sounds from the summit

Arovane
Lillies
(Trinity Centre Official)
Abstract computer funk meets traditional instrument samples – representing both progressiveness and Japanese tradition.

Diplo
Florida
(Big Data)
A fried-out booty-shaking hip hop psych rock epic combining a love for bass music with a crate-digger’s ear for a sample and a classical composer’s feel for development.

Radian
Juxtaposition
(Thrust Jockey)
A collection of sounds and instruments which are “micro re-recorded” then rearranged alongside live instruments. The result is an audio feast – headphones and high volume encouraged! Produced by John McEntire of Tortoise.

Triosk
Moment Returns
(Leaf)
Sydney jazz trio fusing electronic production values with new music and jazz techniques. ‘Moment Returns’ will appeal to those who are already big fans of Four Tet, The Necks or Cinematic Orchestra.

No One
A New White
(Leaf)
Includes Anticon’s Dose One & Her various appearances and CLOUDHEAD. This outstanding debut was created with one reel and one electronic drummer plus electric cells, keyboards, guitar and of course, Dose One’s extraordinary vocals.

Dead Combo
Dead Combo
(Output)
Debut album from output recordings’ latest signings. Finnish marauders Dead Combo. Their raw and aggressive vibe was premiered by output at the Output/RCA records party in NY.

Hexstatic
Master View
(Ninja Tune)
Incredible new multimedia package: the CD album is a loose mash-up of classic electro, Ninja funk and funky samples. The DVD features crazy cool AV shit (and comes with free 3D glasses).!!!

Mara Carlyle
The Lonely
(Accidental)
Produced by Piad and released on Herbert’s Accidental label. This album includes a cameo appearance from Nicolette and is so lovely that it will make you smile and cry at the same time.

Secret Masters
The Lost Dub Tapes
(Ninja Tune)
A collaboration from dedicated dub/ reggae heads: Peter Bourke & Brian Westbrook. What begins as experimentation with dub turns into an obsession. The result draws influences from classic 70s Jamaican sounds while still being very contemporary.

Tuokko
Position Correction
(Ruff Trade)
Debut album from Melbourne’s hip hop heroes. This album features everything good about local hip hop, combining attitude, humour, grit and wit plus a liberating dose of shake-your-ass - and they got it all on one disc.

Sigmatropic
Sixteen Haku & Other Stories
(Rogue Records)
A sensual, cinematic art rock soundscape featuring a star-studded line-up of vocalists singing the haiku of Greek poet George Seferis. Includes Robert Wyatt, Cat Power, Larkins, Sade, Lee Ronaldo, Aled John, Escobar, Mark Eitzel and more.

Various
Ammunition
(Planet Mu)
A $9.95 sampler of for Planet Mu Records. A mindblowing 80 minute mix by Mike Paradinas (U-Zig) which showcases the wild variety this label has to offer.
EDITORIAL
Welcome to Issue 9. It is a bit later and lighter than we promised as Cyclic Towers has yet again been hit by a maelstrom of ill fortune which has permeated out to some of contributors as well. Bear witness to our iPod crunker being bailed up in London after a big night out, an interviewee going AWOL, and my co-ed Dale limping around in an oversize space jandal. The promised articles that are missing will appear in a bumper Issue 10.

Despite this, we’ve been inundated with good music in the past few months and as a result of this flood we have now set up a ‘music club’ – the Cyclic Music Club. The idea of the club came out of talking to one of our writers, Chloe Sasson, about her book club, and from all the emails we get asking where to get some of the music we talk about in the magazine. Like a book club the music club is simply a club where everyone listens to the same album and then discusses it – however using the resources we have, we’ve taken it the next step – we source the albums for you and send them direct to your door! This kills several birds with one stone and makes quite a tasty bird pie out of them. All our Music Club members get new, interesting music sent to them as often as every fortnight complete with listening notes to help them make those all important linkages between what they might be listening to and what they already own or know. Members also get to participate in discussions of the albums with the artists and labels responsible for them, as well as talk to other club members – thus creating a nice relationship between consumer and producer, voyeur and artist. Since launching the club on our email list, we’ve sent out electronica, sound art, hiphop, indie and reggae albums drawn from both local and overseas labels. The Music Club is about exposing people to new, interesting music in an accessible painless way, and building up a stronger, more diverse music listenership out there. To find out more check out www.cyclicdefrost.com/club.

So, on to the stories that are in this issue. We have local interviews with Sydney post-rockers Decoder Ring fresh from their scoring of Cate Shortland’s excellent award-winning debut feature film Somersault, Brisbane dub techno producer Twotone, Sydney sound artist and Electrofringe director Gail Priest, and an overview of the Australian VJ scene since the early 80s from Jean Poole. On the international front we have an interview with breakbeat and jazzstep producer Domu as well as rather cynical reviews of the annual Sonar and DEMF festivals. Filling it out are a stack of reviews and a killer cover this time done by Sydney hip hop producer and graphic designer Macross Matrix.

Sebastian Chan & Dale Harrison, Editors.

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Anything I find on the street, on TV, the net, anything that’s cool enough to make me stop and really think about how it was done, is inspiring.

Paul Drummond is something of one-man creative agency to the Australian hiphop underground. In addition to his day job as corporate graphic designer and as MC Macross Matrix, Drummond designs clothes, flyers, LP artwork, websites, is designing a book and directs music videos for a network of Aussie hiphop mates. Simply put, hiphop is the avenue into which this issue’s cover designer channels all his creativity.

‘It all started when I met Dr D (now 13th Son) in Year 7 at high school,’ begins Drummond. ‘He was in a group called Industrial Dispute that later became Fathom. I was introduced to hiphop by these guys. I was never really into music before I was exposed to the raw, underground, rugged beats and lyrics that 13th Son and the Fathom boys played me. For better or worse, music and especially hiphop music, has moulded me into the person I am: how I see the world, how I am seen in the world and how I participate in it. To start to make music and be involved in the local hiphop scene was just a natural progression.’

Good at art and tech drawing at school, Drummond ‘lucked it’ into UWS Nepean’s Visual Communications course, and his hiphop focus never wavered. ‘It really pissed off my lecturers after a while. From photography to interactive media to video, all had something to do with hiphop in some form.’ But hiphop is simply the filter through which everything passes, as Drummond is inspired by many others things: ‘Anime movies, Hollywood and B-grade movies. B-grade movies are always a good resource to pick up little tricks on how to get effects on the cheap,’ he explains.

‘Anything I find on the street, on TV, the net, anything that’s cool enough to make me stop and really think about how it was done, is inspiring.’

Recently Drummond has been testing his adaptability by producing some music videos. ‘Doing a clip is another challenge (especially with no money) compared to other forms of design. But if you’re a creative person you should be able to apply your ideas and skills to anything.’

Retaining the rough and ready underground approach, Drummond’s most recent clip, for Sydney MC Realsitix, took just 50 minutes to film. ‘[And] that includes walking to the location,’ he says. ‘Realistix used to be a part of the Blue Mountains group Explanetary, rapping alongside Urthboy. He was working on his album Turf Wars (which is out now) and I was looking for a video project to play around with. We picked a song and a location and filmed it in an afternoon. It was a very unplanned, suck-it-and-see type of shoot. We had a portable stereo to guide us and a mini DV camera. We did about two takes of the whole song in about 4 different places and I filmed bits and pieces as we walked around to fill in the gaps. Then I took it home and spent a lot of time editing and treating what was shot in Final Cut Pro, After Effects and Combustion. There was no deadline so I fucked around a bit.

‘I was after a video project but it needed to have a useful end result. If it didn’t have one I would never have finished it. I know I could have just wandered the streets to shoot anything that
moved and played around with that, but then it had no purpose, I wouldn’t have gotten on board with it and I would have ended up with crap.

‘It was very time consuming; I’m a tough customer to please, so I was always redoing pieces. Funnily enough I’m still not happy with the final result, but happy enough to let it go. You have to learn when to say when.’

When in MC mode as Macross Matrix, Drummond teams up with legendary Sydney producer Sereck (Def Wish Cast, Celsius), who also introduced him to Australian graf artist Atome. Drummond designs clothes for Atome’s Oneleginc brand, as well as laying up Atome’s new book *Unleaded*.

‘The *Atome Unleaded* book was a project Atome had wanted to do for a while. The book is a collection of excerpts from Atome; an exclusive peek into his inner-workings and style. The never-before-seen lead pencil sketches are from the birthplace of his style, his black book. *Unleaded* is about documenting and sharing Atome’s art with the world.

‘We originally got together when Atome was looking for someone to design T-shirts for Oneleginc, and Sereck told him about me. We’ve been doing things together for about 18 months. I had a hand in the winter range of Oneleg hoodies and zip-ups, as well the new Oneleginc website. And keep an eye out for this summer range of tees; it’s gonna be dope! The hook up has been great for me cause I haven’t just gained a good friend, but we’ve come up with some great projects for me to really get my design out to the world on a personal level, not for a company. It’s very satisfying seeing someone you don’t know on the street rocking a tee or a hoodie you did.’

Looking into the future, Drummond sees more well-planned works. ‘My approach to the projects I take on is something I have been refining of late: Making the final work’s purpose clear in my mind,’ he explains. ‘Once I am happy with what I want to communicate, or not communicate, I try to find one strong element that is exactly what I want and use that as the core. Then I let everything else fall into place from there. Also, the first creation doesn’t have to be the last, sometimes I save it and come back the next day and remix.’ In whatever he does, Drummond is on a constant quest for what he describes as the ‘Oh shit’ factor. Why? Drummond simply states, ‘Dunno, it’s just my thing.’

Paul can be found at www.bunkadefresh.com.

New Macross Matrix material is scheduled for a 2005 release.
Ryan Gobbe is in an odd position: with two albums out in the same month on different independent labels, he is unsure which he should be talking about more. Under the alias of Twotone he has released *Cinecity* on Bug Records, and as Mieli he has *Version* on Feral Media. Despite different pseudonyms, both releases draw on a similar palette of sound – shifting tones, delay-drenched pads, itchy high-hats, and throbbing pulses with nods to a lot of overseas producers such as Akufen, Sutekh, and Farben. Like these producers, Gobbe is working with a precise computerised sound, the result of detailed programming, in which the challenge is to make things sound humanised and organic, despite being intensely digital and mathematical.

‘There is so much you can do now, just within a computer-based studio, that you could never do so easily before’, Gobbe explains. ‘And now that high-end computers are so affordable, it’s more accessible than ever before. I don’t need a lot of hardware/outboard equipment, and I stick to software mostly – programs [like the open source] Jeskola Buzz, which is completely free and practically limitless. The online community that’s attached to this software is incredible and there are thousands of users constantly improving and adding to it. It’s the same with [Native Instruments’] Reaktor. The problem now is finding what you don’t want to use! There are more options than ever and more ways of doing the same thing, so you have to set your own limits and kind of restrict your interests just to get things done – it’s easy to get caught within the millions of details.’ The very nature of this kind of patch-based software is that its resultant music is full of minute detail – microsounds.

Based in Brisbane, Gobbe is somewhat separated from the wealth of like-minded producers that are based in Sydney, Melbourne and Perth – the three Australian cities where semi-regular nights form the backbone of the scene. In Sydney there is an opportunity to hear micro-house and its related genres in small doses at Mad Racket and Frigid, in Melbourne there is Deepchord run by the crew from Slap Records, and in Perth there is Dave Miller’s Aesoteric which has formed a cluster of interesting producers around it. Gobbe says, ‘The Brisbane scene, apart from a few isolated gigs, generally neglects electronic musicians of any sort. It does however, have a surprisingly large DJ scene, and a respectable turnover of DJ acts passing through. I think this DJ culture excludes local acts and people starting out from getting a foothold. Venues are rock-oriented and, apart from [the monthly experimental night] Fabrique, I can think of no important events that open up the scene or make an effort to book interesting overseas acts. My only complaint with Fabrique is that it is on too rarely; as any events of this nature are obviously valued by the dedicated crowd it draws. Also, local independent radio station 4ZZZ puts out a compilation CD of local electronic music once a year, focusing on unsigned acts, which is a nice move towards forming a scene. On the whole though, the club scene offers little to me as I find little difference between nights, so I don’t get too involved. Instead, home listening has taught me a lot about what I want to do. Over the last few years I’ve found a lot of great records that I always refer to, artists such as Sutekh, Twerk and Akufen. But one of the biggest problems electronic music faces is how fast it can date. These artists have avoided this to some extent, and I appreciate anyone who can do this.’

**Three乐团's album Cinecity is out now on Bug Records through Inertia. Version, released under his Mieli pseudonym, is out on Feral Media through MGM**
The new album from Qua 'Painting Monsters On Clouds' [surge0011CD] available now

"Don't be frightened by technology; as long as artists like Qua exist, you can be safely assured that digital trickery will be absorbed into a psyche that thrives on creating a soothing result. At the halfway mark of 2004, Painting Monsters On Clouds takes the honours for the year’s most beautiful album". whammo.com.au

Also available:
Surgery split 7" series

#1 - Qua // Pretty Boy Crossover
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#3 - The Backfeed Slumber // Toby 1
#4 - Similar // Jeff Symons

Available in all good music stores via Inertia Distribution
One of the interesting things about Decoder Ring, back when their first EP came out, was that it was an instrumental rock band, and really keyboard-driven. Since then Kenny Davis Jr (the keyboard and synth player) has left the band, as has Geoff Towner, the bass player. Ben Ely from Regurgitator stepped in to help when Geoff left, but has since returned to his regular line of work. During this time the remaining members have quietly managed to find their feet and have delivered a soundtrack to one of the most interesting Australian films in years (not to mention a review in Time).

‘The original vision of the band was the death of the band, ultimately,’ says Matt Fitzgerald, who plays guitar, keyboards and synth. ‘We’re anti the notion of any idolatry of musicians, which is quite funny in these times of fashion-led hype machines. It was also a statement against gentrification and pigeonholing. And at its highest level, it was even an assault on demarcations between audio and visual,’ he explains. ‘Simon, who does the projections, likes to say that as far as we’re concerned it’s just all electromagnetic waves, just different parts of the spectrum. For us it’s always been about trying to create something that’s all-encompassing in terms of music, but also in terms of destroying the demarcation between audience and musician. All of us are both passive and at the same time active in creating a context or an environment, and an emotional sensation within that.

‘That all sounds quite cold and theoretical, but we wanted to create something that, when you enter a room, would be all-encompassing, a huge and emotional wave that you got caught up in, that was almost disorienting. A full sensory event rather than being seen as music or projection or a band or DJ, or all those sort of bullshit things that don’t really matter – what you’re actually interested in is an experience, and for us it was about trying to strip everything back so that the experience was paramount.

‘When we play live, we see it more like a DJ set; it’s always frustrated us how live performance is conducted, it’s so stop-start. We try and move it around so that hopefully you don’t get those in-between-set lulls that are so frustrating; when one band finishes and you stand around, rush to the bar, and wait for the next band to start again.’

Although one thinks of Decoder Ring as an instrumental band, all their releases have featured vocal tracks, usually utilising the vocals as just another instrument. Lenka, who sang on the first album, appears again on the Decoder Ring soundtrack for new Australian movie Somersault.

The album has been getting healthy airplay and really does manage to meld Decoder Ring’s rock-meets-electronic aesthetic with something really quite pop.

