmth, resulting in an album that goes from sleepy embrace to dreamy indifference in the nod of a heavy eyelid. **DH**

## Spazzmodics

*Vermin Perm*

(Dual Plover)

This is a case of judging a book by its cover and actually getting to be right. With a cheap demented digitally manipulated cut-up of a cover you'd probably expect a cheap demented digitally manipulated

cut-up of sounds. Which is exactly what you get. A two-piece operating out of Sydney, *Vermin Perm* is their debut album where they torment and distort; featuring strange bursts of lofi shards of sound, off kilter drum machines and weird samples. Much of it doesn't make sense, much of it is uncomfortable and wrong, much of it is gruelling and makes you want to wash afterwards. But then again the sense of humour and outright 'wrongness' compels you to give them a go. There are actually song structures here mashed together in ADD infused flurries of activity. It's all proudly lofi, a crazed broken carnival ride melding Venetian Snares with Faxed Head, then giggling hysterically at the confused torment it dishes out. It hurts you but you love it but it hurts you but you love it but it hurts you...

**Bob Baker Fish**

### Stalker

#### *Empire*

(Geometrik)

The third proper album from Canberra's Darren Zeising and the second this year, *Empire* (recorded as Stalker) is almost a homage to Berlin producer Maurizio (Basic Channel, Rhythm & Sound). *Empire*'s bass heavy organic atmospheres overlaid with warm analogue synth chords would, if they were unlabelled, be very hard to discern from Maurizio outtakes. Certainly if imitation is the sincerest form of flattery then *Empire* is a heart-felt compliments to Maurizio. However, imitations have their limitations. Maurizio's work has been heavily informed by dub and reggae, evidenced by his Wackies reissues and regular collaboration with Jamaican singers, and this has lent an emotional depth and soul in his work that mediates the machine-made sound of his work. Often in imitators such as Detroit-Maurizio fans Deepchord, or now defunct British label Blue Train, this is lost. Although there are some lovely warm sounds with which to curl your ears around on *Empire*, something is still missing. Nevertheless, *Empire* is a solid record and Darren Zeising is emerging as an important Australian producer – I just wish this was as individual as his last record (recorded as Liife). **Sebastian Chan**

### Stern/Guerra

#### *Stich*

(Impermanent)

In recent years Sydney's Impermanent Recordings have released some amazing artists who have created strange and beautiful experimental and electronic sounds for listening environments. In *Stich* Joel Stern and Anthony Guerra have managed to provide Impermanent Audio with its most accessible release to date. This seems surprising given that the album is devoid of a discernable track listing, not to mention any melodic or percussive base, but it may be due to the warm tones and drones they attach to some of their scratchier and abstract sounds, or just simply the familiar presence of the guitar alongside the electronics and field recordings. Some of the cuts have gorgeous atmospheric moments of gentle

# DEMOS

with the Peanut Spell, 2SER 107.3 from 12 until 2pm Mondays

### Lake Lustre

#### *Untitled*

You'd expect a British-born Maltese Australian living in Switzerland to be an interesting one-man melting pot, and he is. Ex-Sydneysider Joe Scerri's accomplished 7-track EP explores territory bordered by funk, classical music, shoegazing, dub, spanish guitars, and the last decade of dance music, occasionally bumping into a ghostly Johnny Marr. It opens with the insistent layered darkness of 'Skyscraping', mixing 8-bit grit with dub before self-destructing into layered atmospheric. This sharp left turn continues with 'Dragonfly Museum', an ambient soundscape that points a finger very firmly towards a career in film soundtracks before, 4 minutes later, single-handedly inventing ambient funk on 'Cul de Sac'. The stuttering 'Dusky' brings in a melancholic Spanish guitar and muted trumpet before a DnB influenced excursion and then the moody cut-up piano and sub-bass laden 6/8 rhythms of 'A Foreign Scene' round out the CD. Smart and always rhythmically unconventional, the tracks are well structured with a sound suited to home listening rather than the dancefloor. A mastering session would make the subtle richness truly shine. **Olo**

### B-List

#### *Balance EP*

Although the reverbs on these tracks make them sound like were recorded live at a warehouse party, the mix and EQ fixes them firmly in the home listening bracket. Appropriate as comedown music, its warm pads and delicacy steer clear of being overly sweet through the use of bubbling acid lines, minimal melody and dissonance. The continual phasing on all three tracks adds to the distinctive sound of B-List. Sitting at between seven and eleven minutes the tracks could stand some editing. Rerun Radio, however, stops at the 7 minute mark before a 3 minute reprise, 15 seconds later. Tricky. Overall the tracks have a kind of updated underground 1991 feel to them reminiscent of Northern Bleep. **Olo**

### Send Demos to:

The Peanut Spell

PO Box 470

Surry Hills NSW 2010

### Chasm

#### *Untitled*

'Point a Pen (Like a Torch at the Night Ahead)' feat. Ozi Batla starts proceedings off with warm and moody strings and down-tempo drums. With Tubby-like dub production – readily embracing delays and a welcomingly thick bassline, this tune ain't a party starter. But then again fuck them party heads, we can jump-start this train and still nod our heads in time. Ozi's flows and subject matter sail comfortably over the top with some introspective and engaging commentary. Delving into a theme of solitude and self-reliance ("people watching cos they don't have my life/ solitude now choose to be my wife/ echo out to sea/ will you marry me?/ feeling like these fish, I should let them be/ why throw a line if you want them free?"), these lyrics feel miles away from the anger of songs like 77%. A very impressive tune. 'Compurhythm' is an instrumental piece that also sinks deeply into a reflective and measured place. With hints of distant machine-like percussion lurking quietly behind dark synth pads and soft piano stabs we're introduced to Chasm in his hiphop realm. Moving like the pulse of a polar bear, Chasm will be a necessary artist to check for upon album release next year. **Tim Levinson**

### Sone

#### *Sisyphus*

Like sleepily shunting machines at sunrise, Sone's music is a soundtrack to lay back and think to. Using delicate vocal and horn stabs and delays to good effect, Sone creates downtempo beat constructions that are sometimes reminiscent of associate Betaville Orchestra. There are a few excursions on this project including the glitchy 'Snooj', the cut-up electronic 'Where is here' (where we see what happens when flatmates share samples) and completely departs to beatless ambience and drones in 'Disconnect' and 'A Beginning Implies an End'. Sometimes the drums sound a tad thin and seem to go against the subtle and accomplished arrangements of synth sounds, horns and bleeps, but this is offset by the nice layering of atmospheric crackles filling out the mix. My favourite here is the shuffling 'Sweet Breath', where the drums contrast Sone's more placid pad sounds but co-operate in creating movement and swing. Thinking music, relaxing music, brain-fried music – it's all here and well worth checking out. **Tim Levinson**

# GRANDMA'S PICKS

## BOB BAKER FISH BAKER'S DOZEN -3

### **Snawklor**

*It Would Have Lived Here*

(Synaesthesia )

Field recordings, reprocessing, head wobble jigs of scatter.

### **Buck 65**

*Talking Honky Blues*

(Warner)

Buck is the saviour. Kerouac with a mic instead of the Benzidrene and alcohol addiction.

### **Animal Collective**

*Here Comes The Indian*

(Paw Tracks)

If rock has a future, these guys will hopefully kill it, stuff it and put it up on their wall.

### **Fennesz**

*Live In Japan*

(Headz/ Synaesthesia)

Sand castles built inside laptops, creating a yearning for summer days and static radios.

### **Matmos**

*Civil War*

(Matador/ Remote Control)

All you need is a rabbit pelt, a boring theoretical concept and a bunch of weird friends.

### **Whitehouse**

*Birdseed*

(Susan Lawley/ Synaesthesia)

Most violent ugly dirty unredeemingly bleak piece of music this year.

### **Yoshimi & Yuka**

*A Flower With No Color*

(Ipecac/ Shock)

Birds chirping, childrens toys, hypnotic sweet childlike. I think I grew my soul back.

### **Nightswimmer**

*And A Crescent Half Lit The Sky*

(Shahnameh)

Lush, classy, beautifully constructed atmospheric electronics.

### **Stern/ Guerra**

*Stich*

(Impermanent Recordings)

Gentle minimal, tranquil electronics melds into guitar and breaks our tender hearts.

### **Mathew Herbert Big Band**

Goodbye Swingtime

(Accidental/ Inertia)

Electronics needed swing. Needed Arto Lindsay crooning. Needed a political philosophy.