‘We found it a quite exciting and challenging thing to do, especially the closing song – you know, the classic film closer; it’s a bit more overt than what we tend to do. It’s an area which we never expected that we’d get the opportunity to do, but you’ve got such a hilarious – sometimes fantastic, sometimes appalling, but always very effective – lineage of closing song in a movie. You know, you’ve got your Beaches, Officer And A Gentleman. We were like, ‘This is a really weird place in music to be,’ so we wanted to do
something which was us, but at the same time pay a
bit of homage to the tear-jerker closing song.
‘And the soundtrack to the film is rarely placed
under any dialogue, so it stands alone. There’s sort
of three types of film score you can have: back-
ground music, which is under dialogue; really over-
the-top, tugging your emotions music – like a dan-
ger theme, Psycho being the classic example; and
then the third is where the music is a different per-
spective, a layer of the film that’s integral to it – nei-
ther overt or underneath but a component in itself.
‘Our brief was that it’s a movie where the heroine
of the film has all sorts of encounters; she’s just left
home and she’s trying to step out by herself into the
dangerous world of male testosterone as a beautiful
young girl, and finding the difference between sex
and love. We were about her inner naiveté, because
on the outside she was pretty street-smart, but she
had a really beautiful, innocent view of the whole
world. So it’s counter-intuitive we didn’t don’t rep-
resent what’s on screen, but what’s in her – what
she’s feeling, and how she’s seeing it. We really had
to lock in with the character.’
While touring after the first album came out, the
band had been working on a lot of new material – in
fact they had about three quarters of an album ready
to go. ‘Whether that material will ever see the light of
day is another thing,’ says Fitzgerald. ‘It’s funny
because you look back and it’s been almost two years
but it’s gone incredibly quickly – we toured and then
just jumped into the film for about six months. And
because there are songs on the album that aren’t in
the film, we finished them off and produced the
album, and then we buggered off to Cannes. Since
then we’ve just been getting back to playing live and
starting practising for some shows in October.
They’re going to be special shows where we focus a
lot on the soundtrack, but we also want to have some
of the various complementary material from both the
EP and the album, and some new material as well.
We’re really excited about it actually.
‘We’re really good at writing songs before we
record them and then forgetting them. We did a
phenomenal song just last week, which we all sort
of finished, and were absolutely blown away. But
we all have absolutely no idea what we were playing
or what it actually sounded like, except that it
was incredibly sonic and moved really naturally.
We became so lost in it that nobody noted what was
happening. It probably would’ve been white noise
once it filtered through the minidisc. One of the
rebounds from doing all this delicate stuff is that
we’ve been quite loud at the moment.
‘On this album, a lot of what we ended up using
was done by playing around, jamming and record-
ing various instruments over it, first takes and
things like that that really fitted. So the soundtrack
is amazing like that – a lot of it hasn’t been
analysed to death. There are first takes with buzzes
and cicadas and crickets in the background, and
other things like that which just all had the mood
that we wanted, which is that gentle innocence.
‘We worked very closely on the soundtrack with
Sam Petty, who’s the sound designer on the movie,
and who worked with The Necks on The Boys
soundtrack. He did amazing atmospheres, so we
worked very closely with the music and him. We
actually have some of his sound design on the
album. You really get a sense of the journey; it goes
in an arc similar to the film, but independent of it at
the same time. A lot of the tracks have been extend-
ed and changed, parts added and new songs added.
So it’s a soundtrack, but it’s a Decoder Ring album
too. It traverses the terrain in the same way that all
our releases have, but in a different way.
‘The soundtrack is like its own world; it’s always
the aim to create a world that you’re invited into. I
find it’s like you can put play the album and create
a little bubble – you’re in it and the rest of
the world’s outside it – and that’s a really nice thing to
have done, especially with what’s happening to the
world at the moment. In the whole world context
it’s really nice to do an album that is gentle and del-
icate, for us it’s almost a statement. For me, all this
energised macho bullshit stuff that’s going on at the
moment sort of denies the existence of these other
issues, but in the past music has played a much
more active part. At the moment music seems to
just be hyping everybody up and being stuck on te-
levision commercials with no shame.
‘This album is more electronic than before, but
it’s also more organic. It’s not over-the-top synth
sounding; more organic synths, and some sequenc-
ing and cutting up of found sounds – but there’s also
accordion, vibes, cello, glockenspiels. Two genres I
really like but really hate the name of are post-rock
(which often they turn around and use as an insult)
and IDM. If I’d like to see us as anything, it’d be the
same territory as Eno – you can see it as ambient,
but then there’s his working with Talking Heads, like
Remain in Light, which is also really funky and live.
Whatever they were called back then, it was ulti-
mately a form of punk, a no-wave response, as they
called it. The genres have all been torn down now
really, so nu-rock no longer really has the spirit of
rock, and so on: there’s ‘chuckle-punk’ now – all the
punk bands stopped being punk, and the rock bands
stopped being rock bands; it’s all so fucked-up it
doesn’t matter what you call yourself.
‘We’ve always liked to play with all sorts of differ-
ent styles of bands, everything from the more
punk/hardcore bands, to hiphop, electronic, or post-
rock, and it’s always been very important to us that
we like all sorts of different music. We like to sup-
port stuff that we find interesting rather than any-
thing genre-specific, but at the moment I don’t really
feel an affinity with anything scene in particular.
And because we’ve just been doing what we do,
independent to music, it’s funny how music ghetto-
ises styles. It’s really nice to just say, ‘This is what I
do and you can take it or leave it,’ and it’s up to
other people to make those decisions. They’re going
to anyway – and they’ve probably got a better per-
spective than me.’

Decoder Ring’s soundtrack to
Somersault is released on Inertia

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Trace the current live pixel boom back from ravelight to cavelight, and music will always be found dancing with imagery. Even musical notation is a visualisation, and a rich lineage of shadow puppetry, sideshow carnivals, tweaked oil lamps, slides and album cover art attest to the historically interwoven nature of music & imagery. Live visual tweakage got a kick out of the last decade though: with real-time video and graphics manipulation possibilities soaring thanks to a shift from C64 to P4 & G5; the emergence of laptops capable of broadcast quality video edits; delivery of a dizzying array of time-melting and splicing audio and video software; and web connectivity. This issue of Cyclic Defrost we will profile some of the Aussie Pixel Battlers who rode that wave in.

AV pioneers such as Severed Heads; the hardware-modifying ‘Video Subvertigo’; and the Australian Fairlight company (which made the CVI video processor) should all be recognised for having risen to the challenge of invention – each contributing much to the growth and potential of the live video community in Australia. Alongside them, several key artists contributed to the evolution of live video in Australia, and it’s a pleasure to present some interview responses from the majority of Australia’s finest live visual aesthetes, experimenters and epilepsy-inducers of the pixel decade past.

TOM ELLARD
The enigmatic lynchpin and frontperson for Severed Heads, with an embarrassingly large back catalogue of mashed & mutant audiovisual material. Ellard was testing the limits of computer-based AV technology before many current DJ/VJs were born and is heavily cited as an influence by many. He continues to release new experiments at his <www.sevcom.com> site.

Early Inspirations?
Film effects – of the sort created by Douglas Trumbull by exposing light to film through lenses. My brother and myself tried to recreate them long before video was an option. My brother built models and photographed them as 35mm slides. The slides would be projected onto a screen and a skateboard used to move the projector! Then they’d be reshot onto 8mm film.

What equipment did you start off using?
Slides. Most music audio visuals were done with slides (e.g. The Reels and the Human League). They were the only things bright enough – video was far too feeble. Computers started to get places with the Atari 800, but still only as a source for slides. I also used film loops – 8mm film fed through a projector and then joined into a loop.

Favourite moments?
Usually when we introduced a new mechanism – video synthesiser in the early ‘80s or OpenGL rendering in the early ‘90s – and the results jumped ‘up a level’ if you know what I mean. Suddenly there was a new potential.

What you don’t miss about the ‘early days’?
Carrying 26 inch monitors up the stairs – and down again at the end of the night.

Old gear vs new gear comparisons?
I can’t define a point at which gear went from old to new but I can say that a point occurred when abstract visuals became concrete – were images of known things. That state-change has occurred a few times in different working methods – in computing it came in 1987 with the Amiga and DigiView – but in live graphics it came later.

How have your creative processes evolved?
Throughout the ‘90s computers were too slow for real-time and so it was a matter of generating frames and dumping them to videotape – the results were increasingly static video compared to the ‘80s. Since about ‘96, real-time has started to reappear. However, I’m still mostly grounded in pre-calculated graphics because the image quality is an issue for me. I would rather pre-calculated good work than real time twiddly (I HATE anything fractal or hippysplat) – the maturation of OpenGL and the new graphics cards are now able to equal prerendered video, so I can tell the stories I want to tell in real time. I believe in content.

The evolution of ‘visuals’ over the 90s?
I am not sure what the fascination was with rotating doughnuts. I guess all early 3D software was able to create a doughnut and rotate it – so that’s what you got. I myself once bought a real doughnut and hung it on a string, digitised that and used it as a video for a band. Around the early mid nineties the whole hippysplat thing went way out of control – mandelbrot and feedback everywhere. I hated it – it was not saying anything at a time when there was a lot that could have been said. The point worth making here is that performance video has yet to escape a trivial ‘eye candy’ level. It still is assessed in terms of ‘what equipment/technique’ – how ‘clever’. More mature artforms such as film have been able to escape that level. I have seen very few video works that made me cry.
VIDEO SUBVERTIGO

Ian Andrews
One half of the legendary and politically effervescent Video Subvertigo, and well known in video circles for his modification to the Panasonic MX10 mixer, which enabled luma-keying and black level adjustment. Aside from a lengthy span as video performer, Ian also has a hefty catalogue of produced music under his belt – as part of Non Bossy Possee, Organarchy and many aliases such as Disco Stu. Try <www.radioscopia.org/iana> for an extensive list of his AV exploits.

John Jacobs
The ‘JJ’ half of Video Subvertigo is a constantly provoking Sydney artist with a strong community pedigree – working as part of the Jellyheads & Vibetrieb collectives, the Organarchy & Non Bossy Possee tekno groups & producing radio at Radio National. Aside from cratefuls of VHS montages, he has also developed a stack of tracks available at the anti-copyright site: <www.mpfree.cat.org.au.>

What equipment did u start off using?
Panasonic mx10 video mixer was the brain of the operation. Often we used 3 of them all connected together with absurd feedback loops. They were all modified to do full luminance key with video instead of background colour. We used a variety of cameras. My favourite was a JVC 3tube KY1900 that produced beautiful soft feedback, and John Jacobs’ Tri-cam which was a special hand built tripod with the camera facing straight down towards a monitor which swivelled on huge industrial bearings. We would control the video feedback from the cameras with Arlunya processing amplifiers and Sony colour correctors. We also used Amigas playing animation loops and Fairlight CVI.

Favourite moments?
Sometime in the early ‘90s Meatbeat Manifesto came out and played at a huge party in Sydney (the name I will not mention). There were massive video projections and Subvertigo were supplying most of the images. The cops arrived half-way though the night and herded every one out. While they were doing this out the words ‘fuck the police’ flashed continuously on the screens.

KIRSTEN BRADLEY

Kirsten started out regularly performing solo in Sydney, creating lush live video for The Bird, Prop and other artists, before merging with Tonescope in Melbourne and producing several well received outdoor performances. She has also done some large scale video in theatre productions along the way. <www.cicada.tv>

Early Inspirations?
Fuzzy Logic crew in Sydney, Xmix on miscellaneous televisions and experiencing the Tokyo Equinox parties. Getting a 7300/200 Mac with video in-built!

What equipment did you start off using?
I lied my way into the craft – got myself a national tour with The Bird, then went and immediately hocked my entire music studio and swapped it for a VJ rig – MX50, 4 tapedecks, a projector, 5 monitors and kilometers of cabling, all housed in old suitcases with foam stuck inside. I then went on tour and learnt how to use it all – rigging 3 projector shows as I went. I had a leatherman though, so I was sorted.

Favourite moments?
Making video with my sweetheart and being allowed to talk about visuals in bed at 3am. First night of VJing at a bush party with Tesseract, Morph and Oishii – they got me tripping and then stuck me on all this gear I’d never seen nor used, it all made sense for some reason. Re_Squared, cause we finally got to do a site-specific work with a decent budget. Birdcage, cause it rocked my heart and soul and everyone came together to cover a building in light and it was just damn special.

Landmark events where live video went ‘next level’?
When I figured out how to use my mixer at the first Bird Show in Newcastle (thanks to mr Nick Ritar who had shown up to have a look).

What you don’t miss about the ‘early days’?
The size of the rig and the packdown time.

How have your creative processes evolved?
I know what I like, and I know how to make it.

Old gear vs new gear comparisons?
Old was tactile, new is powerful – it’s a tradeoff.

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JOHN POWER

Now sporting a beard large enough to store floppy disks in, John has long championed animation and computer graphics in Melbourne, and as part of '2Loops', took his visual performances across Australia and parts of Asia. Apart from lecturing at RMIT he transforms game engines into live video manipulators in his spare time.

**Early Inspirations?**


**Favourite moments?**

Dale Nason and I did a video mix alongside Alan Bamford in the back room of Newcastle’s Cambridge Hotel during 2002 Electrofringe with a DVcam, a VHS deck, and an RCA lead. I was just pulling the lead out of one machine and sticking it in the other, sometimes jiggling the lead for a sprinkling of glitchiness. The crucial ingredient was the footage Dale had shot of himself photocopying a dead cat. It took the staff a while to realise what was going on, and once they’d all had a good look they kicked us out.

**Performances that went really well?**

2Loops did something like 100 shows at Centripugal, and a few of those nights were pretty packed and crazy, with people really aware of – and enjoying – the images responding to the sound. I once mixed defocused static with video feedback for about 45 minutes, and later had a girl explain that not only did she know where and when I had shot this ‘crowd footage’ (of a great gig she’d been at), but which light tower I would have climbed to get the shot.

**Landmark events where live video went ‘next level’?**

2Loops did quite a few shows at the Prince Of Wales in 2000-2001 for the 33 1/3 series where we had more ambitious rigs with digital video feeds, stacks of TV monitors facing the crowd. The DJs and performers were great, and the productions were quite well put together. We did eight hour sets, and sort of planned them in big thematic slabs.

**What you don’t miss about the ‘early days’?**

Carrying equipment up and down stairs. Not getting paid

**How have your creative processes evolved since then?**

Every VJ who likes to mix live learns to keep their content pretty sparse, so there’s room to add things when you mix it. Early material I used involved lots of pretty involved 3D animation and lots of movie clips. I hardly do anything figurative anymore, relying more on abstract composition.

**Old gear vs new gear comparisons?**

Non-linearity is hard to beat. Many people seem to be going for the software patching paradigm, although I’m more interested in what a game engine can do simply because there’s much less data to fuss over.

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WADE MARYNOWSKY/SPANKY/AC/3P

Convict-era Australia’s best known Booty House producer, and long-time 8-bit AV pin-up boy, Wade’s been simultaneously testing bass bins and projectors for many a year. Recent projects include soundtracking a performance artist submerged in a glass tank of live eels and performing an AV mash-up onboard a Finnish ferry. <www.imperialslacks.com/wade>

**Early Inspirations?**


**What equipment did you start off using?**

Apple 575, 33mhz, 36mb of ram, 8 bits of power!

**Favourite moments?**

My first gig at Memory Loss at the Landsdowne, a woman danced wildly to an ambient set, Perth – having trapeze artists in front of my visuals was pretty weird, video stealth ninja was the best when we took over a Starbucks wall for around 40mins

**What you don’t miss about the ‘early days’?**

Carrying around a desktop machine that usually crashed during my sets.

**How have your creative processes evolved since then?**

Into real time live inputs and increased automation. I’ve explored many different techniques.
release their debut album
‘Louden Up Now’

!!! (pronounced ‘chk chk chk’) are destined to be one of the most
talked about artists of 2004. They are a live seven-piece,
electro punk funk mutant disco house killing machine.
!!!’s new album ‘Louden Up Now’, released on the Warp label,
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‘Louden Up Now’ is a serious
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"as good an argument as you’ll find for dance and guitars co-existing
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Tesseract
Cindi Drennan & Justin Maynard
Tesseract (Research Laboratories) are amongst Sydney’s most prolific ‘creators of immersive visual environments’ in recent times. Cindi continues to move them away from ‘screen rectangles’ and into screen sculptures, installations and performances at odd shaped buildings like the Opera House. Justin is also a qualified rigger, a coder, and co-organiser of many ludiciously complicated audiovisual events. <www.tesseractvisuals.com>

Early Inspirations?
Cindi: my background was in painting and filmmaking; live video performance was a progression, using events, architecture and screen sculptures as a canvas for ideas @ 25 fps. We were influenced by prolific and experienced VJs like John Jacobs, Emile Rasheed from Area NotArena, who were tremendously encouraging and this provided inspiration for directions to explore, or avoid.
Justin: I was attending an Apple world wide developer’s conference in San Jose in 1996 where the Apple Game Sprockets group had a party in a warehouse. An electronic band noodled on stage, but the entire back wall was covered in beautiful movement and colour, which I tracked down to Greg Jalbert who was performing with his own software bliss paint (www.imaja.com). That was the moment I realised I wanted to get into live video.

What equipment did you start off using?
Whatever we could access, we were hungry to try everything – initially Justin used a 7500 Mac running Blisspaint, Cindi created sequences using traditional animation techniques, combined these with footage we shot and manipulated ourselves. We recorded every single show we did, watching back to learn from our work (we’ve recorded hundreds of hours, it’s fascinating to watch the progression). Our 2nd mixer was a modified Panasonic MX-10, adopting the mod devised by Ian Andrews and John Jacobs (Video Subvertigo). The immediacy of response and the control of image using knobs became integral to our show, and we eventually colluded with our electronic engineer friend, Brian Murray, to modify an MX-12 for higher quality, which is what we still use at many performances.

Favourite moments?
Freaky Loops 98, 99 were the biggest events we had ever played at in those early days, and were exciting events that brought together all sorts of musicians in a fundraiser for 2SER. Early Liquid Labyrinth parties were special. Perhaps the most special was ‘Life the Universe and Everything’ in 2000, where we played a bogus CNN report at midnight... almost tricked a few people into heading back to Sydney for those ‘Y2K buggy ATMs spitting cash out onto the streets’.

Landmark events where live video went ‘next level’?
Electrofringe, for bringing together VJs from around Australia (www.projectroom.com/ef2k ). It generated many positive connections, ideas and projects. It led to the formation of the vidi-yo nexus, which helped us all keep in touch (www.vidi-yo.com) At Electrofringe in 2000 we all performed for each other, with each other in a group show. There were great experiments like the mega-video mixing machine on the last evening, which ended up inspiring our Video Combustion project, which is a live ensemble performance by an ‘optical orchestra’ <www.videocombustion.org>

How have your creative processes evolved?
From the beginning we’ve been committed to live (audio) visual performance as an important new screen-based artform (and culture), and using that as a basis we continue to explore and evolve the concept of illuminative art, live improvisation, screen sculpture and audiovisual architecture... all of which require loads of think time, planning, prep aside from the actual live performance itself. The creative investment means this is a full time occupation, and we tend to do fewer, larger projects. We partner with collaborators, and initiate more of our own projects these days.

Old gear vs new gear comparisons?
Cindi: Despite the laptop evolution and all the small stuff, we still lug loads of equipment to shows because the quality we strive for is only possible with the bigger processors/faster drives etc of the desktop computer. Digital Video and DVD are integral new additions, no lugging crates of VHS these days.
Justin: I think that modern laptop loop based techniques really lose something in the way of visual surprises and serendipity from the old mixing up hours of VHS.

Enda Murray
/ The Headcleaner
With the thickest Gaelic accent on the Australian VJ circuit by a long mile, Enda has continued on from his VJing to produce many provocative award winning media projects, always tackling social justice and environmental issues on the way. <www.virusmedia.com.au>

Early Inspirations?
Dabbling with Super8 film loops at small reggae sound system gigs in Coventry when helping out a mate who’d ‘liberated’ a video wall (20 x Barco 36 inch video monitors from his workplace). I began to collect material from BBC wildlife films and an eclectic collection of avant garde film sources to play at parties. I pirated some early computer graphic work from the Museum of Contemporary Art in London and hey presto, I was on the road. Matt Black from Coldcut was also an early influence. I moved to Australia in 1996 and through Undercurrents contacts I hooked up with the CATV (Community Activist Techknowledge) people. I was very impressed with John Jacobs’ passion for VJing and his energy helping people starting out. Video Subvertigo were taking VJing to a respected place, which was only fitting given the amount of energy that went into it.

What equipment did you start off using?
2 VHS players and an MX10 mixer... I never really moved over to computer. Prior to buying my first LCD projector I was in the habit of liberating a monster 3 gun CRT (Cathode Ray Tube) projector from the city council where I worked and setting it up in fields outdoors (I’m sure the technicians who guarded it during the week would have had heart attacks had they known). I was always more into narrative than spectacle and was always trying to create sense from the snippets of material I had. I would always have a tape ready in the video machine in case something worth recording came on. Very DIY.

Favourite moments?
In more recent times I’ve concentrated on producing images rather than projecting but I do feel rather proud of my role in the ‘Boat People’ projection onto the Sydney Opera House. It was definitely a moment when projections were taken to the ‘next level’.

What you don’t miss about the ‘early days’?
Lugging 20 flight cased monitors around was a bugger. One occasion we had set up the video wall at a cheesy rave only to be told by the promoter that it was 6 inches off centre and we should take it all down and move it six inches.
TIM GRUCHY
Mixing video since the late ‘80s RAT parties, Gruchy was a founding member of the audiovisual band Vision 4/5, and designer of their interactive AV performance systems. Tim now runs the Gruchy Productions visual imaging and events company.

Early Inspirations?
Stephen Jones / my sister Jane / Buckminster Fuller. GTK.

What equipment did you start off using?
Mid seventies Black and White reel to reel thanks to Brisbane Community Video Access Centre and QUT students Union.

Favourite moments?
The warehouse party scene in Brisbane in the eighties. Improvising everything. People bowing in homage to the screens. The RAT parties in Syd in the late eighties. RAT NY88 – the first time we did nine projectors surrounding the Hordern when E was first hitting the scene in a big way. One party in the Hordern particularly when the whole floor went into spontaneous group dance moves. The time we put 2 starvision (massive outdoor CRT arrays) screens in the RHI (Royal Hall of Industries) which was also the first time a lighting director ever asked me to turn the screen down.

Performances that went really well?
RAT late eighties – big shows, big budgets, big crowds, big fun. Vision 4/5 performance in the Horden. The Humid album launch at the Metro in ‘95. The DIVA awards, where video design is worked into the whole structure of the show including stage design the presenters / mutiple venues. The year the whole Hordern cried when Carlotta entered the hall of fame – superb spontaneous video mix. Some of the Mardi Gras and Pride shows where we designed live shows integrating performers and video in complex ways.

What you don’t miss about the ‘early days’?
Rigging.

How have your creative processes evolved since then?
Gotten more focussed – prefer shows.

Old gear vs new gear comparisons?
Gear – I love it all – the smell and feel of old analogue hardware, its hands on interface even though I hated it at the time and always wanted better control that went beyond the evolutionary hangover. Digital software based tools for their compactness, flexibility and precision – but I still want better interfaces/pseudo randomness.

JASON GEE
Aside from a long-time history of live video experiments in Syd, Jason Gee is also renowned for performing crunchy audio with Garry Bradbury as ‘Size’.

Early Inspirations?
The television cutup work of Ian Andrews and John Jacobs, everything by Severed Heads and the radio show ‘Stalking the nightmare’ on 2MBS. Severed Heads live.

What equipment did you start off using?
Amiga 1000

Favourite moments?
The Australian Video Festival (1989) opening party where I had 30 identical TVs linked with RF cables all in a row and the signal got weaker as it got to the last.

Performances that went really well?
A Big Day Out where we had massive programmable cube video wall and John Jacobs had organised 5 layers of downstream keying.

What you don’t miss about the ‘early days’?
Calibrating the grid on old video projectors, animating using frame by frame methods and storing the results on floppy disks.

How have your creative processes evolved?
My work now attempts to bring a more narrative context to the environment. The Psychedelic experience approach to visuals should be taken out and shot.

Old gear vs new gear comparisons?
You would have to say new, although I have a huge respect for where things have evolved from.


Richard Byers / Superlight: best known for his cinematic, textural & vectoral contributions to Frigid.

Kim Bounds: One half of 2 Loops & long-time Melbourne pixel-ist now running community digital media projects @ ACMI.

Dale Nason: Long-time contributor to the Melb Centrifugal feedback massive, and photocopier of dead cats.
In studios and clubs around the world, thirty years worth of music (and beyond) is being pulled apart and reconfigured into new forms and shapes. Close to the centre of this, is an explosion of inventive sounds from a crew originally defined by their location – the West London scene – even if many of the main players, including Dominic Stanton, aren’t based in the UK capital (Stanton is based in the small town of Bedford fifty miles north).

If Stanton’s name is not immediately familiar, you’ll probably recognise at least one of his alter egos. The best known is the long running Dom-Unique Productions, or Domu. Fresh from finishing up a ‘nice kinda cinematic opening’ for his new album, Stanton took a moment to work out what was happening.

He ended up in music pretty much by default at the age of fourteen. ‘I didn’t have much else to be into, I was just a scribbler, not big on sport or anything.’ So twelve years ago he bought turntables and soon after began mixing jungle and was producing within a year. He sent out demos and 4 Hero’s Reinforced label showed interest, bringing him on board. ‘I was only seventeen, but I moved up through Reinforced and then to 2000 Black and Archive. Then this scene kind of happened so it was all a smooth progression really.’

This scene is now better known as broken beat, but it is a true melting pot, in retrospect, an almost inevitable result of the genre clash of club culture. Taking the familiar ingredients of dub and dancehall, jazz and rare groove, hiphop, house, garage, electronics and drum’n’bass, the menu is contorted into unpredictable directions, and most people now identify the style by its intricate and irregular rhythms.

With the emergence of Jazzanova and IG Culture in the late ’90s, support from DJs like Gilles Peterson and Patrick Forge, great (if slightly confused) press and critical acclaim, they were touted as a potential next big thing and seemed set to explode.

It’s no mystery why they didn’t if you look at the detail. The Acid Jazz and Big Beat scenes had recently spent time in the limelight after wearing the ‘next big thing’ mantle, but when the press got bored, the scenes faded away and the artists involved had to move on. ‘We were all conscious of that and didn’t want to spoil the good thing we had. We’re all kind of on the breadline trying to make good music, and if that changed then the whole dynamic would change.’ It’s hard to imagine, but with Bugz in the Attic playing festivals around the world, it can’t be too long until they get the call from Madonna.

‘The music magazines are so corporate that if it’s not trendy, then it’s not in the interest of the magazine, because they won’t sell more magazines for promoting it, so they don’t.’ Stanton’s wariness of the music media began with drum’n’bass. When he started buying records in 1992, there were a couple of music magazines available (DJ, Mixmag) and each had a drum’n’bass reviews page. But a year later the reviews pages stopped and coverage of drum’n’bass dried up. ‘The only place I could see reviews was in (fortnightly black music newspaper) Echoes. It wasn’t until ’95, when Muzik magazine started, that you could find press on drum’n’bass again.’

‘I see music that a lot of my friends make in the house page, the leftfield page, the hiphop page, it’s always everywhere and in a way I think that’s more creative than having a page of your own because you’re spreading into so many different people’s tastes.’ And as soon as a sound has its own page you start to have people making music to get onto that page. The scene has resisted expanding from its pool of key players, but there has always been a network of crews outside the UK. These include people like Jazzanova in Germany, Straight Ahead and GAMM in Switzerland, Kyoto Jazz Massive in Japan, Titonont Duvante in the US, and even guys like Ennio Styles in Melbourne.

‘I was quite lucky to get in, it was just through Reinforced and 4 Hero. They’re hard bastards to impress and that’s why there aren’t a lot of new people coming in, because if someone gives you a CD and it’s not good enough, it’s not good enough and they don’t have a record. I was quite lucky starting eight years ago and I did manage to build a name as being someone that was experimental... but there’s being experimental.
and having potential, and there’s putting out a record that just isn’t right. I think there’s a lot of that now, people just want to put out music, so they start their own label and put out records that just aren’t really accomplished.’

Stanton blames the advent of PC-based recording. ‘People spend a week learning Logic or Cubase and they’ll have a record out, they’re just not ready.’ Which suggests that Stanton’s not into grime, or whatever you call the dark underbelly of UK garage giving birth to a deformed child (dubstep, 8bar, sublow). ‘Grime is a lot of kids in skullcaps and Nike tracksuits making music on Playstations. The MCing is all about aggression and anger and frustration and airing your views and the beats are simple and dirty. It’s great, that’s what kid’s music should be all about.’

So what ties broken beat music together? ‘Attitude really, I think there just came a time where we all had an idea to stop doing the other music we were doing and do something different, and it was all around the same time.’

‘People were experimenting, using classic song structure and playing that up a bit, misusing it. If you look back at the early broken stuff, all the early IG [Culture] stuff on People, Jazzanova and things like that, they’re kind of song based and they have a lot of movement, but not a lot of form to them, they’re quite free.’

Stanton complains that the scene has become clubbier since then. He’s held a long-time DJ residency at London club night The Co-op, which has a reputation for blending underground beats with the songs that have become anthems at the club, and says it balances with the production in terms of making money, but musically it’s not such a happy marriage.

‘There are conflicts because Co-op has created a lot more dance floor tunes than there ever used to be, and it’s made a scene, where before it was people experimenting. That’s the nature of scenes, they settle down and form templates, but it’s made everyone more conscious of what works in a club. So when you play your really experimental stuff and it doesn’t work you go away thinking, “well what’s the point of me making it if no-one’s going to dance to it?” There’s this huge paradox, where if you’re making 12 inches, a DJ has to buy it to be able to play it. Obviously there are different environments, but if you play it at the Co-op, where everyone is schooled and there for the music, if they don’t dance to it you wonder what chance you’ve got of anyone dancing to it.’

‘When you’re looking at your music in that sense you can really lose a lot of experimentalism because you’re so worried about the dance floor reaction.’

Stanton found the drum ’n’ bass scene stifling when it began to settle into a format of rolls and beat drops and says, ‘Even at Co-op there was a time when I could sense this formula looming over us. Now everyone has kind of checked themselves and they’re tinkering around again and trying to do something new. But there are not enough people outside of the scene making music for us to play.’

They are appearing though. ‘I can see similar things to where The Neptunes are coming from, but they have this whole jiggly American thing, which I can’t really get down with. But ‘Crazy In Love’ is a baaad track, it’s sampling the Chi-Lites with a fat break and a wicked vocal, and if you can do something like that with one of the best singers in the world then that’s a great record.’

‘Madlib’s done the DJ Rels album, I really liked the first twelve, but the album is really dirty, scuzzi rough breaks and it’s all a bit, not unlistenable, but kind of unplayable. Sometimes the Americans really hit the nail on the head though, like Timbaland, he says he was trying to make drum’n’bass but couldn’t find the right sounds.’

Like all music scenes, broken beat has settled down over time, but if you take a look at some of the music coming out now – especially the challenging stuff on Stanton’s Enter The Umod or IG Culture’s New Sector Movements – they’re definitely not slowing down. And that makes sense, because while the scene takes time to re-evaluate and consolidate the musical advances of the past, they’re laying the groundwork for the future.

This process of consolidation is often the lead-in to some of the best music to come out of a scene, which makes it clear that broken beat is yet to reach its peak.

**Umod’s Enter the Umod is available on Sonar Kollektive through Creative Vibes**

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**THE MANY FACES OF DOMU**

While Domu is Dominic Stanton’s main project, he’s constantly releasing material and most recently dropped Enter The Umod on Jazzanova’s Sonar Kollektiv label. ‘Umod is about going back to messing around with samples, it’s very tracky and was done in about 8 days on spur of the moment. It’s a nerdy album for the heads, for the people because I’m doing something that doesn’t really feel like it’s Domu.’ Among these are Yotoko’s deep broken techno (released on the Delsin label), Brazilian disco as the Star Wars inspired Bakura (Especial), the vocal broken beat of Rima (Compost, and a new album likely to drop on Sonar Kollektiv), Vaceo (Chillifunk), Zoltar (Sonar Kollektiv), Blue Monkeys (Spinning Wheel), Kudu (Bitasweet), Real sides (Sirkus) and Domu & Volcov (on Best Seven and Residual). He’s also producing a vocal album for Nicola Kramer who sang on the Rima and Domu albums, which should finish by the end of winter.

‘It’s very complicated,’ says Stanton of his prodigious, even by electronic music standards, array of alter egos. ‘You just go round and round in your head, ‘do I keep the nerds happy, do I keep the girls happy,’ so that’s why I have so many different names and so many different projects it’s because I can afford to make different people happy at different times.’

The new album from Domu should arrive on Archive later in the year. He’s hooked up with Yolanda, a ragga-ish MC who’s worked with the Bugz as well as garage producer Spoonface and breaks duo Deekline & Wizard. ‘It’s shaping up to be a spacey theme, with samples from Battle of the Planets and Transformers, and I’m piecing together a story about someone arriving on another planet and trying to get home, a bit like ET but in robot form. I’m trying to write songs that are relevant to that, you know, the kind of similes about exploration of one’s inner self and exploration of the world.’

Sonar Circle is where it all started for Stanton with early releases on Reinforced. ‘I’ve always been a very complex producer – my drum’n’bass has so much going on, just to make up one beat I’d have four or five different tracks and beats going over one another, all these different hats and things, it just gets a bit crazy at times.’ Stanton still records under the alias from time to time when he ‘feels like making some drum’n’bass’.

‘And the rest are just one-off names I make up because I’m doing something that doesn’t really feel like it’s Domu.’ Among these are Yotoko’s deep broken techno (released on the Delsin label), Brazilian disco as the Star Wars inspired Bakura (Especial), the vocal broken beat of Rima (Compost, and a new album likely to drop on Sonar Kollektiv), Vaceo (Chillifunk), Zoltar (Sonar Kollektiv), Blue Monkeys (Spinning Wheel), Kudu (Bitasweet), Real sides (Sirkus) and Domu & Volcov (on Best Seven and Residual). He’s also producing a vocal album for Nicola Kramer who sang on the Rima and Domu albums, which should finish by the end of winter.

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boxes in grandpa’s back shed. Using small grabs of dialogue from fifties film, *Pacifica* has all the hallmarks of being as well worn as the vinyl that created it, with Andrews imbuing the disc with a murky nostalgia of a more innocent time.

Whereas *Pacifica* consisted of quite gentle and dreamy washes of loops, *Delayed Inaudible P2* is much more beat-focused, where the rotating pulse is established early, pushed to the fore and looped percussively to form the basis of each cut. Whilst this process may initially seem heavy handed, surprisingly much of *Delayed Inaudible P2* is about subtlety and minimalism, with Andrews developing each cut by carefully, often barely perceptively manipulating the warm washes of material that surround the central beat. It's mesmeric stuff, with what may initially seem like a by-product of the recording process such as a warm hum or goggle of static slowly dipping in and out of earshot.

**Bob Baker Fish**

**Because Of Ghosts**

*Your House is Built on a Frozen Lake* (Bright)

New to me but apparently causing a stir are this Melbourne trio. And I can understand why. There are plenty of bands exploring rock’s outer borders but few with such verve and confidence. The six-track EP opener ‘Upwards! Forwards! Towards the Sun!’ plays with the sound we expect from raw guitar as it builds in intensity. ‘There’s Nowhere Else to Put Them’ consists of a field recording that stars a cooing pigeon and scratching noises plus a banjo. Originally an improvisational duo their expanded sound is working well, adding overdubs without disturbing the live essence. It’s got a rousing emotional quality and a rough-around-the-edges nature that’s more warts-and-all than it is unsophisticated. The glockenspiel on ‘You Fool (Your House is Built on a Frozen Lake)’ is there through necessity, not self-conscious artiness. Vocals emerge from the background and if they are heading that way they’ll make wonderful songwriters. The cello on closing track ‘A Waltz for Berenice’ is beautiful and I can easily imagine a vocal counterpoint. If you’re a fan of the Constellation label this is worth checking. The sleeve is great too. **Alex ollo**

**Blackletter**

**Junk Extensions**

*(Vibragun)*

The dense soup of DSP sound, minimal melody, distorted voice and bleeps that starts this album is simultaneously claustrophobic and expansive. Beats and looped melodies glue the next track ‘Atom Driver’ into a dark and intriguing excursion that self destructs before seamlessly merging into ‘Change Agent’ whose guitar melancholy hauls you through more DSP chaos. But it’s a false sense of security as ‘Form 22’ consists of 30 seconds of digital distortion. The beautiful ‘I’m Always Talking’ takes an ambient turn back into deep space. This album is full of new corners, but it’s always with a purpose rather than change for change’s sake. ‘Shunt’ is also a standout, a loping, looping harmonious drone with intriguing rhythm sounds. Musically I love ‘Periscope’ but the upfront DSP epilepsy of the drums reduces its listenability. The album loses some of its slightly caustic edge on headphones where its magnificent depth is revealed.