# LOCAL RELEASES

ambience, where meditative strumming is gradually overworked by subtle industrial electrics. It's still very experimental listening, though there is something undeniably patient and meditative about their approach. Elsewhere there are warbling masses of processed material, warm atmospheric drones and the expected static flecks of digital refuse, however Stern and Guerra manage to integrate these ingredients into their compositions in such a gentle, minimal and contemplative manner that *Stich* leaves you with a float-ing feeling of impenetrable tranquillity. **Bob Baker Fish**

### **Telemetry Orchestra**

*Children Stay Free*

(Silent/MGM)

In a parallel universe there is a place where music like this is offered the opportunity to return into the collective unconscious. Think about how wonderful it would be if in all those public places you inadvertently hear music: on buses, in the shops, coming out of cars, on commercial radio; instead of shouty commercial propaganda it was the glorious and playful music on this album blaring away. I would wager that we wouldn't be going off to obtuse wars for a start. *Children Stay Free* is an album that casts its mental driftnet into our cultural id, fishing for moments and sounds that were stamped onto our DNA years ago. Charming modern psychedelia and analogue familiarity render perfectly formed themes into charismatic songs with a vaguely anonymous and mysterious sensibility. This is a record that is elementally balanced and even: there are no components or textures that dominate, even the vocals are generally covered in ambiguous and impressionistic treatments. A perfect album for glorious spring days turning summer. **Vaughan Healey**

### **Various Artists**

*Ministry of Shit, The 2003 Anus*

(Spasticated)

Spasticated records is a project out of the NSW Ministry of Health 'Reclaim the Mind' public awareness campaign. There is some serious public money behind the *Ministry of Shit* project, with Spasticated pulling in some heavy duty cameos from talents such as Justin Timberlake, Beyoncé and Destinys Child, Eminem and Madonna (among others) you just know this is going to be big. The real stars, though, are the 15 producers represented who have all passed through various institutions from across the state. These real Australians have overcome adversity and Ritalin addiction to produce some of the freshest tunes out there. With artistic direction from Marc Quinn's Warholesque Factory project, you just know this is bound for the charts. Look out for the limited edition complete with 'Tin of Genuine Artists' Faeces'. **Vaughan Healey**

### **Various Artists**

*Ah-tchoo*

(Ear Pimp)

Ear Pimp is a label project run by Lanny K, veteran DJ of the Sydney queer underground, and his friends. With many years of parties and residencies under his belt, the Ear Pimp label seems to have been set up to release music by the rich vein of musicians and performers, and musician performers in and around the scene. With the ever-encroaching gentrification of the areas around Surry Hills and Oxford St, not to mention the endless commodification/incorporation of gay culture, the recording of some of the more colourful characters is even more important. A snatch of classic 1992 Dance 2 Trance launches SodomSonic's 'Lesbian Lavaline' and lures this listener down, down to the (mainly) queer Sydney underground playland. There is electro in many guises – Cherry2000's glam electro, activist electro from free party scene veterans Non Bossy Posse and Andy Rantzen (ex-Itch-E & Scratch-E) & Spinoglio's old school take. And from Mark Murphy's throbbing 'Maggot' to Raycie Puttycat's bowl of Peaches and Christa Hughes & The Maestro Surgeons' lounge/rock vaudeville, it's one exuberant turn after another. **Olo**

### **Via Tania**

*Under a Different Sky*

(Trifekta/Festival)

Tania Bowers used to play bass and sing for Sydney indie rock quartet SPDFGH. After relocating to Chicago in 1999, she continued to release music, with a string of singles and EPs working up to this release. While Via Tania is primarily a solo project in partnership with engineer Casey Rice, *Under a Different Sky* collects collaborations from artists such as Doug McCombs and John Herndon from (Tortoise), Wayne Montana (Trenchmouth), Howe Gelb (Giant Sand), and Prefuse 73's Scott Herren. However, *Under a Different Sky* is not specifically 'electronic'; it's a careful balance between the spaces opened up by electronic experimentalism and blues-painted minimal alt-rock, and is tied together by Tania Bowers' idiosyncratic vocals and lyrics. None of the forms offered overpower each other: 'Lightning & Thunder' is a lovely sculptured song with a colonialist twist in the reserved harmonium lurking behind the chorus, whereas 'The Rising' sounds like SPDFGH revisited, with rockout guitars lifted straight from the golden era of Sydney indie-rock (1992–1996). Tania Bowers provides an autobiographical focus absent from other obvious comparisons (eg Tortoise), and her idiosyncratic voice is welcome back anytime. **Vaughan Healey**

# INTERNATIONAL RELEASES <sup>24</sup>

## Assembler

2

(Thrill Jockey/Inertia)

Initially Assembler feels like a conscious move by renowned Japanese electronic artist Nobukazu Takemura away from the whimsical, melodic and playful textures of his earlier *Scope*, *Audio Sports* or *Child's View* releases and into a darker more traditionally chin-scratching world. But those familiar with these earlier works would be aware that Takemura's mischievous and inventive nature render it virtually impossible for him to remain in this guise for long. Utilising field recordings and synthesized sounds, which are then filtered through abstracting digital processing, much of *Assembler* is populated with erratic, often violent bursts of digital sound. In fact, cuts like 'Kino-ear' sounds like a disorganised cut up of sounds arranged in short, almost illogical spasms. Sharp, violent, clinical digital feedback, clipped and wrenched from the bowels of a laptop – it's here that Takemura is at his most inventive, arranging these ingredients into repetitive riffs, like the almost percussive/melodic abstraction on 'Molla'. 'Sous terret', meanwhile, is an opportunity to sharpen the noise knives, allowing the squalls to exist intact, pitching them up and down, and creating a somehow piercing yet lumbering infernal roaring choir of electronic doom, which is both mesmerising and painful. Merzbow would be proud. **Bob Baker Fish**

## Virginia Astley

*From Gardens Where We Feel Secure*

(Rough Trade/Inertia)

Virginia Astley is a slightly odd singer/songwriter who is still making music and has, over the years, collaborated with everyone from Siouxsie & The Banshees and Bill Drummond, to, more recently, Japan's Silent Poets, as well as David Sylvian and Ryuchi Sakamoto. Strangely enough *From Gardens Where We Feel Secure* features only a small selection of her singing and is otherwise almost entirely ambient. Originally released in 1983, it preceded The KLF's wonderful *Chill Out* by seven years, with its aural equivalent of a spring picnic in a very English countryside. Instead of Elvis, steel guitar and rambling ambient Americana, church bells ring, birds tweet, flutes and piano all come together to make a serene ambient listen, made all the stranger by the way it teeters on the edge of twee – not least of which is the cover, which sports a shock of purple lavender blooming in a very English forest. It all makes perfect sense. **Sebastian Chan**

## Riow Arai

*Mind Edit*

(Leaf/Inertia)

Tokyo beat producer Riow Arai gets a bit of a back catalogue reissue courtesy of Leaf, who have licensed a series of his works dating as far back as 1997. Originally released on Soup Disk and almost impossible to get outside of Japan, Riow Arai's work verges on industrial hip-hop, sliced and diced, but at the same time stripped of organic funk and injected instead with a heavily quantised robotic sound. At the best of time Arai's work is like an uptempo Prefuse 73, but too often his instrumentals are so sparse or off-kilter that they would desperately benefit from the addition of an MC. Dating initially from 1999, there are more than a few moments on this Leaf reissue that are reminiscent of Chris De Luca's 2002 release *Deadly Wiz Da Disko* – but even so, being three years ahead of the game only counts when it's still 1999. Arai has a follow up due out this month titled *Device People* which will hopefully extend into new territory. Otherwise much of his work will remain filed strictly under DJ tools. **Sebastian Chan**

## Buck65

*Talkin' Honky Blues*

(Warners)

Deep down Buck 65 is pretty conservative when it comes to hip-hop. A vinyl purist, he riles against reissues and on this, his seventh album, he bemoans modern hip-hop in a track that takes the art of shoe-shining as its metaphor. paradoxically, Buck65 has strayed further from 'real hip hop' with each release, with *Talkin' Honky Blues* what is left is much closer to the late Johnny Cash (who gets name checked on the first single), a Carny-era Nick Cave (1985-7), or folk/country storytelling, than any hip-hop reference points. This is a good thing, it is almost as if Buck65 is rhyming about a parallel universe set somewhere in a mythical road movie midwest. The album's through thread – seven vignettes of riverside life titled 'Riverbed' – provides a strong narrative against which several minor themes play. Continuing from the death of his mother in his *Man Overboard* album on Anticon, there is 'Roses & Bluejays' that deals with his relationship with his father after this life changing event; and 'Tired Out' about a breakup. The first single 'Wicked & Weird' / 'Protest' are probably the two weakest tracks on the record, the first drawing undeserved comparisons with Beck and the latter featuring an annoying chipmunk vocal sample. Despite these flaws, *Talkin' Honky Blues* is an excellent album that has benefited from the extra time that Buck65's major label deal seems to have allowed, as well as better, if a little unadventurous, production. Buck65 tours in early December and he shouldn't be missed live. **Sebastian Chan**

## Colleen

*Everybody Alive Wants Answers*

(Leaf/Inertia)

This 26 year old Parisian has crafted simple, repetitive, yet utterly sublime sounds on her debut album *Everybody Alive Wants Answers*. Whilst the opening title track bears an uncanny resemblance to Dirty Three guitarist Mick Turner's amazing guitarscapes, Colleen quickly changes tack on 'Ritournelle', constructing a beautifully intimate repetitive jig, slightly reminiscent of a music box being opened and watching the ballerina twirl in a circle. It's a strange image that only begins to make sense when it's revealed that Colleen herself uses a broken music box alongside other tools such as guitar and glockenspiel. The simplicity; the intimacy of her sounds; the gentle, almost tender pacing and childlike naivety of her approach really are unique. Like label mate Susumu Yokota, Colleen manages to experiment with sound whilst retaining a fragile and distinctively human feel. In our cold, often mechanical world that's something well worth holding on to.