I’d have *Junk Extensions* on rotation if the mix brought more of Blackletter’s musical sensibility to the fore. There’s a truly beautiful album amongst all those clicks and squelches. What is going on in Townsville? A great deal of talent that’s for sure. **Alex ollo**

**Bleepin’ J Squawkins**

**Floppy Disco**

*(Clan Analogue/Creative Vibes)*

It’s great to see a predominantly live electro act such as Bleepin’ J Squawkins finally sitting down in the studio after putting together their debut album after their live shows in the last few years. Floppy Disco is a journey from electro-house to synth-pop, there’s even a touch of electro-clash, but from the very first track the listener is transported back to the ‘80s. There’s an obvious love of vocoders on this release and some narrative vocal lines to keep you attentive. Some tracks I found to be reminiscent of Rephlex’s DMX crew without the serious edge while others reminded me of the more disco-oriented music Bochum Welt has released, minus the melodic focus. One thing I can say about this release is Bleepin’ J have chosen their style and stuck with it. While there seems to be quite a few artists revisiting the ‘80s at the moment, Bleepin’ J appear to have a real passion for its cheesiness and the party vibe. In summary – it’s a light-hearted and fun release for fans of the ‘80s to dance to.

**Melinda Taylor**

**Bliss n Eso**

**Flowers in the Pavement**

*(Obese Records)*

Hiphop should apply for a work-for-the-dole tax break. In a couple of short years all those scruffy backyard operations churning out beats, running shows, distributing magazines and selling records have moved from the garage to the front room. For the Australian hiphop soldiers it’s still a cottage industry, but when you check the development of some of the local product, you get a sense that big things a’gwan. In particular,
Kieper records returns with æther2, a compilation featuring some of Western Australia’s finest exponents of electronica with tracks from Elemental, Pablo Dali, Audio Cephlon, Jaek, The Plastik Scene Manuel Bonrod, New Sirus Project, Anubis compleX and many others.

æther2, and Kieper’s first release æther, are available through Couchblip! Distribution at:
http://distribution.couchblip.com

For more information about Kieper records, visit www.kieper.com.au or email info@kieper.com.au

Kieper Records, home of liminal west coast sounds.
LOCAL RELEASES continued

Melbourne’s Obese Records proudly represent with a hefty back catalogue dating to the year 2000, with releases from the Hilltop Hoods and Upshot, not to mention the numerous Culture of Kings compilations. Their latest long player is the debut album from Sydney’s Bliss n Eso, and it continues the Obese tradition of releasing idiosyncratic, upfront local hip-hop. Bliss n Eso have been making Sydney headz nod for a few years now. Experience pays, and the 17 cuts on Flowers in the Pavilion are structured around sophisticated metaphor and clever metre. Tracks like the Triple J favourite ‘Rubbed the Lamp the Wrong Way’ are light on the hooks but are instead held together by punchlines and a party-time chorus. Moments in the flow remind me of the West Coast psychedelic crews like the Hieroglyphics and maybe Souls of Mischief, an approach complemented by production that rejects slamming razor beats for more cerebral studio licks and blunted tricks. ‘Vagina Ice’ works neurotic r’n’b beats around a minimal guitar lick, set next to a track like the irregular stolen polka of ‘Clean in the Tub’. Flowers in the Pavilion is a deceptively dense album: full of laddish appeal but balanced by peculiar turns, strong production values and a lyrical depth. "Vaughan Healey"

Bokor & Pablo Reche

Dialogue
(Dreamland)

Graduating from a series of three-inch singles, the majority of which celebrated the beauty of drone music, Melbourne’s Dreamland Recordings have teamed up label honcho Bokor (aka Zac Keiller) with Argentinean sound artist Pablo Reche. Not surprisingly it’s a drone-based work with subtle and evocative progressions and implementations of new sounds. Dialogue begins peaceful enough, a thin distant drone, flecks of fluttering static and a repetitive almost percussive skip. Within a couple of minutes however things become somewhat more dense and sinister with a deep metallic hum introduced and some industrial sound whosethes of what may be compressed air. Over the course of the single, half-an-hour-plus cut, the ground shifts repeatedly as the duo, possibly communicating and responding to each other, remove and reorder sounds in quite rapid succession before decreasing in volume and density, taking things down a notch and giving the piece a few minutes to breathe. Dialogue’s strength is its unpredictability, in that it twists and turns through multiple techniques, through a dark minimal ambient drone territory and a busy semi-industrial landscape, where it seems to build then unexpectedly subside, creating a vast and compelling world where you can never be sure what’s around the next corner. "Bob Baker Fish"

Decoder Ring

Somersault OST
(Inertia)

I first heard Decoder Ring when they upstaged The Yeah Yeah Yeahs a couple of years ago at Sydney’s Annandale Hotel. Their tumblingly broad sweep of sound created such a powerful atmosphere, that when I first heard this I wondered whether someone had put the wrong CD in the box. Since getting together in 2001, an entombed media have pushed over the couple of discs they’ve released. But this stirring, richly textured soundtrack for the Cannes and AFI scooping film Somersault, expands their already evocative sound. It uses a sparse palette made up of the warm strummed guitar and Rhodes, occasionally sequenced beats and bass. Snippets of vocals from the film sparkle with character, and fans of Air’s Moon Safari or the soundtrack from Lost In Translation will be elated. This is pretty and melancholic music. If you’re sad, it may bring on tears, if you’re not, it’ll still make you feel a little wistful. Either way this beautifully musical score will stay with you for a long time. "Sebastian Chan"

Lawrence English

Ghost Towns
("::Room40::")

The latest processed soundscape from Lawrence English once again explores a sense of place, this time celebrating the unique sounds of a landscape so few urban Australians experience frequently. Created from field recordings made in ‘the remote settlements that litter the vast Australian plains’ it is exotic, strange and powerful evocative. It begins with a minimalism that gives equal space to silence and sound, before the emergence of buzzing of power lines and insects. Deep and tuneless windy drones hover beneath the clanging of dry metal and the squawks of passing birds, as a fly weaves in and out of DSP scratches. While some sounds have a watery quality – there is rain – the overall impression is of dryness, heat, and emptiness. The difficulty of this landscape is also present in the insistent and sometimes almost overpowering drones and creaks. Music exists as a mesmerising metaphor and clever metre. Tracks like the Triple J favourite Somersault (Inertia) are structured around sophisticated conversation and incorporating the beat and, in time, encompassing the beat and, in time, everything around it. Like opening statements in a debate, each side presented their strongest case – Topology leading off with their amorphous massed strings, only to be answered by the embodied syncopations of Full Fathom Five. It’s in this spirit of conversational collaboration that the album proceeds promisingly and then seems to falter. Supported by an Australia Council grant, I’m sure the purpose was to bring established culture and street culture together into some kind of dialogue, but about halfway through, the album starts sounding like they’ve stopped chatting, with Topology getting all ‘new music’-ed up on ‘5 Minutes from Machines’ and Full Fathom Five lasciviously stroking a rather inadequately member of the sub-electro of ‘Bad People Have Parties Too’. By the end of Future Tense it’s as if Topology have stormed off into their room in a huff, only to return sheepishly for the finale, which turns out to be the lovely ‘Spiral Soma’. Obviously it’s difficult to tell exactly what role each member had to play, the liner notes being scant on details apart from writing credits (which do indicate at least some collaboration on each track). Suffice to say that when each group had a distinctive voice, such as in the first and last tracks, the resulting music was far more compelling. "DH"

Kazumichi Grime

Source_Guerra_2230
(Pneuma)

Sydney-based sound artist Kazumichi Grime is known for his electronic processing and reprocessing, utilising drones, field recordings and voice to create drifting electronic vistas of sound. Here Grime has teamed up with London-based guitarist Anthony Guerra, a renowned textualist and improviser with a certain penchant for working with electronic artists. Whilst working with warbling masses of processed digital material at times, Guerra’s ‘Sitch’, with Melbourne based sonic adventurer Joel Stern, also ventured into almost melodic territory. The piece here is based on a collaboration the duo recorded in August 2002 following Guerra’s appearance at the What Is Music Festival. Whilst that
original 37-minute source material is included in this release as a CDR, featuring odd scratching, background masking, and feedback drones. Grimes has turned and reprocessed the material providing a clearer perhaps more unified focus. The highlights are the longer cuts, which consist of a brooding underbelly of sound interrupted by occasional splatterings of sticky static, dull murmurs and oscillating drones. There's something inevitable about these cuts, something almost elegant as the sweeping fragments of melody build in density and tension without ever really ever really becoming frantic or difficult. **Bob Baker Fish**

**Minit**

*Now Right Here* (Staubgold)

As Minit, Berliners Jasmine Guffond and Torben Tilly, formerly of Sydney, create ambient soundscapes that are meditative, hazy, and hallucinatory. If the idea is not terribly innovative or original, their particular take on it is, as well as being more original, satisfyingly that the genre-norm.

Three of the four compositions on *Now Right Here* are the longest at close to twenty minutes. An epic drone, wavering tones chime as they grow through subtle modulations and incremental changes into a dense hypnotic mass. Suspended rootlessly, the work shifts gears dramatically, becoming almost entirely instrumental. Ultimately, the work is more contemplative than cerebral, with a sense of vastness and mystery.

**Ponyloaf**

*O Complex* (Valve)

Ponyloaf is a three-piece electronic outfit from Brisbane consisting of ex-Regurgitator keyboardist Shane Rudken alongside Dan Templeman and Damian Lewis. The album begins with a dramatic and cinematic track 'Why Breed Pt 1', which sets the stage for the ensuing tracks. The album features intricate soundscapes, with a mix of heavy metal, grinding, thrashing guitars and electronics. 'Nhaeb' stands out as one of the most beautiful tracks on the release – simple, beautiful and gritty. The album is appropriately raw and another example of the quality electronic music starting to emerge regularly from Australia.

**Qua**

*Painting Monsters On Clouds* (Surgery)

Qua (aka Cornel Wilczek) starts his latest audio outing with a simple, short statement of intent in the form of 'Painting Monsters'. It's an introduction to sort, both suggestive of the sound textures to be encountered on disc, and acting as a guide to the overall mood of the compositions on this record. Qua has developed a fine sensibility to his work, an understanding of the way that melody, rhythm and texture can be used in creative ways to illustrate a theme or feeling. Tracks like 'Night Sailing' have an amazingly visual quality to them – they ring out with conventional melody interplays, but like Tortoise and other groups with strong layering abilities, the quality of each section of the piece working and over the top of each other generates a unique phrasing that heralds strong tension and release. The same can be said of pieces like 'Happy Domestika' and 'Luckybuster'; each carry a formidable barrage of divergent sounds. A well conducted and composed piece of work, electronics riddled with personality and expression. **Lawrence English**

**Triosk**

*Moment Returns* (Leaf/Inertia)

Anyone who caught Triosk performing live with Jan Jelinek this year will testify that they are quite an amazing trio. The Sydney-based crew of accomplished jazz musicians, all in their twenties, burst on to the international scene with their 1+3+1 album for Berlin's ~scape label last year. For some reviewers it was difficult to determine what was Jelinek and what was Triosk, but on this album for Leaf it becomes much clearer. *Moment Returns* was recorded pretty much at the same time as the ~scape record, and it shares much of its predecessors fascination with sampling and re-mixing of its predecessors fascination with sampling and re-mixing. Adrian Klumpp lays down some languorous piano motifs and Ben Waples’ double bass creates the foundation for Lawrence Pike’s wild scattershooting and polyrhythms to flutter above. More than just processing and applying DSP effects to their instruments and samples, Triosk’s music is properly ‘futuristic jazz’, by seamlessly incorporating these electronics into the basis of their improvisations. **Sebastian Chan**

**Twotone**

*Cinecity* (Bug Records)

Although emerging from Brisbane, Ryan Gobbe’s Twotone sounds closer to Germany. Recalling equally the glitch micro-rhythms and minimalism of Mille Plateaux artists and the hissing dubscapes of Rhythm and Sound, it’s an impeccably-produced collection. Yet it’s warmer (maybe all that sun?) and it has its feet squarely on the dancefloor in a way that brings Herbert’s house tracks to mind in its use of twitchy syncopation. The four are solidly on the floor as Twotone sets up a groove and pursues it, occasionally into more melancholy dub influenced territory (‘Representative’ and ‘Fake Newsreels’). Headphone listening is recommended, if you want to catch all the carefully-crafted layers of intricacy. There is no obvious standout track as the quality is there all the way, though that does mean it may lack the club ‘hit’ that would draw listeners. My only criticism would be a lack of variety that leads me to tune out over the length of the album – a downtempo excursion or less club-focused track or two wouldn’t go amiss. But the flip side of that is that if you love track one you’ll love them all. **Alex ollo**

**Upshot**

*Make it Happen* (Creative Vibes)

Sydney live hiphop band Upshot have struggled for the past few years to realise their particular musical vision – one part hiphop, one part modal jazz; one part rhythm, one part harmony – the path they tread is fraught with danger. If they play too loose they look like wankers, if they play too straight they become a very expensive 5 person replacement for an MPC. On Make it Happen they manage to stay on course for most of the way, occasionally stepping into but in the process they come up with open window of new musical potential for hiphop beyond simple boom and chord stabs, releasing it from its...
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pad/16 bar confines. Not that hiphop needs saving - but an occasional weekend away would be nice. Notoriously demanding of their MCs, Upshot manage to coax good performances from each of them, but at times they seem either constricted to extreme versions of themselves - Qiro com- ing on all fire-a-brimstone preacher in Leviathan and Brass rhyming in his quickly nasal prose in 'Breathe' - and then at other times putting the MCs in distinctly unfamiliar terri- tory - the Herd's Uthboy does a chorus that verges on metal in 'About to Break'. It's this forcing of issues that sometimes grates - a situation reflected in the song-writing, especially in choruses - tracks like 'Fire' move from the sublime verses to somewhat contrived 'big moment' sing- alongs. Although not a criticism per se - as it's obviously a consequence of their high musical ambitions, when tracks settle into more natural progressions between verse/chorus in such tracks as 'Tango' it all feels so much more satisfying.

Nevertheless an interesting album that falters for the same reasons it succeeds - and the hidden space jam shows they retain a sense of humour. DH

**Various Artists**
*Decomposition* (Sound Punch)
The cheese. The lack of emotion. The lack of subtlety. Oh God, I have a love-hate relationship with '80s movie sound- tracks. And with shimmering synth, a wailing guitar, slap bass and again that overwrought cheesy synth I'm back in the midst of that fantastically terrible world populated by Harold Faltermeyer (Fletch), Wang Chung (To Live and Die in LA) and whoever that dude was who did that rock' n' roll soundtrack to Magnum. Askii's (Adam Milburn's) 'The One' is but the opening track to *Decomposition*, a compila- tion of music for short film, interactive and instal- lations, a gaggle of innovative, genre-bending and fearless local Melbourne musicians and sound artists, all curated under Philip Brophy's Sound Punch records. Aside from the hysterical and dramatic trips down memory lane, there's a restrained electro ditty from Two4k, some gloomy, windswept atmos- pheric work from Tim Catlin, some cheeky, electro-space pop with more sides than a Rubik's Cube from Cornel Wilczek (Qua), and a sort of jolly, watered-down Disney-does-space-end-credits theme from Brophy. Everything is here, the music touches on movie soundtrack conventions and then moves fearlessly off into unknown or unexpected realms. There are no studios bearing down on these folks and the freedom is palpable in the terrain they traverse. Bob Baker Fish

**Various Artists**
*Overland* (Naturestrip)
Naturestrip is a Melbourne label focussing on artists who incorporate environmental sound, field recordings and microphonics in their work. Only recently established, *Overland* is a vital and arresting document that displays Naturestrip's commitment to demonstrating the diversity of approaches and techniques in working with field recordings. Whilst it presents untreated urban sounds from a thriving Japanese metropolis via Toshiya Tsunoda's 'Reclaimed Land'; and Brisbane artist Lawrence English's busy pitch-shifted microphonics in their work. Only recently established, *Overland* is a vital and arresting document that displays Naturestrip's commitment to demonstrating the diversity of approaches and techniques in working with field recordings. Whilst it presents untreated urban sounds from a thriving Japanese metropolis via Toshiya Tsunoda's 'Reclaimed Land'; and Brisbane artist Lawrence English's busy pitch-shifted

**Waiting for Guinness**
*The Show* (Independent/Vitamind)
It'd be easy to dismiss Sydney band Waiting for Guinness as a novelty, especially when on occasion they sound like out-takes from the soundtrack of the Muppet movie. However, the immediate appeal of their gypsy meets klezmer in the dunny of a country pub while being serenaded by a mariachi band made up of Irish folk singers (with a dwarf named Ted calling bingo in the corner) just doesn't wear off.

Somewhat of a concept album based around a fictional cabaret performance (each of the players has various tons de plume and sings/plays in character) the narrative thread that ties *The Show* makes for a coherent whole, despite the fact that it's as much Eastern Europe as it is Ellington. And despite the consummate musicianship it retains a sense of humour - and more importantly, under the thick blanket of intricate arrangements there are some poignant songs.

'Harry's Theme', a tale of bucking, bludging and beer drinking is delivered by Bonkin' Dave Stephenson with a tender-throated delerium; elsewhere 'The Lost Mariachi's' haunting melancholy competes for your tears with the lost love song 'Diamonds', delivered by the frayed silk tonsils of Marko Simec. The instruments, in particular the overwrought arabesque of 'Radio Novgorod', are just as fine. And the recording is wonderfully natural - rooky and airy allowing the performances to crackle with live energy. *The Show* is an album that sounds like everything else and nothing else, and that's its main strength. DH

**Various Artists**
*Iconic* (PsyHarmonics)
Try and wipe those Dave Hughes suntan commercials from your mind and con- sider that for over ten years Psy-

*Harmonics has provided a unique platform for Australian artists to produce challenging, interesting and predominantly electronic, though regularly genre-crossing, music both with- in Australia and across the world. Their compilations are always an arresting experience and generally dominated by the ubiquitous presence of Ollie Olsen who continues to produce a startling array of diverse material in multiple guises. Here he produces tracks solo and collaborates in projects such as in Honour, Lion Feed, Third Eye, and Quark, skir- ring such diverse terrain as downtempo ambient electronics, restless tribal psychedelia, and melodic electronica. In recent years other artists have also stepped up and made an impact such as Shaolin Wooden Men, remixing one of their own charging rock'n'roll jams here, or Ad Astra, who provides some tripped out new age electro rock on 'Billions'. Whilst David Thrussell's Black Lung offers the abrasive acid trance on 'Autocratic Zeit Shift', Melbourne duo Hesius Dome pro- duce the show stopper in 'Aftermath', an unexpected mix of deep, lush ambience and a funky-ass bass line that is hopefully a taste for their forthcoming album. And then WYEYE, Eye from legendary Japanese outfit the Boredoms pops up with a weirdo everything-but-the-kitchen-sink groove he recorded in '98 that is still leagues ahead of what is being produced today. So forget Dave Hughes, forget suntan cream and forget national pride. Psy-Harmonics is Iconic. This amazing collection further confirms it. Bob Baker Fish

**Various Artists**
*Black Frost* (Dorobo)
Darrin Verhagen is the 'real person' behind the mythical Shinjuku Thief. The music of Shinjuku Thief is filled with drama and tension, grand cinematic flourishes of gothic soundscapes, whilst Verhagen in person and musically is some- what less bombastic and much more amiable. He began using his real name as a way of pursuing his more minimal digital and glitch based material, and *Black Frost* is the second part of his final trilogy for Dorobo.

Consisting of stark minimal soundscapes, dull drones, subtle electrics and guttural rumblings surrounded by a multitude of space, *Black Frost* is a daunting prospect. Despite the suggestion on the back cover that low volumes are recommend- ed and headphones permitted, *Black Frost* bears an odd resemblance to Black Ice, the informal noise record that preceded it. Whilst it differs dramatical- ly in terms of tone, being at heart a dark ambient release, there is an unexpected similarity and distinctiv- eness in the way sounds and tones are introduced - albeit at polar opposite volumes. There are no beats, and few glitches in the place of beats, and textures fade in and out of this strange dark netherworld. A challenging, surprisingly minimal drone and avant-electric piece, *Black Frost* provides a curious and accomplished counterpoint to the aggression that preceded it. We've had noise, now minimalism, I wonder what's next? Bob Baker Fish
A Hawk And A Hacksaw

s/t
(Leaf/Inertia)

It begins with the cry of a rooster and then an oriental sounding gong and before anyone can say ‘Mice Parade’, it’s descended into a dense, vaguely Eastern, repetitive piano flurry, which then somehow, with the assistance of accordion, bass guitar and drums, has transplanted its mood to a provincial France. It almost makes sense given that its creator Jeremy Barnes recorded part of the album in Saumur, France. Much of A Hawk And A Hacksaw is held together by repetitive, frantic and almost comical piano work there is a real artistry, humour, and even compositional care in the way everything is constructed. Such is the diversity of the sounds they conjure, the squelches, burps, wails and squeaks, that many of the tracks sound like a night time field recording in a bizarre alien jungle, where everything is alive, competing for space and bouncing off each other. In this sense there are links to abstract electronica, yet also to the less beat-oriented work of the Boredoms.

Creature Comforts is incredibly bold, well off the beaten track, and arguably one of the most progressive and original releases this year. It also feels just like their amazing Beaches of Canyon, that it’s just another part of the journey – and if their stops are this abstract and wonderful, one wonders with anticipation about their next destination.

Bob Baker Fish

Audio Active

Back to the Stoned Age
(Beat/Valve)

Audio Active have managed to consistently stay true to the spirit of reggae while not actually sounding like anything resembling Jamaican music. Their days on On-U Sound have been able to be quirky and individual without resorting to cheap gags or gimmicks... well, not too many. Still true to their stoner/spaceman roots (or schtick), Back to the Stoned Age features huge doobie spaceship on the cover and a dubious, if entertaining lyric sheet. They seem to have toned down the guitar antics and reclaimed the spirit of their golden ‘Weed Back’ and ‘Suckers’.

By track three everything seems to settle down, with the melancholic synths of ‘Stoned Age’ preceding ‘Frozen Head’, with its intense treble skank and loping baseline counterpointing an understated chant, and the odd analogue bubbling of ‘Locomotive’ all displaying the collective ear for melody and understated chant, and the odd analogue bubbling of ‘Extinction’), with drones, deep bass thuds, etc. To raise the profile of Praemedia, whose, possibly their most intense and compelling work, is hidden in the middle of the track. The skiping beat of ‘Time Shock’ and the vague glitchescape of ‘Universal Joint’ they have displayed a good half album’s worth of interesting music, full of scratchy details, glistering delays and their peculiar melodic sensibility, and that’s at least a quarter album more material than their last outing.

DH

Black Dice

Creature Comforts
(Fat Cal/Inertia)

Creature Comforts further cements the notion that American outfit Black Dice are operating in their own distinct world of music that is simply without peer. A former punk rock outfit, at some point things changed drastically and they delved headlong into the experimental realm. Whilst the psychdelic wash that was 2002’s ‘Beaches of Canyon’ had a vague and loose semblance of the guitar, bass and drums world of their past, Creature Comforts, possibly their most gentile, tripped out work is also their most exploratory. Each track is bathed in strange effects that all seem to originate from their guitar, and traditional song structures have well and truly been relegated to the past, with the sounds constructed with a baffling eccentric logic. For some the experience may be akin to listening to someone too far gone with their guitar-effects board for 40 odd minutes, however

Peter Hollo

Butch Cassidy Sound System

Butches Brew
(Fenetik/Stomp)

In amongst all the Soul Jazz and Blood & Fire reggae reissues there is this excellent, albeit very short, album from young UK producer Michael Hunter. Drawing heavily on ‘70s roots, the Butch Cassidy Sound System is a warm, soulful dedication to roots reggae. Unlike a lot of other roots-sampling digidubs, such as Groove Corporation and Rockers HiFi, Butch Cassidy doesn’t just sample roots vocals and lay
them over modern electronic backing, instead he attempts to create period-piece tracks in which his samples no longer stand out so clearly. Thus the most well-known track on this release, his cover of The Meters’ soul classic ‘Cissy Strut’, is re-fashioned as a dubbed out hiphop track, whilst ‘The Putney’ and ‘Outsiders’ are perfect late ’70s roots dub – smoothed in siren delays. Only the opener ‘Brothers & Sisters’ gives away its modern origins – being an up-tempo piece of rollicking UK dub house that wouldn’t be out of place at a Jah Shaka clash. Sebastian Chan

Chromonad
Sokut
(Alien Resistor)

While the idea of modernising world music with contemporary electronics and rhythms sounds promising in theory, in practice the resultant fusion can sound more like vulgar kitsch than a novel genre-defining hybrid. Saam Schlamminger (aka Chromonad) treads somewhat risky ground when he merges musical sounds and styles of the Middle East with the drums, keyboards, and programming of Markus and Micha Acher (of The Notwist, Tied & Tickled Trio, Lali Puna, and Ms. John Soda fame). Born in Iran and Munich-based since the age of twelve, Schlamminger is no dilettante; formally trained he plays the Persian zarb (a cylinder-shaped drum) and daf (a tambourine with rings in place of cymbals), as well as canjira (bells), dohol (a large two-headed drum played with sticks), gambe, guitar, and bass. Not surprisingly, Sokut is most successful when electronics are used to convincingly re-create Eastern patterns and textures rather than conventional techno beats, and when electronics and ‘live’ elements are allowed to interact: voices and instruments are cut up and transformed into stuttering themes or configured into arresting rhythmic patterns. Strangely, the album’s muted teat-maroo, photo-montage cover design evokes Cold War-era Russian Constructivism, just one of the album’s many unusual qualities. Much like forebears Trilok Gurtu, Glen Velez, Rabih Abou-Khalil, and Alice Coltrane, Schlamminger and the Achers create a convincing global fusion in Sokut by thoroughly integrating the component pieces of Eastern and Western styles as opposed to superficially grafting one onto the other. In this case, Schlamminger’s risk pays off.

Ron Schepper

C.M. Von Hausswolff
Three Overpopulated Cities...
(Sub Rosa/Creative Vibes)

Aside from winning the award for the most long-winded, descriptive and judgemental title of this issue (full title: Three Overpopulated Cities Built By Short

Dizzez Rascal

Showtime
(XL)

The Mercury Music Award can be a kiss of death for UK musicians, as past winners crash back to earth with tepid follow-ups consigned to the discount bin. Listening to Showtime makes me think that Dizzez Rascal has parlayed his

Depeche Mode

Remixes 81-04
(Mute)

I think I probably first heard Depeche Mode when I was in Year 6, everyone on the school bus was singing ‘People Are People’. DM never really attained the art-cool of their closest compatriots, New Order, and instead get lumped in with other ‘80s refugees. Duran Duran, Hamstrung by earnest corny lyrics (but who wasn’t in the ’80s?) it was their late ‘80s output on their Music For The Masses (1987) and Violator (1990) albums that has stood the test of time, with pretty much everything subsequent being rubbish.

Interestingly, the zeitgeist has caught up with them again – the very time that this pack of remixes is out. Marilyn Manson is covering ‘Personal Jesus’ and a car advert is using Just Can’t Get Enough’. From very early on, Depeche Mode worked with remixers and they had a bit of knack for securing mixes from ‘soon-to-be’ stars rather than the obligatory big names. One example of this is the Portishead remix of Walking In My Shoes’ that preceded their rise to fame, and curiously omitted from this collection replaced by their mix of ‘In Your Room’ one year later. Spread across a triple CD set, there is a bit of everything on this set of remixes – from cheesy synth pop and reasonably generic ‘80s club mixes, to nuggets of goodness such as DJ Shadow’s mix of ‘Painkiller’, Kruider & Dofmeister’s predictable but effective dub of ‘Useless’, the pre-Tackhead industrial funk of Adrian Sherwood’s mix of ‘Master & Servant’, Spyder J’s brutalist version of ‘It’s No Good’ and Calder’s lumbering and lurching remake of ‘Clean’. But despite over three hours of remixes there is not enough here to excite, and even at that length it cannot claim to be the comprehensive remix collection it could have been. Sebastian Chan

Sighted Planners. An Unbalanced And Quite Dangerous Airport
Michael Von Hausswolff has crafted an incredibly abstract album inspired by his travels to Mexico City, Tokyo, and Bangkok. As suggested by the title this isn’t exactly a Woody Allen style love letter to those cities – rather the pieces included here are his responses to over-population, poor planning and the disparity amongst the people he found there. Whilst it’s not clear how these sounds were created or constructed, it is clear that without the helpful titles it would be impossible to link these pieces to the aforementioned cities. Rather than an aggressive, abrasive response, Von Hausswolff creates deep bass drones and tones that slowly build and reverberate over these eight-minute-plus pieces – with the occasional siren blast of digitalita. The kicker is the second cut recorded in Stockholm for galleries in New York and Seattle, ‘Muhammad Murtala Or So…’, which for its twenty-three-minute lifespan consists of a huge bass heavy drone and a sparse repetitive beat that sounds like a robot being beaten and skittering digital static. A weird and obtuse work. Bob Baker Fish

Efterklang
Tripper
(Leaf/Inertia)

Efterklang, whose name means reverberation, is a sizeable ten-piece from Copenhagen who combine the sound of Godspeed You! Black Emperor, Sigur Rós and Mùm to create an album that at times surpasses the latest efforts of all three of these influences. Their debut album for Leaf, Tripper, is a quite stunning example of atmospheric orchestral postrock underlaid with laptop electronics and obscure vocals. With lush string contributions from Icelandic string quartet Amina (who worked with Sigur Rós) the album’s best moments are early on. The second track, ‘Swarming’, is all music box pianos and sweet vocals with glitched electronic pulses as a rhythm whilst ‘Collecting Shields’ is full of fluttering twitchy electronic insects. A fascinating debut.

Global Goon
Family Glue
(Audiodregs)

Apparately Johnny Hawk (aka Global Goon) roomed with Richard D. James in London in the mid-’90s before releasing his 1996 Rephlex debut Goon, which was followed by Cradle of History and then Vatican Nitez. The Aphex Twin influence is still audible on Family Glue, his fourth album, but that’s not a complaint. Think of Hawk as a less jaded Aphex, someone for whom the innocent joy of music-making is still very much alive, a quality large-
ly absent from Come
To Daddy and drunks, whatever
their other redeeming qualities. Goon is also more
straightforward and less self-indulgent than Aphex,
as all eleven tracks on this succinct set make their
point with dispatch and end before the four-minute
mark. With only one exception (the spacey yet unre-
markable ‘Pause’), all songs are up-tempo; anyone
looking for somber melancholia won’t find it on Family
Glee. A typical Goon track features a propulsive bass
and drums combination over which bright synth
melodies sing and subtle vocal flavourings appear, and
he often incorporates a bucolic synth sound that’ll be
familiar to Boards of Canada listeners. ‘Electrostatic Bonj
De Lonj’ opens the set on a high note with its bright analog
synths, beefy bass lines, and laconic but assured drum
beats, and the good times continue with ‘Who Gonched Ya?’
Here an intricate, Plaid-style beat kicks the track into gear
accompanied by skirling lead bass lines; Goon even finds a
spot for the by-now familiar ‘funky drummer’ beat in ‘Glory
B.’ Admittedly, Goon’s pop-IDM-disco-funk hybrid lacks the
moments of brilliance and depth that distinguish the best
Aphex tracks, but Hawk makes up for it by distilling the
irreverent spirit of Wagon Christ and James’s analog spark
into a jubilant cocktail. Ron Schepper

Gravenhurst
Flashlight Sessions
(Warp/Inertia)
Warp Records are a different beast of late, what with the
likes of !!!, Vincent Gallo and a generally expanding roster
that refreshingly contradicts its back catalogue. Nick Talbot’s
Gravenhurst furthers this abandoning of Warp’s electronic
past, focusing purely on traditional songwriting using voice
and acoustic instrumentation. There is some heavy emula-
tion here of Drakian wistfulness and melancholy, but it
seems a little too forced and strained in execution. Nick
Drake perfected the art of shaping sad songs that were also
full of hope and promise, and didn’t choose to wallow to the
point of self-indulgent no return. Talbot has a voice that
sometimes shines with the aural crutches of a well written
and structured song, but more often than not he falls a little
flat in delivery on Flashlight Sessions. His harmony work
seems rushed and unfocused, possibly a result of recording
the entire album in the confines of his own home studio
with no real external influence. ’I Turn My Face to the Forest
with a Nick Drake lyric’ are all thick with
happy-sad atmosphere
and dark
lyrical flair. yet somehow fall
short of developing melodically and struc-
turally beyond densely, finely-tuned atmospherics. Perhaps
this is the most appropriate criticism of the entire album,
with songs often relying heavily on a mesh of multitacked
parts that drench the arrangements unnecessarily. ‘The ice
parts Tree’ melds all the promise of the remainder of the album,
and shows that Talbot’s Gravenhurst has the potential to
grow into something that is obviously only half told here.
Barry Handler

Arve Henriksen
Chiaroscuro
(Rune Grammofon)
Trumpeter Arve Henriksen hails from Norway but there’s
certainly nothing regional about the global style of this fan-
tastic collection. Evidence of his interest in Balinese sounds
and Mongolian overtone singing occasionally surfaces, but
tones that’s uniquely his own. ‘Opening Image’ plunges us imme-
diately into a poignant string-laden soundscape with
Henriksen’s trumpet crying softly, its soft tones even resembling a
flute. His voice enters, so high-pitched it resembles a
choirboy’s. It’s a remarkably beautiful opening that is
reprised at the album’s end as an equally moving, almost
heartbreaking, coda. The exotic percussion of Bird’s-Eye-
View then transports us to Africa, with Henriksen’s singing
drum featuring against the afro-jazz backing. Later in the
album he retires the horn to spotlight his voice, heard in
‘Chiaro’ against a backdrop of percussion and electronic
washes, and then in a more incantatory feel in the plodding,
dirge-like ‘Blue Silk’ where Kleive works up an animated,
colourful base alongside a murmuring array of trumpets.
While not obviously ‘jazz’ in the conventional sense, this
marvelous album testifies that the spirit of exploration pur-
shed by the Art Ensemble of Chicago lives, something need-
ed now more than ever in light of Lester Bowie’s premature
passing. How ironic that the album’s title refers to the techni-
ique of using light and shade to create illusions of depth in
two-dimensional imagery, as there’s nothing illusory about
the deeply affecting qualities of Chiaroscuro. Ron Schepper

Hard Sleeper
“Rain”/A Leaf Spiral
(Sub Rosa)
For someone with such an acclaimed background in design
and typography, Dublin-based Peter Maybury’s latest Hard
Sleeper release “Rain”/A Leaf Spiral boasts a rather undis-
tinguished, even crude cover design. Luckily the minimal
electronic music inside is the diametric opposite, “Rain”/A
Leaf Spiral exudes a clean and clinical sheen and, in spite of
its sonic tactility, is meditative, unhurried, and quiet. At
twenty-three minutes ‘Rain’ is the obvious epic, although
that’s attributable more to duration than dynamics. It might
seem somewhat loosely structured, but in fact Maybury care-
fully modulates its development throughout. He places a
wawering tone in the background that forms a connecting
thread for the numerous episodes, and frames the piece
brought to the material, Ron Schepper

Himuro
Clear Without Items
(Couchblip)
The music of Yoshiteru Himuro is all over the
shop, yet it’s also remarkably controlled and
extraordinarily precise in its eccentricity.
Whilst with the advent of computer music
some artists attempt to cram in as many
genres as humanly possible into the one
song, Himuro by contrast appears incredi-
bly clear and focussed about what each
track requires before moving on to the
next. Consequently Clear Without
Items bounces