**Bob Baker Fish**

## Andrew Duke

*Take Nothing For Granted*

(Acid Fake)

Andrew Duke has been involved in the Canadian music scene as a composer, musician and author for years. Whilst he has released albums on Staalplaat, the impressive French label Bip-Hop, and now his own Acid Fake Recordings, his musical has output has been quite diverse, rarely settling on one style for an extended period of time. This restlessness has been reflected on *Take Nothing For Granted*, where at times he often seems to be inventing new genres or at least existing between the cracks. 'Shuffle' is excruciatingly slowed down dub, stripped of its rollicking funkiness, just plodding wearily along, and if you thought that was slow, 'Mortal' is virtually comatose. Other cuts take a markedly different approach, though quite difficult to define, like the skittering flecks of 'Suture', the strange sonic wave-forms of 'Cement', or the abstract atmospheric noises and warm tones of 'Progress'. Ultimately challenging, it may be a little too uncompromising and distinctive for its own good. Though there are vague though undoubtedly unbalanced hints of dub, they are tempered by elements of electronica, sound design and dark strange film soundtrack material. *Take Nothing For Granted* is a challenging and abstract album that is inventive as it is diverse. **Bob Baker Fish**



# GRANDMA'S PICKS

## LAWRENCE ENGLISH

### Akio Suzuki

#### *Odds And Ends*

(Horen)

the old man of Japanese sound art - a true master of found objects

### Rhythm + Sound

#### *The Versions*

(Burial)

Perfect for those hot summer afternoons on the veranda mate!

### DJ Olive

#### *Bodega*

(theAgriculture)

Well we don't have rooftops here, so let's dub this record yard music!

### T.Ramschmiere

#### *Monster Truck Driver*

(novamute)

The dance floor rocker of the year, macho and ballsy, with a hint of silliness

### Janek Schaefer

#### *Weather Report*

(audiOh)

A fine listen, almost like an audio diary

### Scott Horscroft

#### *8 Guitars*

(Quecksilber)

Need to meditate? well here's this year's credible release to do it to!

### John Chantler

#### *The Circle The Sun Spins*

(unreleased)

A super rough demo of his 2004 slated album - magical!

### Glenn Branca

#### *The Ascension*

(Acute)

Ascend with Branca into a realm of no wave intention and guitar majesty...

### XFM

#### *XFM 3 Track Sampler*

(unreleased)

Why can't I find more from these guys??

### Various

#### *Meeting At Offsite Volume 2*

(IMF)

If you can't be in Tokyo this winter then this cd will offer some consolation.

# INTERNATIONAL RELEASES

### Fennesz

#### *Live In Japan*

(Headz/Synaesthesia)

A live album from a laptop artist is a pretty bold concept, though if anyone could pull it off it would have to be Christian Fennesz. The Austrian laptop/guitar composer has established a formidable reputation over the past few years as one of the most distinctive and original manipulators of electronics presently in practice. In short, Live in Japan is an account of the Fennesz live show. At least partially improvised, his 43 minute set (one single track) begins in a gentle swarm of static, with strange floating off kilter melodies before evaporating into a drone and dipping into some wispy disjointed acoustic guitar work and reprocessed elements of 'Codeine' from his *Field Recordings* release last year. Over the course of the set he also repeatedly touches upon elements of *Endless Summer*, with warm hues of static lapping the guitar gently like waves as he effortlessly steers from one idea to another, evocative atmospheres one moment, harsh flecks and buzzes of static the next. Like every good live (rock?) show, the highlight is in the encore, a beautiful and intimate version of 'Caecilia', one of the most emotive tunes from his *Endless Summer* set. Perhaps visually this may have been as boring as watching paint dry, but with sounds this good, it transcends the visual and simply no longer matters. Fennesz has drawn a line in the sand. This is going to be a benchmark. **Bob Baker Fish**

### Hymie's Basement

#### *Self-Titled*

(Lex/Creative Vibes)

Recorded in the basement of Andrew Broder's favourite Minneapolis record store, this is Andrew (The Fog) collaborating with Anticon's Why?. As you would expect with these two souls involved it's a quite odd and sad record. Typically it's a charming album of piano, lo-fi folk, low volume guitar detuning, and rhymes that flit between hiphop, that Anticon spoken word harmonising, and alt-country. Probably the closest reference point is Clouddead but instead of dense collage of loops and oddness, this record is full of space and a lightness that, coupled with the nasal vocals, recalls They Might Be Giants (except without their annoying fanbase). Opening with a declamation of the militarism of the moment, it traverses increasingly intimate territory where the lo-fi grit of a 4 track recorder brings the listener closer with each track. A few tracks miss the mark but overall, *Hymie's Basement* is a surprising and lovely record.

**Sebastian Chan**

### Anna Kaufen

#### *Who Carez*

(A Touch Of Class)

A new 12" from Akufen is always worth lending an ear to. But this is special, not just for the 'hidden' pseudonym, but for its two remixes from Perth producer Dave Miller. Miller has been busy releasing 12"s for Background Records and most recently put out a collaborative EP with Melbourne's Fiam. With each release Miller moves further and further from his initial experiments in microhouse and into broken beat and jazz. Here Akufen's original is a surprisingly dull discohouse cut up that pulses along nicely enough for a swish bar, but it's Miller's Careful mix that is the killer. Forgoing the original's disco pulse, Miller slows down the original and chops out a downtempo hip hop beat whilst keeping the original's bassline. As the remix progresses the beat breaks up even more and the end result is a great piece of messed up hiphop. Miller's second remix is more standard, starting promisingly with a disjointed swing that keeps returning throughout the track interspersed by a reasonably standard dancefloor friendly 4/4 tech track. **Sebastian Chan**

### Maps + Diagrams

#### *Polytuft-Tech*

(Expanding)

Ever since the Boards of Canada unleashed their amazingly intimate and beautiful *Music Has The Right To Children* many moons ago, there has been a flurry of activity in what has been vaguely termed 'warm electronica'. Evidenced by gentle, often melancholic tones and light dreamy atmospheres attached to lazy beats, artists of the likes of Arovane have utilised this approach as a stepping stone to give voice to their own unique perspectives and obsessions. Joining them is Tim Martin (aka Maps + Diagrams) who delivers his sumptuously produced second album *Polytuft-Tech*. Eraserhead heater drones permeate hesitant keys, whilst the flanged up percussion starts to go haywire on 'Through Me', and elsewhere there are strange clips of static, squelchy beats and odd fluttery drones. Though strictly composed, Martin utilises many of the techniques of experimental electronic artists in *Polytuft-Tech*. Constructed with patience and a clear intent, Martin has produced a gentle yet touching album that challenges whilst it soothes. **Bob Baker Fish**

### MF Doom Is Viktor Vaughn

#### *Vaudeville Villain*

(Sound Ink)

The comic book mastermind of Daniel Dumile AKA Zev Love X AKA MF Doom AKA King Geedorah AKA Viktor Vaughn gets another chapter with *Vaudeville Villain*. After splitting with Elektra in

# INTERNATIONAL RELEASES <sup>26</sup>

1998, the metalface villain has clocked up countless releases on US indie hiphop labels Subverse and Fondle 'Em as well as dropping the *Take Me To Your Leader* album on Big Dada only a few months ago. Despite the quantity, the twisted cartoon universe is as potent as ever: the tracks are solid with a degree of clarity absent from previous excursions. The production is strong but transparent – minimal analogue dressing over refined percussion and programming. It's a perfect stage for the lyrics and mad scientist persona, conducting strange, forbidden experiments. MF Doom's rhyme schemes are as convoluted as ever, with a heavy dose of deadpan slack on lines like: 'I'm jokin on the fact that hiphop has gone freak show/don't let the drama get ya/in the only genre of music where the fans shoot the messenger' and 'do a street lyric like that's a neat trick/off on a tangent ain't got a cent ... sparkey/I've had enough of your malarkey/for one, don't mark me/and who you calling darky?'. *Vaudeville Villain* is a fine album, reminding me in parts of some of the better moments of Kool Keith, even stretching back to the native tongues Tribe and De La. It has an appeal for both backpack torch carriers and people outside the abstract hiphop fraternity. 'I'd rather masturbate than fuck with Vic Vaughn'. Don't believe it. **Vaughan Healey**

## Midwest Product

*World Series Of Love*

(Ghostly/Couchblip)

New Order's 1983 album *Power Corruption & Lies* is one of the classic rough diamond albums of the 80s – a fact that Ann Arbor 3-piece Midwest Product know well. Their debut album *Specifics* came out eighteen months ago and opened with a track that could almost have been a B-side of those original New Order sessions. *World Series of Love* continues down this early 80s path but now shares more with the New York DFA sound – tight Krautrock drums, driving synth and bass. The opener and second track are nothing special but things pick up with 'Swamp', its languid plod and sharp synth blips. And then there's the lovely moment when a sparkling guitar bursts out and glistens as a coda at the end of 'Motivator'. Still it feels a little like there is unsettled discomfort between the twin attractions of electronics and indie rock. *World Series of Love* is also notable for its new style of cardboard EP packaging – a flip out sleeve that reveals the CD disc – an ingenious design that both protects the disc and gives new design spaces on the sleeve, something I haven't seen used before except on a Creative Review DVD. **Sebastian Chan**

## The Neptunes

*Presents Clones*

(Startrak)

The amazing breadth of sound on *Clones* could make it seem like a Top 40 compilation, but all the tracks present a coherent Neptunes aesthetic. Whereas some of the earlier Neptunes productions like those on Kelis and Clipse albums tended towards the monochromatic, every track on *Clones* is rendered with a fresh palette. It effortlessly flips from the major scale up-tempo RnB of Nelly into dark skeletal hiphop on Rosco P. Coldchain's 'Hot'. The rockin N.E.R.D track 'Loser' comes across like a contemporary 'We Are The Champions' fixed to a swung out waltz beat and rave stabs. Most of the typical Neptunes trademarks are there: the basic up / down melodies and guitar licks on 'Frontin'', the piano riffs and Korg instrumentation on 'Good Girl', with the latter sounding like a small tribute to classic Jam & Lewis moments. These guys are at the forefront of an amazing remapping of modern music and if it continues as good as this, even pointy eared Vulcans will be waving the Neptunes salute.

**Vaughan Healey**

## Novel 23

*Architectural Effects*

(Bip Hop)

Novel 23 is one of the best Russian exports to date. A master of melodies, he has appeared on just about every solid IDM compilation in the past 4 years, although *Architectural Effects* is his first full length CD release (his three previous full lengths only being available on Casette, Vinyl and CD-R). Each of the ten tracks is a concept piece that reflects an element of architecture, construction or styles. The first track hits you with a dark, menacing overdriven bassline and percussive lofi harshness – not at all what I would usually expect from Novel 23, but seconds later his trademark melody fades up, reversing the mood of the piece. Composed with vintage Russian synthesizers, there is an undeniable analogue warmth to his music, and coupled with his penchant for natural uncomplicated synth-pop beats puts this release squarely in the melodic retro electronica bin – don't expect any complicated beat programming or DSP manipulation. It's all about the mix and production, not about being technical and modern – just blissful and inspiring listening music beautiful electro rhythms and enchanting refrains.

**Melinda Taylor**

# GRANDMA'S PICKS

## SIR ROBBO BIG BOTTOM SELECTION

### I Benjahman & Earthman tune in

Brain Smashing Dub  
(Lion Kingdom 12")

### Shinehead

Billy Jean  
(African Love Music LP)

### Yush 2K

Light Up  
(Soul Jazz 12")

### Revolver

Too Cool For School ( Treva Whateva remix )  
(Tummy Touch 12")

### Junior Kelly

Go Down Satan  
(Front Page 7")

### Dean Frazer

Nice Dub  
(Beverley Records 7")

### Robert Palmer / Lee Perry

Love Can Run Faster  
(Island Records 7")

### Tino's Breaks 6

Magic Dub  
(Tino Corp. LP)

### Tied & Ticked Trio

Revolution  
(Morr music LP)

### Keith Hudson

Playing It Cool / Playing It Right dub  
(Joint International LP)

## STINKY JIM BENT REGGAE BEST BITS

### Turntable Rocker

Rings (Riton Ska Boogies Rmx)  
(Four)

Takes a tragic herman german original and transforms it into a spectacu-ska-ly wobbly monster.

### Dave 'Stranger' Kelly

Fiesta Rhythm  
(Madhouse)  
Acoustic guitar shuffler = dancefloor dandemite.

### Fletcher

Heavy Stepper (Jon Kennedy Mx)  
(Seven Hills)  
From Vibra's Sheffield label that specialises in supremely saucy sevens, a funky-reggae mini-platter of unfeasible obesity.

## STINKY JIM continued

### Sizzla/Bonecrusher

Solid As A Rock (Rmx)  
(Dj Obsession White)  
Bonecrusher's bulbous dirrty south slammer gets blended with a previously lacklustre Sizzla lyric NYC style.

### Scatta And The Mulawi Indians

Coolie Dance Rhythm  
(High Society)  
African/junkanoo inspired JA dancehall rhythm that is running things here, there and everywhere

### Jae Millz

No No No  
(CDR)  
Chops Dawn Penn into little bits and Jae Millz lets off on the mic

### Fat Freddy's Drop

This Room  
(Drop/Best Seven)  
Business from the Wellington premier leaguers who are pulling props all over the shop.

### Digidub Ft Rico Rodriguez

Day One  
(David Trombone)  
Tremors from the right honourable Rico sit atop a slovenly but delightful rhythm

### Kensuke Shiina & Toshio Nakanishi

Bomb-Da-Bag-Dad (Car Park Middle East)  
(Postage)  
A spot of anti-oil-war dubwise deviation – search this album down and broadcast it frequently

### Pablo

Cissy Strut (Pt 3)  
(Red Hook)  
Dubbed-up Meters makeover in an old/new style 7" from the infrequent Glasgow label - also look out for their recent Butch Cassidy Soundsystem seven – it's a jockers hifi gem.

# INTERNATIONAL RELEASES

## Aki Onda

*Ancient And Modern*  
(Phonomena)

Aki Onda is a serious sonic shape-shifter. He's one of these musicians and producers that diligently manages to link into a variety of music sets, from the Improvised Music In Japan community to the academic scene of Northern New York (where he teaches alongside Jon Appleton) to his role as a pop producer, working with the likes of Tujiko Noriko (for whom he produced the Tomlab issue From Tokyo To Naigara). On *Ancient And Modern*, Onda undertakes a series of flowing tape compositions that are both compelling and understated. Pieces like 'Flickering Lights' mimic their title to a tee – his backward rhythmic loops shimmering on the horizon like a city in the distance. Likewise the somewhat more brutal 'Dream' tosses and turns, its revolving dull percussion loops flutter away, becoming increasingly hypnotic until new scratching elements are added via fast forwarded tapes. The nature of tape compositions generally lead to a 'defined' series of results, but Onda's attention to detail here and his understanding of space and repetition makes for a powerful sonic collage of dense layered audio atmospheres rich in colour, personality and timbre. **Lawrence English**

## Phelps & Munro

*Slowpoke*  
(Round Trip Mars)  
From Stinky Jim's Auckland label, responsible for the excellent album from SJD two years ago, comes Phelps & Munro's debut. Opening with a power chord and then a mutant drum & bass bombast, appropriately title To The Spazzmobile, it would be easy to skip past this little gem of an album. What follows is much more engaging melange of post rock, chunky hiphop beats, and tight digital edits made with an MPC and guitars. It's an odd combination of sounds and styles that has plenty of tongue in cheek moments – moody tracks that stop briefly for a cough or tiny dialogue sample, or the Choose Your Own Cover™, or the witty track titles that seem to be common to every Round Trip Mars release. The almost cheesy morse code stabs on 'Artificial Duck Flavour' gives way to a blissful ride into swirling guitar drawl into 'Glib's synth drones, guitar lick, and bass pulses. Later standouts include 'Ditto', 'Horse Winning Without Rider' and the title track 'Slowpoke'. Despite the improbability of the various elements that make up 'Slowpoke' working together, this is one of my favourite releases this year – quirky, atmospheric, and uncomplicated.