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across incredibly diverse terrain both in terms of style and moods, somewhat like a peculiar electronic opera. The palette and inspiration comes from ‘80s game sound, where Himuro has tumbled the insides of decrepit Ataris and Nintendos and wrenched out those ancient kitsch sounds, and reorientated them with a distinctly 21st century feel. It’s tightly controlled mechanical music comprised of claustrophobic electronics, demented disco induced stumps, twisted abrasive bursts of hip hop, lopsided hackneyst drum’n’bass, and weird genreless pieces that manage to exist outside explanation, yet still make perfect sense in Himuro’s magical world. Here Donkey Kong has been turned on his head and become a dark, ambient, somewhat melancholic slice of atmospheric electro, Pac-Man a Tourette’s inspired burst of impish jungle, and Galaxian a downtempo slab of electro trip hop. Clear Without Reins is undoubtedly a colourful and evocative disc with a light and playful mood contrasted by some dark mysterious places, and it’s the emotion he conjures up as he navigates this divide that provides that lasting rewards of this surprising and inspired work. Bob Baker

Kazuya Ishigami
Utage Hanabi
(Chmafu Nocords)
The swathe of CDs from Austrian label Chmafu Nocords comes with a rather overbearing set of A4 notes from the label, and it actually takes a few days after reading the post-Deluxian claptap ('a non-profit label that specializes in anti-specialization. Specialization is in fact only a fancy form of slavery'; ‘Virtuosity? Fuck it! It is the worst enemy of the ear!’ and so on) to properly appreciate the music for itself. And Kazuya Ishigami’s album features musicscaping of a kind that works very well indeed with no explanatory notes at all. Distorted noise and drones are put into a 3D space that makes them sound like field recordings from some kind of metallic source, so when spoken voices are heard, it’s like we’re hearing a recording of some kind of installation. It’s abstract noise, but works as a weird journey, and the blocks of wood in the second track are particularly engaging. Peter Hollo

Lullatone
Little Songs About Raindrops
(Plop/Couchblip)
With Little Songs About Raindrops, Shawn James Seymour (Lullatone) shifts the focus away from the pure sine tones of last year’s Computer Recital to a more expansive toy orchestra sound. Stylistically, his music retains its previous child-like, innocent qualities but now sounds even prettier. As before, the songs are charming mood-scares that cumulatively induce a peaceful reverie; there’s no conventional rhythmic base to speak of, the clos-
est thing to it is a faint click that patters. Obviously one presumes that his recent move to Nagoya, Japan, catalyzed the stylistic changes; the music is now stately and less minimal than before, as Seymour is joined by singer Yoshimi Tomida on four songs, plus guitar and ukulele players on others. Adding to its charm is its occasional homemade feel, with brief music box tracks like ‘My Petit Prelude’ and ‘Pitter Patter Interlude’ sounding like they were recorded in Seymour’s bedroom. Those are slight pieces, however — more fragments compared to longer and more intricate songs like ‘Morning Coffee’ where clocken-spiels and gamelan chimes interweave with growing intensity. Amidst string plucks, a melodica sound adds a nostalgic air to the song’s meditative mood as it does to other songs. Admittedly, a sameness in the sound and style starts to emerge by the midway point of the recording — most tracks develop from intricate interweaves of melodic patterns — but there’s no denying the lovely marriage of lapping ukulele strums and looping clockenspiel melodies in ‘Leaves Falling’ or the appealing onomatopoeic qualities of ‘Drip Drops Jumping On An Umbrella’ where guitar plucks mimic bouncing water droplets. Ron Schepper

Lionel Marchetti
L’inconscience de L’Etoile
(Stitching)
This single, at times ferocious, twenty-minute piece from renowned French collagest and composer Lionel Marchetti is full of snarling, roaring, screeching tones that dip into light squeaks before coming together in a roaring cacophony of aggressive voices. Seemingly placing a heavy reliance on tape manipulation to contribute to the drama of the piece, Marchetti alternates between violent strokes that increase in volume, range and density during the frequent crescendos and then dissipate into the odd fragmented snarl or droning Zen like ghostly cries. It would be interesting to know the sources from which Marchetti; a devotee of the school of music concrete garnered his sounds. Whilst there appears to be the sounds of flies, tapes of birds run backwards and possibly some larger more aggressive animals with bigger teeth, the genius is in the manipulation, which twists, speeds up or fragments these core sounds altering them into what could almost be (but isn’t) laptop-crafted digital refuse. Bob Baker

Moodymann
Black Mahogany
(Peacefrog/Creative Vibes)
I know it’s been out for a while now, but I finally got a copy a little while ago, and this is strictly timeless stuff. Since 1997, Kenny Dixon Jr has been taking the roots of house music – the glorious moments, the moody bass lines and warm vibes – to create his soulful electronic music. His fifth full-length album Black Mahogany is arguably the best yet. It’s set somewhere in between a dark, smoky jazz club and a beautiful deep house mix. Whispers from the vocalists appear in the mix, dip down again only to reemerge minutes later, repetitive minimal loops and disembodied gospel singers. Disco loops are cropped into tracks, alongside snatches of Norma Jean Bell or Amp Fiddler. Black Mahogany is like that all the way through. There’s a scene setting ambience and the signature samples (from Blaxploitation films like Superfly) that earned Dixon his underground rep for talking about racism in America. It’s almost a cliché to label Kenny Dixon Jr a genius. Yes, he’s a house music producer, but comparing this to most house releases is like comparing a caramellised peach to a jam doughnut. Calico

Mouse On Mars
Radical Connector
(Rogue Recvd/iNetria)
Since reportedly meeting at a death metal concert, Jan St. Werner and Andi Toma have been producing together under their Mouse On Mars moniker for just on a decade. The slow but steady trickle of releases issuing from their studio reveal a couple of restless musicians always ready to explore and experiment with new ideas. This is primarily why there has always been a buzz of excitement surrounding the release of their albums. Surprisingly, Radical Connector shifts away from the jagged edges of electronic experimentation found on their last album Idiology and favours an idiosyncratic pop approach. It has been a long time since Mouse On Mars have been this melodic and, somewhat uncharacteristically, there are vocals on every track, while the beats stomp towards danceability. Radical Connector showcases the duo at their most accessible, as they playfully deconstruct urban, hip hop and pop influences into jittery computerised mayhem that isn’t too dissimilar to the vibe found on Funkstörung’s Disconnected album released earlier this year. ‘Mine Is In Yours’ kicks off the album and it bumps to a funky grinding boat accompanied by Dodo Nkishi’s vocals, which are processed and layered with out-of-control synths to work up to a throbbing climax which acquires into lush, pastoral vocal harmonies accompanied by a strumming acoustic guitar. The first single, ‘Wipe That Sound’ features an irresistible, lumbering, bass-heavy groove with falsetto disco backing vocals. ‘Send Me Shivers’ comes draped in delicate electronic textures underscored by a bouncy tech-house beat, while the duo dissect Niobe’s sweet voice in a computer with a battery of effects to achieve a strange stuttering robotic effect that avoids the vocoder clichés found on so many electro tracks. The furiously shredded vocals on ‘Spaceship’deliver a political message while the track sinks deep into glitchy bouncy shaking laptop p-funk. Foreboding electronics and guitars swirl hypnotically on ‘The End’ while Niobe mysteriously suggests that the end, the very end, is on hand. This album demonstrates how lessons learned from years of sonic experimentation, sweetened with melodic hooks, can be inserted into a pop context. Predictably the results are quirky but very appealing. Guido Farnell

Multiplex
With Hands And Feet Remixes
(Multiplex Music)
Multiplex are a brotherly duo that have released in the past on Toytronic and Senton, and now present their own label, Multiplex Music. The CD begins with the original rendition of ‘With Hands
and Feet’ – a pentatonic inspired electronic work of artists: Proem, Novel 23, Dictaphone, Digitonal, Shitmat, Safety Scissors, Fizzarrum, Decadniads. Though the remix album is not a new idea, provided you have a great song to begin with, the result is always interestingly diverse and it highlights each artist’s individual sound as they each interpret the same piece of music in a different way. Digitonal starts off the remixing work with a lush orchestral-inspired piece that is captivating. The tranquility is irreverently removed by the frantic and sinister splattercore of Shitmat, who also offers up another piece of mayhem later in the CD. We are returned to the safety of the serene melodic ground with the lovely remixes by Proem, Decadniads and Fizzarrum. Safety Scissors roughens up the original with a quirky SID-styled interpretation and crunchy 8-bit beats. The standout remix is by Novel 23 who takes the oriental inspiration one step further and the result is an uplifting yet dark piece. The touches of live instrumentation and filtering by Dictaphone puts the finishing touches on this externally captivating release. Melinda Taylor

Murcof

Utöpia (Leaf/Inertia)

Murcof is the Tijuana-based producer Fernando Corona, who has previously released material as Terrestre, as well as other material that adheres much the same principles of his more recent style of composition (i.e. orchestral cut ups, micro rhythm edits and generally nano-textures and rhythms). Essentially a remix album all prettied up, Utöpia features remixes from a handful of respected producers in the Leaf camp and extended family, with an additional four original Murcof tracks (two already featured on the Ulysses 12” released previously in 2003). ‘Ulysses’ introduces Utöpia with soaring and sensuous pure filmic dissonance and a melancholic saunter that is hard to resist. The swathe of melodic elements subside as the click-house elements arrive around a soft piano motif, but the full potential of this arrangement of sounds never seems to be realised. The Deathprod mix of ‘Ulysses’ is a delightfully brief excursion in dream-like texture and is ironically more engaging than the rhythm based remixes present elsewhere on the disc. Pleasingly, the disc ends on a high note with Sutekh’s remix of ‘Memoria’ foregoing cut and paste build up techniques and jumping straight into the smooth edged electro groove he does so damn well. Barry Handler

Neotropic

White Rabbits (Mush/Stomp)

After Ninja Tune closed down its electronic/ambient sub-label, Neotropic’s Riz Maslen was cast adrift. In 2002 she toured Australia showcasing some of her rediscovered interest in guitar. It was through touring the USA and hooking up with the Anticon crew that she has ended up at LA-based White Mush Records for her fourth LP. The new album, White Rabbits, continues Riz’s foray into ambient guitar-meets-electronics that started on her La Prochaine Fois release for Ntone in 2001. In terms of ambient electronics it is all very laid back and calmative, like a bubbling brook, and far less driven by the frantic and sinister splattercore of Shitmat, who also offers up another piece of mayhem later in the CD. We are returned to the safety of the serene melodic ground with the lovely remixes by Proem, Decadniads and Fizzarrum. Safety Scissors roughens up the original with a quirky SID-styled interpretation and crunchy 8-bit beats. The standout remix is by Novel 23 who takes the oriental inspiration one step further and the result is an uplifting yet dark piece. The touches of live instrumentation and filtering by Dictaphone puts the finishing touches on this externally captivating release. Melinda Taylor

Pan American

Quiet City

(Kranky/Inertia)

Mark Nelson’s fourth album as Pan American sees a return to the gentle arpeggiated aesthetics of A Stable Reference-era Labradorescence in favour of the bass pulse that defined his last album. This move backwards, from being a negative impulse, has consolidated the unique presence that both Labradorescence and Pan American possess, but it also blurs the line between them. Although the Pole-ish scratch and thudding of his last work The River Made No Sound was moderately convincing in its scope, it lacked the rich timbres and phrasing of the previous outings. Quiet City, on the other hand, is all cold stillness and subtle energy – and forgoes programmed beats altogether – a characteristic more in tune with Labradorescence’s output than the typically beat driven solo project. Although a little confused in this mixing of gentle show-runs of rain, rarely registering more than the sound of tyres on wet bitumen and the gradual glistening of the grass, it’s an album for dark nights and the occasional blistering afternoon as it indulges in a almost palpable indolence: the barely audible rasped poem over the reverberating picked guitar of the first track (‘Before’) is the single greatest outpouring of energy until a set of lazy trap drums appear on track five (‘Lights on Wire’). In between are tracks exploring single note drones, dusty vinyl crackles and a sparsely melancholic melodica. Despite its quiet nature (and in fact because of it) the thrill of vertigo is present at every moment, as each piece verges on the sublime point between musical existence and the precipice of silence. DH

Sebastian Chan

Noah23

Jupiter Sajijtarius

(Jupiter Sajijtarius is the third album from US-born Canadian resident MC Noah23. and comes out on Hamburg label 2nd Rec – that continues its diverse output with this foray into hip-hop. Noah23 isn’t your average MC, while shifting from rapid fire rhymes to semi-singing, he’s more likely to drop names like 23 Skidoo, Joy Division or Axl Rose than he is to follow hiphop’s more standard rhetoric. Similarly, having come from a production background that has encompassed rock and techno, his musical backings range from boom bap to reggae skanks to odd swingtime samples. The first thing to strike me about this generally interesting record is its similarity to Australia’s very own The Herd – the production, rhyming styles, and Noah23’s flows and politics immediately conjure up images of Ozi Batha and Ubtho by perhaps crossed with MC Paul Barman (although without the stupidity). Likewise, fans of other Canadian MCs like Josh Martinez and of course, our own Elefant Traks should check this. For those insistent on keeping it real (a.k.a. keeping it locked down) – bypass this one. Sebastian Chan

Pan Sonic

Kesto

(Mute)

Kesto is enormous, feeling like it encompasses every area ever touched upon by this experimental electronic lo-fi duo, and then some. A four-disc box set lovingly packaged with vivid photography, Kesto, roughly translated into English apparently refers to the very fulsomely heavy, at times searing,Animal-esque beats and beats and remains for the majority violently heavy, at times searing,
INTernational releases cont

aggressive and overwrought instrumental hiphop. Disc two,
meanwhile, returns to a similar atmospheric beat driven
world of AaltoPiiri with brooding muscular wisps of sound
taking a step back from the heavily textured rhythms. The
third disc is perhaps the most interesting, though also the
most abstract – where beats are dispensed with altogether
and replaced with dark ambient drones, gentle tones and
monochromatic suggestions. It’s a dark, jittery, though at times quite powerful, work of alien soundscapes that isn’t afraid to be provocative. The last disc, a single
hour-long piece entitled ‘Radiation’ is almost Zen-like
with a metallic shimmering drone and is an interesting
counterpoint to the aggression of the first disc. Though the
sounds have been harnessed in a quite mesmerising and
peaceful form, there is no denying the underlying strength
and violence inherent in the work. 234 minutes and barely a
moment is wasted. Bob Baker Fish

Quantazelle
Coaster
(subVariant)
Chicago-based Liz McLean Knight certainly keeps herself
busy. As well as making electronic music, she runs a design
company, an online IDM magazine and various other ventures
centred around technology’s interface with culture. Her
new album is released on her own label subVariant, and
with a healthy list of other artists, it’s certainly no
vanity label. Music seems to be her first love, however, and
it comes out in the high-quality electronic music on this
CD. The design concept is that Coaster doubles as exactly
that — something to rest your beverage on, complete with
customizable colourful CD covers. But don’t let that fool
you into expecting disposable music; Quantazelle’s
music is as melodic as it is expertly programmed, the
complex beats flowing with grace. Disarmingly, a foot-
note on the artwork tells us a ‘Hidden track is sold
separately’, so it’s actually a shame that it appears
after minutes of silence inside the last track — it’s a
beautiful creation of multi-tracked vocal samples
and beats that deserves to be ‘tracked separately’. It’s
great to find another female electronic artist
out there, as enterprising and accomplished as
Sydney’s own Robokonoko. Peter Hollo

Reverbaphone
Our Heart Beats with Joy (The Curved World
Outside)
(Benebecula)
Benebecula Records began as a Scottish CDR
label in the late ’90s. Reverbaphone is the
26th release on the label to date. At first listen
Reverbaphone is reminiscent of Morr
Music, but a prolonged investigation reveals a gamut of styles, from sound
experiments, to ambience, to some folk-
tronica incarnations with digital diver-
sions. A dark and reflective ambience envelops certain
tracks, and they’re contrasted with some more upbeat and
peculiar vocal offerings. When I hear yet another electronic
release drawing inspiration from folk music my ears get very
weary — but one of the things that make this release stand out above the rest is the range of instruments present; from
accordion, melodica, guitar, banjo, biwa and of course, a
reverbaphone (a reed mouth piece connected to a long card-
board tube with a spring-tension along the length that is
recorded to a variable speed four-track, altering the pitch
during recording to get a tune). An atypical take on electronic
and distinctly lovely to listen to. Melinda Taylor

Lori Scacco
Circles
(Eastern Developments)
At first glance, the nature photography and ’60s-styled
typography that adorn Circles suggest that it might be some
earliest collection from a Californian singer-songwriter in the
Laura Nyro mould. But first impressions, as
they so commonly do, mislead. It’s an instrumental album
from classically-trained pianist Lori Scacco, one-time co-
founder of indie group Sooly and lately a touring member of
Savath & Savalas; coincidentally, Circles finds its home on
Scott Herren’s Eastern Developments label. Its nine tracks are
generally becalmed, meditative, and bucolic. Her music is
often stately and ruminative, qualities nicely showcased in
the opener ‘Roiling Then Again’ where her overdrubbed
guitars and pianos (acoustic and electric in both cases) are
enhanced by the warm tones of Tim Delaney’s acoustic bass.
Scacco’s an impressive instrumentalist, too, as she adds percus-
sion and bowed strings to the dramatic piano flourishes
and guitars of ‘Imitation of Happiness’. Elsewhere, she
rostraneously performs ‘Love’s Journey’ as a reflective and
ruminate piano solo. A few tracks emphasize a
different, more electronic side. On ‘A Quiet Light’, electric
pianos create a child-like, lullaby sound that recalls
Lullatone, while ‘Meditation’ moves even further into ambient
electronica with its blurred electric pianos and clicking
patterns. The resultant album isn’t earth-shattering by any
means, but still music refreshingly free of irony, cynicism,
and sentiment — no small accomplishment. Ron Schepper