## Sebastian Chan

## Remarc

*Sound Murderer*  
(Planet μ)

The first junglist record I ever bought was Remarc's 'Sound Murderer' on Whitehouse Records, so I was pretty excited when Planet μ announced they were going to reissue his back catalogue. Back then, it was music with no equivalent, cacophonous anti-music that bore no resemblance to anything that had come before it. Crucially though, the tracks were borne of a dance-floor genesis: nothing was sacrificed to the funk – somehow finding its way out of the myriad warped breaks and bass. Through the 1990s, Remarc became infamous for the most twisted and extreme junglist music around, his releases were scarce and obscure with tracks coming out only sporadically on different labels. In fact he never seemed to be part of a larger junglist scene.

Listening to this today, it sounds as radical and unconventional and futurist and funky as ever. With its urban savant quality, these days Remarc's music is more likely to appeal to obsessive IDM fanatics than suave contemporary junglists – so it's a fitting Planet μ release. Even more exciting are the whispers of a forthcoming album of unreleased tracks. Sit tight and watch the ride. **Vaughan Healey**

## DJ Rubbish

*Proper Propaganda*

### Project Brothers

*We're Number One*

(Barry's Bootlegs)

Before you get confused, Rubbish isn't a DJ – just some fool with a mic. On *Proper Propaganda* he delivers an album of British Boy MC work, targeting Osama Bin Laden, Tony Blair (and all those other terrorists). With a voice placed too high in the mix, Rubbish moans and groans over a selection of beats that sway from disco to breaks, through to shoddy drum machines. It's killer. Unlike anything you've ever heard, this album is more like a badly recorded live set, a sixteen track mix, where the nine Rubbish originals are interspersed by Project Brother interludes. Now I don't know much about the Brothers, but judging from their album cover (a she-man, with no pants on, confused genitals and a blurred out face), these guys are as sick as label head honcho Barry. On their solo album *We're Number One* they display a similar political slant to Rubbish, with their slapped together odds and sodds collection of predominantly vocal samples that attack capitalism, denounce Paul McCartney as a cunt and stick together a rather jiggy collage of bling and dub infused phrases. Cassette Boy may still reign as the King of Barry's kingdom, but these two albums, as disparate and dishevelled as Barry's prison cell, are worth the purchase. Think Dsico meets Ozi Batla after a day on the piss. **Chloé Sasson**

# INTERNATIONAL RELEASES <sup>28</sup>

## Scanner & Stephen Vitello

s/t

(Audiosphere/Creative Vibes)

When he visited Australia a few years back doing a stand up comedy routine he cheekily referred to as an artist talk, Scanner seduced us all with tales of a life spent enraptured by sound. No stranger to collaboration, this time his partner is electronic musician and media artist Stephen Vitiello. Split into two pieces, the first was recorded live in June 2002 from Atlantic Avenue rooftops in New York. Clocking in at a modest 35 minutes, it provides the duo plenty of scope to move between ambient drones, gorgeously warm synthesized washes of sound, minimal beats and deep space bass tones. The second piece, recorded at the Knitting Factory in New York in 1999, is equally adept at setting the mood early with gorgeous washes of sound flowing under a spraying radio static and voicemail messages. As the twenty-minute piece continues, the duo continue to surprise, easing into mesmerising blips of backward masking, glitches, fractured material, and of all things ghostly chorals. It's a strange and beautiful sonic adventure that is always engaging. **Bob Baker Fish**

## Sora

*Re:Sort*

(Pop/Couchblip!)

From a Japanese label with a name that doesn't quite translate, comes this subtle and calm release from Kyoto-based musician Takeshi Kurosawa. A producer since the early 90s, Kurosawa had a few releases out on GPR (home to Beaumont Hannant, Germ and others) before they folded. This latest release under the pseudonym Sora steers into territory recently traversed by Four Tet and Manitoba, a kind of organic digital psychedelia – although minus the beats. Music box melodies, xylophones, tinkling pianos, chopped up samples from cocktail jazz records – there are also similarities to Jan Jelinek's *Loop Finding Jazz Records* – although this is brighter in mood. On the third track, 'Revals', Kurosawa makes much of a cocktail piano looping under a sea of random brightly coloured chattering glitch creatures: a little like an audio world akin to Takashi Murakami's *Adventures In Wonderland*. 'Etude Diagonal' carries a swing influence with the sample edits adding syncopation and 'Rayuela' brings 1950s b&w movie strings in over brushed drums. Worth tracking down. **Sebastian Chan**

## Twine

*Self-titled*

(Ghostly/Couchblip)

Following several tracks and an album for French experimental label Bip Hop, Twine release their second album for Ghostly. An ambient record that

recalls the prime of ambient electronics in the early 90s, before chill out compilations became fashion accessories for people with fashion accessory lives, 'minimalist' furniture, and corporate stress - it also recalls the days before digital processing and abstract effects superseded, in some cases, ideas. On this album the focus is on atmosphere, and Twine steer towards evolving sound collages of looping dialogue, found sound voices, sampled guitar, minor key synths, and an aesthetic that draws on Dead Can Dance and Eno. The central 12 minute epic, 'Kelea Morning', is carried by a voice that is reminiscent of the female call in Blade Runner, and is accompanied by a rapidly panning staccato pulse, circa Autechre 1995. Its reprise, 'Counting Off Again', begins with fluttering chopped up voices before a subtle piano progression emerges. Steadfastly refusing to be abrasive, this is a very approachable release that has an appealing subtlety and depth. **Sebastian Chan**

## Various Artists

*2nd Coco Waffle Flake*

(Skip/Synaesthesia)

In this weird fractured frantic world filled with ill fitting strangely spiced digital shards, there seems to some kind of perverse pride associated with the artist's ability to utilise all manner of difficult pitches and tones, clip them, and reassemble them with some semblance of structure and rhythm. Many would be familiar with DAT Politics zany frenzied spin on laptop punk, though with this collection featuring 10 other artists, they reveal many others equally adept at utilising the spit and glitch technology for mischievousness purposes. In fact there's something positively juvenile about many of the tunes presented here from the likes of Goodiepal, Nathan Michel and banjo laptop goddess Kevin Blechdom. The music lurches forward in noisy clipped spasms, tormenting one moment, embarrassing the next with repetitive cheesiness, seemingly sending the message that though the fiery pits of hell await there's plenty of corn to keep us going in the meantime. Aside from the big guns (Kevin Blechdom is typically hilarious), it's some of the lesser knowns that send speedballs through the circuit board. Melbourne based The Park Royal Trio click, shudder, bleep and overload in a joyfully clinical and vaguely percussive stomp, Aelters somehow marries abrasive noise, hiphop, abstract tech and low rent electroclash, and the wonderfully named Secret Mommy construct an intimate childish carnival of cuteness, energetically populated by strange whirrs, wails and spasms. **Bob Baker Fish**

## Luke Vibert

*YosephH*

(Warp/Creative Vibes)

The 303 is a much maligned instrument. The result of its overuse in the hard trance scenes of the mid 90s was that much of the funk that made acid house work in the late 80s was lost. Then came the software version – Rebirth, which only exacerbated the problem. Bar a few moments of pop brilliance *a la* 'Everybody Loves a 303' and 'Higher State Of Consciousness' it's been quite a while since the 303's burbling analogue sound has been of interest. That's why *YosephH*, Luke Vibert's tribute to the 303, is such a pleasant surprise. The lead single, 'I Love Acid' sets the tone with a cheery gurgling ode to acid carried by a typically slappy Vibert rhythm – ever notice how each breakbeat he has made carries a certain slap/swing in the tail? The same sharpness is brought to work on 'Acidisco', which is everything DJ Icey should have been (but never was). Referencing Chicago house, British acid, and the California mid-90s acid breakbeat revival sound, the album moves playfully through a series of warm and inviting, slightly twisted analogue bumbles, never reaching high tempos nor relentless shrill squealing acid heights. Instead it's a simultaneous step forward and back – a familiar blanket given a fresh wash. **Sebastian Chan**

# DVDs

## Various Artists

*Visual Niches 2*

(E:Motion/Inertia)

The first *Visual Niches* brought together a series of seventeen music videos from Sigur Ros to Little Computer People and was a good collection of material that rarely, if ever, saw screens in Australia. On *Niches 2* there are fifteen clips ranging from the well known – Roots Manuva's 'Witness'; DJ Shadow's 'Walkie Talkie' – directed by Ben Stokes whose work you may have seen in the video mix for Shadow's live shows; Basement Jaxx's award-winning 'Where's Your Head At?'; and LFO's 'Tied Up'; to the more obscure like Amon Tobin's 'Four Ton Mantis' and T.Raumschmiere's animated 'Monster Truck Driver'. What separates the original *Niches* from this latest edition is that in the first volume the more obscure clips were amongst the standouts, whereas here they feel more like filler. Even when the music is edgy and exciting – Anti Pop Consortium's 'Perpendicular/Vector'; Casten Jost's 'Make Pigs Pay', the video accompaniment is conceptually interesting but visually dry compared to the high budget clips. Perhaps it is this problem of context/contrast that makes *Niches 2* less engaging than the first? **Sebastian Chan**

# SLEEVE REVIEWS:

Sleeve Design by Alex Crowfoot

A mixed bag in this issue and, to quote Tooth, 'disappointments... here and there'. Alongside handmade packaging from Western Australian series of credit card CDs We also have further examples of the CD release as craft object, with sewing machines making a surprise entry into the design vernacular, a design sequel/remix for Red Snapper, and more.



**Fuckface Records Volumes 1-5**  
(Fuckface Records 2002-2003)  
Format: Credit card CD  
Designer: Uncredited

All these Western Australian releases come as unprinted white credit card CDs in a plastic wallet, with a paper insert. This is slipped into a stitched fabric pocket. I was impressed by all the care and love that has gone into producing a series of unique looking releases that are unlike anything else I've seen.

## **Volume 1: Bib Gnaw**

A black pocket, with a paper 'cover' consisting of streaked black with the characters C N C / H in small (intentionally?) bitmapped type. This is joined by a track listing and credits in black on a white piece of paper, in the same bitmapped typeface, sometimes reversed out 'Dymo' style. The minimal style is completed by a series of black lines. It's either a colour-copied inkjet print or is printed on a colour laser with limitations, as tiny dots create a smudging effect. Intentional or no, it's a nicely subtle effect.

## **Volume 2: T. Pakioufakis**

Black and cream striped fabric with black stitching wraps the CD this time. The paper insert is all black save for a white box on one side which holds type in small black Helvetica caps. Minimal, simple and effective.

## **Volume 3?: AIDS Fuckface EP**

Aesthetic diversion here in the form of an ink-stamped eyes, nose and mouth on a red fabric pocket. The type also diverts into a lo-fi dot matrix style on one insert, and black and white band photo on the other. There's a sticker too, in red and black, to advertise the EP, complete with its touchy-feely title in red. The eyes nose and mouth return, complete with face and hair this time.

## **Volume 4: Aut tinkle**

With this volume the charm comes back in spades. A simplistic brown felt tree with beige, rust and cream leaves is stuck to a brown fabric pocket. (it could also be a bird's foot after it has walked through some glue and then some scraps of paper. Just kidding). The paper insert is dynamically angled minimal sans serif type in beige-green on white.

## **Volume 5: Nisa Briggs**

Well you don't see a gatefold fabric pocket double CD release every day. Red waffle textured fabric, back to the small Helvetica caps here, this time in red.

Because of the variations in this series they don't quite work as a set for me – either more or less contrast between them would have done that – but individually these are interesting pieces well executed, with volumes 1 and 4 being the best.



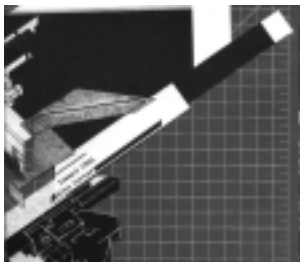
**Left:** The unprinted white credit card CD

**Above:** AIDS Fuckface EP cloth pocket

**Below:** Aut Tinkle cover slip and cloth bag







### Alex Cortex

*Inward CTRL*

(Ann Aimee)

Format: Digipak CD

Designer: Uncredited – I think

This design is notable for its translation of digital style into the physical world. It features the angled, highly structured pseudo-architectural forms normally seen in computer artwork. It then subverts them through being hand drawn on cut out, dirty black and white photocopied pieces, assembled on a green background with yellow grid lines that designers should recognise as a cutting mat. The piece folds out into a T-shape.

Inside all is white save a few inky black edges and blotches. The CD echoes the lo-fi feel with more dirty, angled forms in black and white.

The type is all in Courier, sometimes reversed out of black, the information minimal. The music completely replaces the earthy grit of the sleeve with digital textures circuiting its warm chopped electronics.



### Bradbury

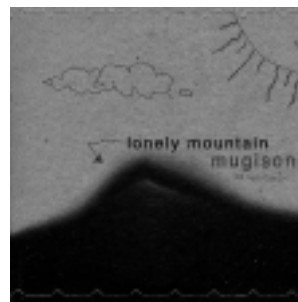
*Ruffini Corpuscle*

(dual pLOVER)

Format: CD

Designer: Uncredited

A die-cut card sleeve with Velcro closure is emblazoned with a photo-collage inside and out which features, among others; hands, coin, camera lens with peach inside (?), furry bits, teeth, horn, oil drum thing, carrot-slice-on-fork, megaphone, pidgin English sign, seeds, map, sky, smokestacks (like the sugar factory you pass as you head up to the North Coast of NSW), frog, fungus, sphere thing, pig snout, cowboy head on dominatrix shoulders, medals, sealion, aerial view of farm, foot, electron microscope shot of something, water. Inside we have a green felt panel in the CD pocket and black type on an OHP film insert with the credits. The disc has an old illustration of a baby talking on the phone wearing pearls and stepping into a little spaceship containing a teddy. So aesthetically that would be a collage with green felt and OHP mashup type thing. I don't know what to say, it just is. I like the record.



### Mugison

*Lonely Mountain*

(Lifelike 2003)

Format: CD

Designer: Sasi, Kjartan, mugl and Runa

This is a highly personal and idiosyncratic design that perfectly matches Mugison's music and fits alongside the increasingly more exotic design work on Herbert's Lifelike label. Recycled board is stitched together to form a pocket with a flap, with a booklet on recycled paper stitched to it inside. The cover: a blurry digital mountain shape with title in black, artist in muted red, both in lower case Helvetica. A scribbled arrow points from the title to the blurred, digital and slightly 3D from of a mountain. Mugison is subtitled 'one man band' in awkward handwriting. Jagged clouds and a portion of smiling sun are also hand drawn. The mountain flows onto the back cover and is joined by running stick figures, scribbled arrows, with track listing (in red) and credits (in black) in a mix of typefaces and handwriting. Tear apart the Velcro tab and it's scribble heaven. Handwriting (some child-like, some adult, a mix of comments, lyrics and credits), doodles, photo booth stupidity, smears, repeated chopped up shapes, lower case Times typesetting, and blurred digital forms collapse across the pages. A nice touch – the booklet centrefold also appears across the spread of the inside cover. The CD is a red circle that repeats the mountain shape in a white line, and mirrors the typography of the cover. A suitable sleeve for the mix of melody, insanity, softness, DSP, electronics, vocals, drums, guitar and whatever else on this extraordinary record.



### **Vacuous Ninnies**

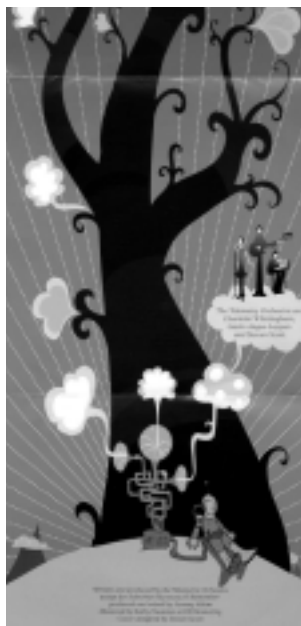
*Vacuous Ninnies*

(Quatermass/Creative Vibes)

Format: CD

Designer: Uncredited

This sleeve is interesting mainly for the type. The cover is a pale grey and features an odd shape, on closer inspection it's a hog with its face buried in a big red food bowl. The cover has the name Vacuous Ninnies in angled type, which is hard to read but it's a really nicely executed "show-the-process" form of 3D digital type. All letters feature anchor points, some showing the structure of the vignettes, others having the rendered vignette. The back features the same technique but a different type face. I especially like the way the centre of some letters is extruded and filled – definitely an alternative take on deconstruction of type. Inside the 4 page booklet we get the track listing repeated in the same typeface as the cover over a white paint splat. This splat is the only non-typographic element on the CD.