Secret Chiefs 3
Book of Horizons
(Mimicry/ Stomp)
With Book of Horizons Trey Spruance, the former Mr Bungle
member and sole musical mind behind the Secret Chiefs 3
has crafted his masterwork. A sprawling canvas of Middle
Eastern melodies colliding alternatively with film sound-
track influenced sounds, dirty electronics, punk rock and
surf guitar, Book of Horizons is the
culmination of years of tireless work and the first part of a
plan so grand that the Secret Chiefs 3 could conceivably take
over the world. Split into six separate sub bands, all with
separate names and comprising of the likes of Danny Heifetz
(Mr Bungle), Tim Harris (Extradysphere), William Winnant
(Sonic Youth/Mr Bungle), and renowned improviser Eyvind
Kang, the cuts on Book of Horizons are a series of themes for
each band, or variations on those themes. The first part in a
trilogy, not all of the themes will be revealed until the third
part is concluded. Though it may
seem bogged down with

bizarre theory, which anyone who’s read
the sleeve notes to the three previous stu-
dio records can attest is pretty damn
dense, the music itself, spawned by these
ideas, is light, weightless and damn near
perfect. If you’re sick of disposable music,
Book of Horizons is the antidote, aside from
the theoretical basis, the music itself posi-
tively resonates with feeling, in much the
same way the work of Alice Coltrane is
imbued with intense spirituality. It’s ironic
that an American playing Middle Eastern music is
able to achieve this, but what’s clear is that a
week, a year, ten years from now this music is
still going to mean something. The musicianship
is extraordinary, the compositions challenging,
vital and as uncompromisingly diverse as any of
the Bungle material. Featuring sounds like
everything from Morriconi-esque symphonic sweeps to
Turkish wedding music, to minimal avant-garde
soundscapes, to bizarre Arabic percussion disco elec-
tronic amalgam, this is music that is so classy and dis-
tinctly in its own world, that everything else in yours
suddenly ceases to be important. Bob Baker Fish

Ran Slavin
Product 02
(Cronica)
Ran Slavin is an audio/video composer and improviser
who has previously operated under diverse monikers such as
Tour, Extract, Ivan and Rose of Jericho, working with various
noise outfits in Israel and London from the late ’80s to
early ’90s. These days his musical work is purely within the
abstract electronic realm, utilising flicks of static and warm
metallic drones to come across with the treated lushness and
depth of Austrian maestro Christian Fennesz. The initial
nine cuts under the umbrella Tropical Agent are quite ama-
zing constructions, gorgeous minimal drone pieces, warm low
key pulses that resemble beats, skittery delayed electronics
and a craftsman-like use of dynamics. Allowing for thirty
seconds dead air in between, on ‘Vista Plain’, the opening
track of the second part entitled ‘Ears in Water’, Slavin incor-
porates the gentle strumming of guitar, a pulsating drone and
some gently tearing digital static to hypnotic effect. Whilst
the remainder of the disc continues deep within the experi-
mental realm of the first, it is actually stranger, somewhat
more abstract, with peculiar muttering over far away drones,
and sounds that seem to begin from miles away before slow-
ly evolving into focus. Bob Baker Fish

Spirit Elevating Brains
Do Not Expect
(Chmafu Nocords)
Packaged in a DVD case comes this double CD release from
Sebastian Alvarez (aka S.E.B) on Austria’s Chmafu Nocords.
The second CD, a self-contained EP called Evidence and
Process, offers fairly uninspiring minimal loopy electronics.
On the album proper, however, there’s more to keep one listen-
ing. Tracks often loop in ways reminiscent of early releas-
es on fellow Austrian label Megro, and this can give the
impression that we’re just listening to a series of
ideas strung out to track-length with no
real development. Still,
there are some very
glitchy beats, and the best
tracks to keep the finger off the skip button, and
there's an ear for sonic texture that bodes very well
for future releases by S.E.B.

Peter Hollo

**Swayzak**

Loops From The Bergerie
(K7/Creative Vibes)

When Funkstörung released *Disconnected*, the group
traded its unique sound for faceless soul, pop, rock, and
rap. I wondered. then whether Swayzak might suffer a
similar fate given that the group had decided to emphasize
analogue equipment from the ‘70s and early ‘80s over laptop
production methods, and embrace, more than ever before, a live analogue approach. Any fear of this are laid to
rest once ‘Keep It Coming’ kicks in. In this irresistible open-
er, the group alternates garbled voice clusters (‘Are you
ready to go?’ and ‘I’m ready to go’) with Brun’s dark mono-
tone while a pummeling base that’s equal parts electro,
tech-no, and new wave broils underneath. Following its ‘Psycho
Killer’ intro, Brun re-appears to pleadingly croon on the
lurching shuffle ‘Blindblind’, but the remaining vocal tracks
are shared by Clair Dietrich, Mathilde Mallen, and Richard
Davis. There are instrumental too, like ‘Jeune Loup’, where
the group droops Fripp-like razor guitars over a clicking
groove that shimmies and shakes like some animatronic
belly dancer. The album’s integrated feel is partially attrib-
able to its method of production. Rather than soliciting vocal
contributions via e-mail as was done in the past, Swayzak
invited the singers to the Bergerie so that the songs and the
vocals developed together. Consequently, the pieces seem
fully-formed and natural as opposed to sounding like back-
tracking logs that have had vocals grafted onto them. Consider
how artfully, for example, the group combines minimal bass
lines, electro showers, and warm synth tones into a
restrained base for Clair Dietrich’s sprechgesang vocal in
‘Then There’s Her.’ Make no mistake: these are songs, not
experimental soundscapes, but eminently sophisticated and
finely crafted songs nonetheless. On *Loops From The
Bergerie*, Swayzak distills its strengths into a stylistic format
that seems thoroughly tailor-made for them.

Ron Schepper

**Toshiya Tsunoda**

Scenery of Decalcomania
(Naturestrip)

Recent visitor to our shores, Japanese field recordist Toshiya
Tsunoda is renowned for his desire to record the minute
vibrations of sound, having previously recorded the likes of
motion of air within a glass bottle. On *Scenery of
Decalcomania* Tsunoda suggests that ‘an event causes vibra-
tions through a certain space, and the vibrations affect this
space. Tsunoda’s interest is in documenting this altered
space and in order to do this he sets up a few little experi-
ments for himself and then enthusiastically records the
results. Thus armed with three glass bottles, three vibration
plates and sine waves he creates a miniature symphonic
hum that is gradually overcome by the pitches of the pure
sine waves on the opener ‘Unstable Contact’. Then there’s
‘Wind Whistling’, where he records the sound of the wind
whistling through a narrow slit in the handrail of a foot-
bride, the pitch changing according to the strength of the
wind, sounding like a gentler higher pitched companion to
Alan Lamb’s infamous wind on powerlines experiments.
Elsewhere he records a narrow cavity under a cylinder
resulting in a water drone replete with nearby bird calls,
the sound of a nearby ferry, the almost calming drones
recorded from the opening of a pipe, plus other more com-
plex experiments involving oscillators and sine waves.
Tsunoda’s strength is his desire to focus on the microcosm of
sound instead. This is exactly what a mix tape/CD should be – dynam-
ic, slightly nutty, and instilling of
the desire to track down other

Bob Baker Fish

**Tarentel**

We Move Through Weather
(Temporary Residence)

Treading the somewhat overgrown but nevertheless trodden
path of edgy instrumental rock (AKA post rock), Tarentel’s
way of life is a thing of beauty, not just in its desire to upset
the stand out amongst their peers in their desire to upset the
irrepressible world. The opening delicate sonic swells are
interrupted by a persistent drum beat that sounds like a ran-
dom snip from a Keith Moon solo (all arms and toms) that is
eventually accompanied by a gorgeous guitar arpeggio, only
to be inevitably subsumed by organic noise and the constant
flailing drums. ‘We’re the Only Ghosts Here’ pits a mordant
piano refrain against waves of static, and on the opening
track ‘Hello...’ the feedback crescendo builds from the open-
ing moments to an extreme that is poignant in its totality –
and then replaced by sublimity effecting strummed guitar.
This deliberate detailing of the pieces is frustrating – it’s as
though Tarentel deny themselves the beautiful music that
they naturally express in spite of themselves, in favour of
being difficult or irritating. As an intellectual exercise this
strategy has arguable validity, but musically it seems count-
erproductive, destructive and a little immature.

DH

**Various Artists**

Trade & Distribution Almanac Vol. 2
(ADAAADAT)

Last year a new UK label heralded its beginning with a
‘Trade & Distribution Almanac’ demonstrating its sound with
a collection of predominantly unknown artists. ADAAADAT
has since cemented their reputation with an album from
Utabi (whose Manchurian Candy has everything that’s right
about Japanese breakcore-meets-folktronika-meets-mid’90s
Warp), and a split CD from breakcore darlings Donna
Summer and Ove Naxx. For the second ADAAADAT sampler
those names join many from the first comp as well as more
newbies, for a selection that is ultimately more satisfying
than the first. Breakcore’s scatter-gun nonsense side domi-
nates much of the proceedings, including the third (and least
interesting) breakcore version of the Mario Brothers theme
that I know of. Neither Donna Summer nor Ove Naxx turn
in particularly good tracks, but CDR’s drill’n’bass nostalgia
is cute, and 65days/ostatcprove that by rights they’re
gonna be huge in 2005. Some of the slower tracks have a
great digi-cut-up funk to them, and in particular Utabi
rounds off the CD with a typically quirky but engaging

Peter Hollo

**Peter Szely**

Welcome To My World
(Mosz)

Viennese artist Peter Szely has been working across a range of
sound fields for many years. Working as a sound architect,
exploring the use of sound through a variety of installation
and theatre related projects, he recently turned his interest
in sound to focus more fully on composition and it is this
album that is the results of that work. Collecting together a
range of sound sources, from electric guitar and programmed
drums to filtered percussion and field recordings, Szely cre-
ates a piece and in some ways quite simple sound world. He
ever tries to reach for anything too unfamiliar here – the
melodies and drum patterns, while occasionally unusual,
are a mix tape/CD should be – dynamic,

Sebastian Chan

**Various Artists**

Late Night Tales Mixed By Four Tet
(Azuli/Stomp)

Generally mix CDs of this sort get short shrift by me, but Four Tet’s
dropped out of one of the best mixes of the year on Azuli’s latest *Late Night Tales*.
Standing out like a twelve-foot giant’s sore thumb from the previous *Late Night Tales* mixes by
Jamiroquai, Nightmares On Wax and others, Four Tet welds together a coherent and involving mix
that skates merrily through psych-soul, ‘70s folk, experimental electronic, astral jazz and
hiphop. Manfred Mann rubs up against Terry Riley, Max Roach and an early Tortoise track
gives way to RZA’s Gravediggaz goth-hiphop. Joe Henderson’s epic spiritual evocation
‘Earth’, with the sublime harp of Alice Coltrane, mixes company with fellow ‘70s
traveller Linda Perhacs before dissolving into Four Tet’s own remake of Hendrix’s
‘Castles Made Of Sand’ and so on. It is
Four Tet compatriots Koushik and Icarus
who also deliver sterling tracks and the
‘70s effortlessly criss-cross with
tracks from the last year or two, refusing
to be genre-bound, but instead
deciding to mix by the purpose of
sound instead. This is exactly what
the mix.
Takashi Wada

Meguro
(Onitor)

There was one project Alfred Hitchcock dreamed of doing but which remained unfulfilled: a film that would encompass ‘twenty-four-hours in the life of a city’. Whether or not wunderkind Takashi Wada knew of the director’s idea, he’s produced a credible musical equivalent to it. His solo debut, the stylistically rich Meguro, begins at 3am and ends at sunset, with the intervening hours spent taking in a city’s architecture, light reflections, fluctuating weather conditions, and landscapes. Wada’s compositions are through-composed pieces that eschew soloing and favour rich arrangements with all manner of instrumentation featured throughout. Sounds of insects and lush washes convey a sleeping city at the outset, but the sitar-like glistens, skipping beat, and bright vocals of ‘Morning View’ show the city arising. At times, the feel is laid-back and reflective (the acoustic bass and skipping beats in ‘108th August,’ fluid washes suggesting glistening reflections in ‘Lights and Water’); at others, it’s uptempo, and reminiscent of Cologne techno (the subtle, soft shimmer of ‘6pm Cityscape’) and Kompakt-styled shuffle (‘19°C’). The day-long concept imbues the album with a unifying programmatic quality, but the album would still succeed in its absence; one would still sense the joy and peaceful contentment, and the innocent, even slightly naive, quality reminiscent of Nobukazu Takemura in the recordings. A stylistically rich debut for this young composer. Ron Schepper

Zeppelin

Sleever Coach
(Loose Thread)

The album begins in waves of lush, pure and dreamy sound that wash over you as formless, almost incomprehensible atmospheres. Gradually they are revealed as the sonic reverberations of a guitar and bass; then as the vocals seep slowly into view, and a few minutes later a plodding hazy percussion begins. This opener ‘Sea Bastards’, is representative of Sleever Coach as a whole, a gentle, drowsy meditative work that falls somewhere between the Red House Painters played with the reverb turned up full blast on every instrument, and the density, though not the abraciveness of My Bloody Valentine. The mood is a slight step up from a ‘Thursday Afternoon Brian Eno’, with a similar lush warmth encompassing everything it touches. Whilst their sound has roots in the ambient and drone worlds, Chicago-based quartet Zeppelin are very clearly utilising guitar bass and percussion, though there are also hints of piano accordion, organ, vibraphone and possibly some Middle Eastern instruments – all given that sleepy tripped out treatment. Sleever Coach is a heady and evocative trip, an album that effortlessly fills up the room with its gentle, dreamy grandeur.

Bob Baker Fish

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**DVD REVIEWS**

**INTERNATIONAL RELEASES cont**

**Various Artists**

Warp Vision: The Videos 1989-2004 (Warp/inertial)

A few years ago Warp started talking about releasing a DVD compilation of all their promotional videos. After a couple of Warp screening events in Europe, including Sonar 2003, it has finally seen the light of day. Some of you may remember the early ‘90s computer graphics that filled Warp’s Motion release (1994, VHS only) accompanied by music drawn from the Artificial Intelligence series – but it’s been a long time between drinks. Curious, especially for a label that has always released very ‘visual’ instrumental music, and had such a strong and lasting visual design aesthetic. Warp was waiting for a medium like DVD that could adequately capture the breadth and depth of their output. What appears on Warp Vision is a detailed chronicle of their music videos, much like the recently released Ninja Tune video compilation. However unlike the Ninja Tune compile, Warp has commissioned some of the most lauded and interesting music videos of the last decade all of which appear here. Of Cunningham’s incredible Aphex Twin double, ‘Windowlicker’ and ‘Come To Daddy’, and Squarepusher’s ‘Come On My Selector’, and Daniel Levi’s clip for LFO’s ‘Freak’ all appear in their longest unedited versions. Alex Rutterford’s intricate CGI work on Autechre’s ‘Gantz Graf’ leads the animated clips along with the excellent stop-motion work from Pulp’s Jarvis Cocker (‘he was the only person we knew who could do video’) on Aphex Twin’s beautiful ‘On’. Of the others – there are 32 in total – there are some groundbreaking clips from Lynn Fox, Pleix, Carlos Arias and promowork from Designers Republic. In a world where music videos generally tend to be short-lived phenomena quickly discarded to the waste lots of uninspired cultural refuse, a large number of the Warp videos here surpass their ‘use-value’ as promotional tools and become important milestones in modern visual culture. Sebastian Chan

**Christo and Jeanne-Claude**

Five Films about Christo and Jeanne-Claude (Plexifilm/Stomp)

This elegant package from the independent DVD publisher Plexifilm chronicles the long-running and unique collaboration between the contemporary installation artist Christo, his creative partner and wife Jeanne-Claude and acclaimed documentary filmmakers Albert and David Maysles (Salesman and Grey Gardens). The series of award-winning films spanning from 1974 to 1995 stands as a permanent document of the process, the political drama, the emotional investment and the transforming effect the finished works have on all those who come in contact with them. Known for projects as seemingly incomprehensible as surrounding islands around Miami in flamboyantly pink fabric and using fabric to disguise the Pont Neuf in Paris, the pair aim to change the way people view their surroundings — both natural and man-made — drawing attention to the collision between art and everyday life.