### **Telemetry Orchestra**

*Children Stay Free*

(Silent Recordings 2003)

Format: CD

Designer: Steven Scott

Appealing organic vector graphic illustrations flood the cover with colour and a knowing innocence. A Yellow Submarine-esque cartoon other-world is revealed in two tableaux, the sunset cover folding out to reveal a forest in pinks and reds with a nice hint of menace in the hidden creatures, only their eyes visible. Inside the booklet, a curling tree clammers up the sunset as it spews forth balloons of pastel colour. Somehow the style of the astronaut doesn't fit into this world, but then he is a visitor. His breathing machine (?) makes a reappearance on the back cover. The illustration of the group themselves is cute in a not-too-cute way. Nice continuation onto the CD, in yellow white and brown, the tray being the only slight let down in an otherwise beautifully executed sleeve. The bar code integration on the back cover could perhaps have had a tweak too.

Check [cyclicdefrost.com](http://cyclicdefrost.com) for more sleeve reviews and colour sleeve images



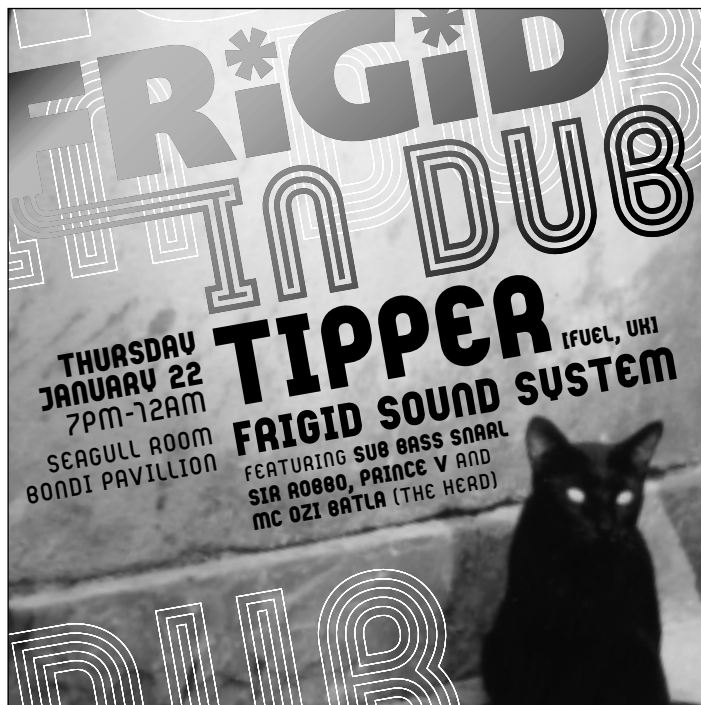
**impermanent.recordings**  
**HTTP://IMPERMANENT.INFO**

**out now - stern / guerra - stitch**

**If there are barriers between experimental  
electronica and free improvisation, this lot  
are breaking them down.**

**Peter Marsh - BBC**

**out soon - brett lerner & toshimaru nakamura  
'after school activity'**





# HERMITUDE SELECTS

by Sebastian Chan

EVERYONE HAS THOSE SPECIAL RECORDS THAT CHANGED THEIR LIVES, AND THEY'RE NOT ALWAYS JUST TEENAGE SONGS. THE MOST MEMORABLE MUSIC MAKES AN EMOTIONAL CONNECTION, MORE THAN JUST A 'DOPE BEAT' OR A 'HOT DSP EFFECT'. THIS ISSUE'S SELECTS COMES FROM THE BLUE MOUNTAINS, WEST OF SYDNEY.

Luke Dubs and Elgusto are the two young players (rumoured to be 23 and 20 respectively) behind Hermitude, responsible for *Alleys to Valleys*, one of the best downtempo albums of recent times. Full of warm keyboards, rounded and surprisingly complex beats, it has been deservedly getting glowing reviews both here and overseas. Both formerly members of Blue Mountains hip-hop crew Explanetary (which also featured Urthboy from the Herd) their musical partnership rotates around Stuart Sound Heaven in Wentworth Falls, the studio run by elgusto's father, himself a musician of some note. Apart from Hermitude, elgusto has spent the last couple of years playing and touring with Paul Mac as percussionist and DJ, whilst Luke Dubs has lent his keyboard skills to many local Sydney outfits, including the inimitable Gauche.

## EL GUSTO SELECTS :

### Herbie Hancock

#### *Headhunters*

(Columbia, 1973)

This record was a huge influence to the direction I took in music. The first time I heard 'Chameleon' was when I was about 12 or 13. I walked into my dad's work room (he's a composer and guitarist) and he called me in – I thought I was in trouble – 'Angus, come here, I need to show you something'. He put the record on and played me 'Chameleon'. I completely freaked out. The bass sound that begins the song is something in itself, and then the beat. Being a drummer it was the funkier thing I had ever heard. From then on, I tried to be that type of drummer, the ultimate in refined groove.

### Primus

#### *Suck On This*

(Caroline, 1990)

Les Claypool, where the hell was this guy coming from? His bass playing astonished me. It was completely different, all the tapping he was doing... and Herb the ginseng drummer. Herb was so tight – not just his playing but the sound of his drums were tight – which is why I think I liked it so much. I filled my metal stage with those guys.

## James Brown

Various releases

(Various labels)

After hearing funk music such as Herbie, the next step had to be James Brown. What would hip-hop be without the funky drummer? The funny thing is that at that time, when I was listening to James Brown and the JB's I was in Year 7 at high school and I was a complete purist and hated electronic music – 'why are they even bothering, they just rip everybody off, they can't even play an instrument'. But back then the only electronic music I was hearing was happy hardcore... James Brown and the JB's – it was all about that locking groove, everybody playing together so tight and so simple. They all had their place and if they stepped out of line – James would fire them!

## DJ Food

### *Refried Food*

(Ninja Tune, 1996)

This is where it all went backwards. I'd heard some hip-hop by now and I was starting to accept that not everything had to be played by some amazingly funky black guy with a deep voice. I bought DJ Food when I was on holiday, one of my friends had mentioned it and I thought I'd give it a go. I immediately thought 'Holy Shit! What is this?'. I'd never heard anything like it, it was hip-hop without the rapping – and the music, the sounds, weren't just loops of the JB's – it was really something different. I thought to myself, these guys must actually be very musically talented. After hearing some more Ninja Tune stuff like the Herbaliser, I got completely obsessed with that sound. I wanted to try to make it so I convinced my dad to go halves with me and a friend in purchasing a sampler. In just 3 years I went from a hater to a lover of sample-based music... and then started making it.

## DJ Shadow

### *Entroducing*

(MoWax, 1996)

I bought *Entroducing* when I was 16 and it sat on my shelf for two months. I wasn't sure if I liked it or not. But after a while it slowly took over my CD player and it didn't leave it for a long time. Unlike other hip-hop related music the tracks didn't sound 'cut up', they almost sound as if musicians had played on the album. This record pushed my production techniques further towards concern with separation of sounds, the quality of the sounds, and intricate beat variations.

## LUKE DUBS SELECTS :

### Michael Jackson

#### *Thriller*

(Epic, 1982)

This was the first cassette I ever owned and it brings back memories of roadtrips with my folks. My parents were heavily into Quincy Jones, so they bought me a copy of the album. And it blew my mind! 'Billie Jean' was the obvious standout at first but then I got into the other tracks like 'Baby Be Mine' and 'Human Nature' and I realised what amazing songwriters and producers Quincy and Michael were.

### The Prodigy

#### *Music For The Jilted Generation*

(XL, 1994)

Through the last years of high school (93-95) I was into electronic music. Everything from Rotterdam Records and Bloodyfist to The Prodigy. I was hanging out with Edy Sledgehammer (our designer), going over to his house every other day to smoke weed, *The Experience* and *Jilted Generation* were always high rotation. It was about this time, at the end of 1993, that I obtained an Atari ST with Cubase and a Yamaha SY22 synth and started making beats. *Jilted Generation* was a huge influence on my writing. I just loved their sound and their crazy high pitched sped up melodic lines which remind me of evil video game music.

### The Roots

#### *Illadelph Halflife*

(Geffen, 1996)

I first heard The Roots at fellow producer Realistic's house when he put on *Do You Want Some More?* (Geffen, 1994). It's a wicked album, with the band pulling some amazing sounds from their instruments with very little production. Then came *Illadelph*, their first trip into programming and sampling, and it didn't leave my CD player for months. I was studying at the time and I remember going down to Unsound Records at Wynyard and snapping it up straight away. Back to uni, I went to the library, put on some headphones and listened to it cover to cover. They pulled some killer drum sounds on that record and have continued to push their sound.

### The Herbaliser

#### *Remedies*

(Ninja Tune, 1995)

I was in my first year at university and cruising down Pitt St Mall and I went downstairs in to what was then Blockbuster Music. I was browsing through the 'recommended listening' section and the cover caught my eye. I had never heard hiphop without rappers – it was a dream come true. That was the discovery of Ninja Tune for me and after thrashing that album I hunted down DJ Food and Vadim and any other Ninja Tune I could find.



'I had never heard hiphop without rappers – it was a dream come true'

### Ernest Ranglin

#### *Below The Bassline*

(Island Jamaica, 1996)

Elgusto played this to me about a year ago. It's a killer mix of tasty reggae grooves and jazz. Idris Muhammad has the killer feel on the drums and Monty Alexander is an absolute shredder on the piano and reminiscent of the Oscar Peterson style of playing. He unleashes these fuck off chops over these laid back reggae grooves. Ernest is right there with him, playing these amazing solos over a killer rhythm section. The perfect summertime album.

*Hermitude's Alleys to Valleys* is available now on elephant traks through *Inertia* see [elefanttraks.com](http://elefanttraks.com) and [hermitude.com](http://hermitude.com) for more



## SUSUMU YOKOTA ~ laputa

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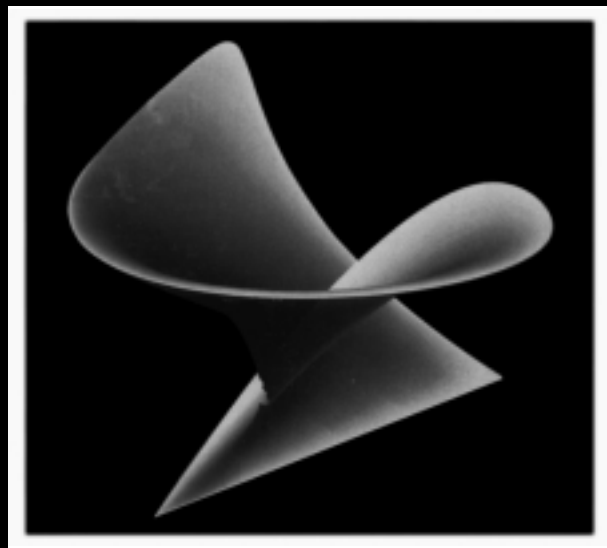
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'Mostly quiet, sometimes scary, often beautifully mad' *Wire*

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# DEAR DEGRASSI

A REGULAR DOSE OF IRREGULAR POP CULTURE

*Dear Degrassi,*  
*What are your views on family planning?*  
**Seamus Murphy**

Three words for you my fertile friend: Eight Is Enough! My parents did a pretty good job of grinding adamantly Catholic families to a near halt, however it is my complete lack of maternal instincts coupled with my paralysing fear of spontaneous lactation that has banished the Degrassi name into a genetic cul-de-sac. *Eight is Enough* could very well have played a part in this. It was a show about the Bradfords, a family who were to the Bradys what Holly Valance is to Delta Goodrem. And they were the greatest exponent of the 'dramedy' genre... something which some of the actors carried into real life as well. Some might even say that the show was as cursed as *Diff'rent Strokes*.

The Bradfords were headed by Tom (Dick van Patten – best known recently for appearing in Weird Al Yankovic's Smells Like Nirvana clip), a columnist that must have somehow commanded a salary capable of supporting eight children varying in age from 8 to 23. In the first four episodes he was joined by wife Joan (Diana Hyland), however the actress was diagnosed with cancer and was written out of the show shortly after passing away in real life. This seemed to put the 'dra' in 'dramedy' and paved the way for the much loved Abbey (Betty Buckley) to woo her way into Tom Bradford's, and the American public's, heart. But hey, with all those kids to support, her whopping salary earned as a counsellor no doubt helped out. Funnily enough, she also played a counsellor in the film *Carrie* two years earlier. Typecast? Nah!

When it came to remembering all the kids in chronological order, some die-hard fans used the following mnemonic for help: Dumb Martians Just Sit Nearby Eating Tender Noodles. Dumb is for David,

the eldest son who managed to escape living with the rest of them. Mark Hamill played the role in the pilot, but he got sidetracked by some low-budget sci-fi flick freeing up the role for Grant Goodeve. Just as well, because there's nothing better than a second rate actor showcasing their third rate singing talents on TV, Stan Grant stylee. After scaling a fence and face planting in 1980 (curse #2) he found god after watching a televangelist, although he shuns away from becoming a 'celebrity Christian'.

The gravelly voiced doctor-in-training, Mary Bradford, was played by Lani O'Grady, who tragically gives us the third curse. After suffering severe panic attacks during the filming of the show, necessitating two bottles of wine and hand-fuls of sedatives daily, she was found dead in her mobile home by her neighbour in 2001, a passing that was mysteriously similar to that of Dana Plato. By contrast, Laurie Walters (who played Joannie) has led a life as spectacularly uneventful as that of her character in the show. Susan Richardson, unimaginatively named Susan in the show, was sports mad – so much so that she married a baseball player in one of those tacky, far-fetched double weddings with her brother David. Of course marriages provide the opportunity for legitimate childbirth and thus Susan procreated in both the show and real life. This led to her gaining an extra 40kgs and since post-natal personal training wasn't the boom industry it is now, she went on the Columbian diet which proved very successful for dramatic weight loss. That would be curse #4. And just to take the tally to five, she became a rock singer and fell off stage shattering her tailbone, leading and developed a taste for morphine.

Nancy, played by Dianne Kaye, although foxy, offered nothing in the way of scandal, except perhaps for an allusion to living in the fast lane during her modelling career which occurred between the

end of the television show and the *Eight Is Enough* Family Re-union telemovie. Connie Newton Needham, who played the youngest daughter Elizabeth, also lacked any curse.

That leaves room for the two baby boys... and what doozies they are! Tommy was played by Willie Aames, who wanted to be a marine biologist more than he wanted to act. However, being a child star offered an escape from his unhappy childhood. So too did cocaine. That's six now. Fortunately for him and his similarly drug addicted love interest, Maylo, they both heard a pastor preaching on the radio and within three months were clean-living, baptized and married. Whew! It's all or nothing in Hollywood. Willie's new found faith caused him some career problems as he felt that his role as Buddy Lembeck (Scott Baio's sidekick) in *Charles In Charge* compromised the integrity of his faith. This was not a problem for him when he took on the role of Bibleman in videos and later, plays. The premise? Well, quite simply Bibleman (alter ego Miles Peterson) is a superhero with all the usual contraptions... and his special power? The word of god... His protection? The armour of god. Great stuff.

Last, but possibly juiciest in terms of 'dramedy', is Adam Rich, who played the pudding-bowled Nicholas. We all heard about his addiction to just about anything, becoming so acute that he dislocated his own shoulder in order to be prescribed painkillers (curse #7). Then his crimes against hair were renewed with the mullet he sported in the *Family Reunion* telemovie that truly resembled a Bon Jovi parody wig (curse #8). In dire need of some publicity... any publicity, the 1996 Adam Rich death hoax made it to the cover of *Might* magazine with the headline 'To Live and Die In LA'. The plausible story told he was shot by an unemployed dinner theatre stagehand. The Karate Kid himself, Ralph Macchio (who played Abby's nephew towards the end of the series) was even quoted in the article, with the lasting tribute 'I'm glad he's dead.' Watch your leg there, Daniel-san! But the elaborate hoax was conducted to parody the media and of course, since all Americans have had an irony by-pass, it worked! Only last year Adam narrowly missed hitting a police car in a closed highway lane and was arrested when found to be under the influence of booze and pot, despite proclaiming that he had been sober for the past decade. I'm sure that brings the tally to somewhere around 10!

My advice one child is by far enough, otherwise they all run riot!





# Come and get it!



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**Various  
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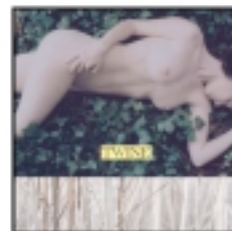
**Various  
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A superb musical journey from glitch-nod to lush ambience. Includes music from Sense, P8XD, Twerk, Khalie, Stewart (aka Machine Drum), Blamstrain + more



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Two tracks of dark introspective idm flavored dub from Melbourne's Sense. Mesmerising and lush. This is a ltd edn 7" release from Merck with a ltd number on marble-laid vinyl



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All the way from Siberia, a debut album that is as lyrical as a fairy tale for people tired from all the noise and stir of a big city. An uplifting release that will imbue you with happiness



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**Gridlock  
Formless (Hymen)**  
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**AC/3P  
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**Fila  
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**Disjunction Reunion  
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