My previous experiences of and exposure to Christo’s diverse projects have all been through reproductions in various publica-
Blackletter
Junk Extensions
(Vibragun 2004)
Format: CD
Designer: Dank Realms

Hot off the presses, another explosive design from Dank Realms for this second Vibragun release which also credits Blackletter for some graphic elements. Here, like a method actor, the graphic chaos has motivation. A photographic background shows the flat earth and superimposed cities being bombarded with lightning. Fragments of letters and shattered keylines are strewn across the digipak by the mother of all storms, which comes complete with twisters. The credits and track listing are similarly thrown around the sleeve like so much debris, the tightly tracked heavy sans serif face varying in readability. Intricate spot varnishes add a watery depth. Caught in the storm on the front cover and sliced into several pieces are two hand-drawn cartoon people, looking contemplative and irritated, respectively. Their inky lines are a great contrast to both the photography and the crispness of the line work. And there’s a joke for fellow designers too. The name Blackletter is written in the heavy sans serif on the front. But on the back it is written in black letter – that’s what’s commonly known as gothic writing, an ornate hangover from hand lettering beloved of anyone trying to make something look really old or traditional – the word ‘Antiques’ for instance. But there’s more. In 1936, typeface designer Frederick Goudy said ‘anyone who would letterspace black letter would steal sheep.’ He was referring to the writing on a typeface award he had just won, ungrateful sod. Anyway, here the black letter is not letterspaced (big gaps between the letters) but is very very tightly tracked. Goodness only knows what Dank Realms will do to your sheep. It appears on the back cover in this style and also on the CD, which is printed in black on black. Noice, and a good fit for the record – variously moody and abrasive, with abstracted digi-noise contrasting with fragments of melody and occasional guitars.
Twink
*The Toy Box*
(Mulatta 2004)
Format: 3 mini-CDs and a picture book in a box
Designer: Twink

The type and design on the printed band that closes this box recalls late 19th century American type – vaudeville posters and the like. But slip the maroon and lilac band off the recycled brown box and you see a thoroughly contemporary... thing. Is it a jellyfish? A three-stalked mushroom? Whatever it is, it’s printed on there with a rubber stamp, and also appears on the lilac cover of the booklet that greets you as you lift the lid of the box. The book follows the adventures, in pictures only, of a cute white bunny when he encounters this jellyfish/mushroom – and we have to add bird to that, because it turns out it has wings. The bunny tries to catch the jellymush bird with a butterfly net, but crashes into a bush. He climbs the tree it’s perched in and tries to grab it, falls, and catches its leg as it flies off – but he crashes to the ground again. But then, jellymush bird returns with two friends and they sing to him, and he is happy. We could be, perhaps, in the land of Cute. So we reach the first mini CD, clad in brown die-cut gatefold sleeve printed on the cover in metallic copper. Hand-drawn style type announces the name of the CD, *Small Sound All Around*. The name Twink is written in a beautifully executed ‘70s blobby style across a flower. On the back, the track titles spiral in copper around the page. An insert into the gatefold comes on bright orange paper, printed in black with credits and another flower with musical notes on it. The CD is printed with an orange and white flower. Twink’s music is created with lots of toy instruments combined with electronics. It’s actually more musical than it sounds – these people can play, contrabass and trumpet appear in amongst the toy sitars and animal sounds. Some of it recalls The Residents, but these guys are on a very different trip. The next CD, *7 Pieces for Pling Plong* features a very different and more classic serif typographic style in gold on a deep red stock, topped with a clean illustration of a leaping bunny with a key in its back. The insert follows the same tri-fold format as before with a calligraphic typeface on parchment forming the credits. A pling plong is apparently a music-box-like instrument that can only be played by cards punched with holes. And it can only cope with C major, but they have certainly taken it a lot further than that suggests. From the bluesy swank of ‘Dandelion Wine’ through the moody and evocative ‘Light Through a Keyhole’ and the sweet melancholy of ‘Yarnbelly’ to the minute-long black and white Hollywood sweetness of ‘Zwool’ it deserves the love and care put into the packaging. To the last CD, *Welcome to the Jingle* where it all goes a bit darker. Another bunny this time forms a skull and crossbones, except they are crossed carrots, in silver on black card. On the back is the name Twink in mock heavy metal logo form. The insert features Kiss bunnies. Bloody hilarious. By now I really like these people. The CD print features the same bunny and cross-carrots, but the centre of the CD removes his face. And on the CD we get grinding guitars mixed with toy xylophones, and driving synth basslines. And cellos. The design works in that each CD design has its own personality to suit the different sides of Twink’s output. So it relies on using different colours of the same stock and the same die-cut to hold it together. For me, the design of the outer band could have had more connection with the little illustrated booklet or vice versa, or the pattern on the band could have been used inside to pull it all together. Recommended all the same.
Carsten Nicolai
*Auto Pilot*
(Raster-Noton 2002)
Format: CD and book
Designer: Olaf Bender, Jonna Groendahl, Carsten Nicolai

In the embossing bonanza that was last issue, we showed an example of CD sleeve-as-book. Here is another, although strictly speaking this is a book with CD. It’s a retrospective of some of Carsten Nicolai’s audio and visual science-art that I just rediscovered on my shelf and it deserves to be covered here. It’s a fascinating collection and thanks to the Raster Noton aesthetic it looks great. The contents run from the classification of snow crystals by Ukichiro Nakaya (one piece brought the process of their creation into a gallery space) to the effects of different sounds frequencies on liquids; the book contains a series of photos of milk that you can almost hear. Explorations cover the nature of randomness, new forms of notation, the codes and systems of language, the relationship between the mathematical and the organic, and the movements of energy as sound waves. Somehow the potential severity of the aesthetic is always dissipated, and perhaps the randomness plays a part in this. So the book’s cover consists of a series of lines and dots from the piece *Telefunken Reverso*, the CD-holding device and bright yellow core of the CD peeking through a circular die-cut. The CD is solid yellow with copyright details in tiny type, and is held in a gatefold flap inside the cover. The book variously contains fine line work and gallery photography, diagrams, and interview texts. It’s well-paced, varying between full-bleed double page spreads, text pages, and illustrations swimming in white space. Transparent plastic sheets printed with strips of black form the centre of the book, recreating part of the Telefunken Reverso piece. Can someone please bring this work to Australia? Ta.

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*agf*
*delayONmyPILLOW*
(Stichting Mixer 2004)
Format: mini CD
Designer: Uncredited

This is a good example of a low budget but quite interesting sleeve. Firstly it isn’t square. A plastic closure holds together a rectangle that is printed with bands of navy on cream stock. The title appears on the back in Courier or similar. Snap open the plastic doodad and remove it from the die-cut hole to reveal two more navy stripe-printed flaps that help secure the CD, which is printed half white, half blue and features artist, title and catalogue number in Courier again. A business card accompanies it and contains title, credits, label contact and logo and website addresses. It could have gone further, but it’s a nice twist on mini-CD packaging. Musically it’s an 18-minute piece of field recordings, creaks, overhead voices, whispering, occasional percussion, DSP and a lovely gentle song at about the eight-minute mark, with a more strident song at the end. The whole piece is very evocative – I would love to see it interpreted visually.

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See cyclicdefrost.com for more including the Rune Grammofon release Money Will Ruin Everything, more illustrations and, as always, reproductions in glorious full colour.
Sonar is a strange beast. The sheer scale of the production and organisation, even in the daytime events, was mesmerising. At times sonically arresting, at others astonishing in its blandness; at times too crowded, and at others, disturbingly empty; at once an epiphany and an exercise in futility, it was, and probably always will be, an enigma.

Taking place in the centre of the glorious ramshackle metropolis of Barcelona, Sonar ran over three days and nights. The daytime events were held in the grounds of Barcelona’s premier modern art facility, the CCCB/MACBA, literally in the epicentre of the city. With apartment blocks on all sides, sprouting from the intricate laneways and thoroughfares, the space was like an oasis in a desert of intricate 19th century architecture. The proximity to housing is arresting – the daytime events take place on thousands of people’s doorsteps – needless to say the locals are a mere twitchy at the presence of so many people, and show it with banners hanging from windows and balconies. The daytime events were generally more experimental and featured showcases from a number of different labels including Lex, Ghostly, Domino etc. The nighttime events were held in the less salubrious environs of a warehouse complex in Barcelona’s outskirts, and were basically huge dance parties with the odd decent act sandwiched into line-ups of big name DJs.

Wandering around on the first day was a little futile – still recovering from jetlag and acclimatising to the city meant that I managed to catch very of little of interest. The gallery however, remained open, and was full of Sonar punters (including me for a couple of hours of air-conditioned bliss) meandering through an excellent exhibition on war, with security present, it seemed, to insist only that the public carried their backpacks in front of them.

The evening was taken up by a special umbrella event featuring the Barcelona Orchestra in a versus situation with Ryuichi Sakamoto, Pan Sonic, Fennesz accompanied by visuals from Lia, Jon Wozencroft and Videogeist. Despite the sumptuous surrounds of the auditorium and the obvious pedigree of the performers, it was a little lacking in focus and inspiration. Both Sakamoto and Fennesz did little audibly to really interrupt, interact or involve the orchestra, adding subtle DSP effects to what seemed like the whole orchestra rather than remixing (or reconducting) singular instruments – in fact Sakamoto seemed merely to be manipulating a Kaos Pad during his performance. The roles were reversed during Pan Sonic’s set and this was far more successful, with the Barcelona Orchestra playing at, around and through Pan Sonic’s clinical but organic swathes of sound.

The late evening featured a press launch at a largish Barcelona club. After waiting through a set drawn directly from hiphop’s canon (it’s great that some things don’t change) we were joined by Big Dada’s Roots Manuva and band. Coming on to a just-filling room they took a little while to get settled; the fact that Mr Manuva has selected a band as adhoc and casual as himself may have also played a part. But that’s part of the charm, and by the time ‘Witness (1 Hope)’ was played (featuring two bass players) all the slop finally solidified.

Day two was far more coherent and thus more enjoyable. Despite this I still missed out on more than I saw. The festival curse of crowds, time conflicts and intervening factors (such as eating/abluting/resting) meant that I managed to miss the Spanish hiphop of La Excepcion and Roty340. However, I was stunned to stumble upon Rune Grammofon’s Maja Ratke, whose glacial stillness and strength was a tonic to the heat and grit of the day outside. Francois K with a majestic Mutaburaka holding court was another early highlight, with the dub poet riding equally comfortably over abstract rhythms and more familiar dubwise terrains. When the stalwart DJ moved into more housey domains so did I.

One of the smaller stages featured showcases from Michigan’s Ghostly International and NYC’s Brøklyn Beats. Geoff White from Ghostly played a somewhat dry set of messed up instrumental hiphop ensconced behind a laptop, and managed to barely change facial expression through the course of the set. Dabrye seemed far more comfortable, and was far more compelling because of it, even though his set was very similar to the one he had played in Australia in 2003. Brøklyn Beats upped the ante, performance-wise at least, with a quite manic display from Drop the Lime. A skinny blonde kid flipping out to a soundtrack of mashed up drill’n’bass while screaming into a mic was pure gold and easily the highlight of the day. Full of pauses, ruptures and fuck-ups, it displayed the randomness and chaos that electronic sometimes misses. Doily, although overshadowed by her labelmate, was consummate in her honest set of crunch and syncopation. During the odd break and wander I peeped Prince Po doing call and response (yawn), Prefuse 73 spinning plastic (double yawn) and poor old Fog from Hymie’s Basement playing a lonely set post-downpour on the main stage, amongst a mere smattering of audience members (sigh). Deciding to leave the huge night event to the pilled-up munters I headed to my hotel via one of the stranger takes on Indian cuisine that I’ve tasted.

Arriving mid saturday I was greeted by Dani Siciliano in full band mode reinterpreting faithfully her most recent album. Less throat and silk than chest and canvas, her presence and performance were remarkable for their ability to capture the nuance and shade that she possesses on record without optioning on flashy gimmicks, apart from getting Herbert up for a bandoneum solo. Heading over to one of the smaller stages I managed to catch most of Roger Robinson’s set of spoken word/hiphop – a large man with a commanding presence, Robinson played tracks from his upcoming album on Jazz Fudge. Expecting his righteous and inciteful poetry I was almost shocked when, accompanied by guitar and violin he proceeded to sing a pretty ditty in praise of sunshine with summery chorus intact and smiles all around. Fantastic, and courageous. He was followed by label mates Dark Circle, a German/UK hiphop crew whose boundless energy, interplay and bilingual verbal gymnastics were a breath of fresh air. And despite their reputation for being a little serious their set never strayed into self-indulgent territory. Nearby a Domino showcase featured Juana Molina, Max Tundra, Fourtet and To Rococo Rot. Juana Molina stole the show as well as my heart with her delicious understated folk tunes soaked in gentle electronics. Accompanied by an impishly playful yet portly ginger-bearded keyboard/guitarist, her set was delivered with a quiet charm verging on shyness. Next up, Max Tundra had the dubious distinction of being one of the few acts of substance to really capture the crowd’s
In Detroit, no-one lives downtown if they can afford not to. Instead the middle class live a million kilometres away out in the ‘burbs and, should they be so unlucky as to work in the city, commute everyday. I’d heard about Detroit’s ruined downtown and was expecting to be amazed by the post-industrial melancholia of it all – and I was amazed. It’s one thing to be a visitor wandering around appreciating the gritty aesthetic and quite another thing to actually live there, when the ‘shithole’ aspect would probably take over from the ‘melancholic’ grandeur.

With a backdrop as poignant as this it was only fitting that the Detroit Electronic Music Festival was fraught with problems of relevance, lack of resources and adequate cash flow.

The cracks appeared as festival organiser Derrick May was hardly to be seen over the weekend. When he did pop up, he was looking pretty worried – not much of a surprise seeing as it was a lot of his cash that was funding the event. Since the festival is always free, they were having a tough time getting anything back. He interrupted Barbara Presinger’s (~scape Records) set for an ‘important announcement’: they needed cash, so could we ‘please buy the official merchandise?’ Later on it turned out that the power suppliers had threatened to turn off the power the next morning if they didn’t get paid and that, as recently as two days before the festival started, the legendary Kevin Saunderson was scraping around for the $125,000 that they needed to pay the security and sound guys.

Presinger was playing what was called the Underground Stage which was literally underground, in a space a bit like a double-height car park. It had a massive PA that was always turned up too loud to the point where the kicks and bass all just blurred together into a huge, messy, bowel-shifting boom that made the top of my skull vibrate. When Presinger played, it was raining outside so the place was packed with ‘peakers’. When May interrupted, he apologised for breaking up her ‘really excellent set’ and I’m thinking: ‘bullshit, you only just got here’. As a taste maker she’s faultless, but it’s a party and if she’s going to DJ, she should learn how to mix. But she wasn’t the only one with substandard mixing skills. Kevin Saunderson played the penultimate set on the main stage on the last day. This joker’s been DJing since before I was born and his mixing was rubbish.

The best day of the festival was the first one, when most of the darker, electro-y people and the Dutch contingent played. Kill Memory Crash were easily my favourite, banging out a rough set of cranky electro. It’s good to see producers laying their own vocals over their tracks, even if they are just screaming through a vocoder. I was really looking forward to Legowelt’s D&D techno, but he was disappointing, probably because the booming PA meant that you could hear almost none of the melody and top end, which is really what his tracks are all about.

The prize for the weekend’s most amazing after-party venue goes to Ghostly International, who hired out the ballroom of the Detroit Masonic Temple – a massive, slightly gothic, shabby building, from the 1920s. The inside of the building was all stone floors, wide, dramatic staircases, high ceilings, low lighting and massive chandeliers. The ballroom even had a mezzanine with viewing boxes. Unfortunately, in order for it to have looked like a party, they would have needed about another 400 people more than the 150-odd techno geeks, intellectuals and professional-haircuts that were there by the time Matthew Dear bumped out a tough, minimal and occasionally interesting laptop set. There was a pretty amazing after-party where the same Kill Memory Crash played alongside DJs including Ben Sims. It was in three little rundown, sweaty, interconnected shopfronts—rough’n’tumble and really dark. Tech-house in one room, bangin’ techno in another and electro-tech in another. Brilliant. Another after-party had Japanese legend Ken Ishii playing to a crowd of just 200.

By the last day, when most of the big local names were playing, it got to the stage where I was just praying that Kevin Saunderson, Stacey Pullen and Rolando would be able to save the main event by at least being entertaining. Saunderson’s set I’ve already mentioned. The other two were unfortunately on at the same time and Pullen lost out. Rolando was playing the main stage and he played a mostly excellent, well constructed set. In a good way, it was kind of just what you would expect – some Detroit history mixed in with newer, Detroit-influenced tracks. But the crowd? There would have been a few thousand people there. Only about half were dancing. The rest just stood around. When the MC (Derrick May, hidden behind a speaker stack) was trying to amp up the crowd, no-one was responding to his calls. There was even crowd-surfing and, god help us, girls flashing their tits. It was all so surreal.

Why have a free techno festival for people who, it seems, mostly aren’t really that into it? It seems like part of the reason for having a big-ass festival is to pay homage to their own glory. Most of them have been around a while now — some would have released their first record nearly 20 years ago — so I suppose their options are either to fuel the hype or fade away. Many still seem to believe, without a hint of irony, that they’re on some sort of futuristic mission for the salvation of music. The festival program guide was full of this hagiographic, self-aggrandising bollocks. This is the glaring problem for the festival: that the Detroit sound is, well, kind of boring now. Despite supposedly being the music of the future, it is sounding purely historical. They needed more fresh talent, not just the old men.

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*Both reviews appear in longer form at cyclicdefrost.com*
a housemate, having my own personal Laurie Anderson festivals when I listen to the box CD set compilation of the six hour ‘Unites States of America’ concert. I was particularly influenced by her in my earlier sound works, in the use and manipulation of text, which provided me with a bridge from my performance practice to an electronic-based and audio-focussed approach.

PJ Harvey
Dry & Is This Desire
(Shock 1992, Island 1998)
The feisty rock-babe in me got really excited by the bold and blatant tracks on Dry. It was the early ‘90s and I was big on the assertive-female-perspective thing, so her bolshy lyrics really appealed. She was one of the first heavier, dirty-rock sounds that I was attracted to after all that folk. But what I really loved was her conversion from the punky, rock style to the intricate sonic depth of Is This Desire. Here she built a whole other world both lyrically and sonically. The restraint in the production and integration of electronic content has a real brooding, darkly sexy quality about it.

Björk
Human Behaviour & Vespertine
(Bapsi/One Little Indian 1993/2001)
When I’m not wanting to be Laurie Anderson, I’m wanting to be Björk. Everything on Debut opened my eyes. Her vocal abandon, more akin to a jazz singer or wailing harpy than pop utilising every possible timbre; the fusion of beats and found sources; down to the atmospheric recording tech-
niques of ‘There’s More to Life Than This’. I love everything she does, but book-end Debut with the very other-worldliness of Vespertine and you see how she goes from strength to strength. The fusion of Matmos’ masterful sampling and the extraordinary choral and orchestral moments is something only the weird Icelandic princess could pull off without it ever becoming excessively saccharine.

Tricky
Maxinquaye
(Island 1995)
A friend gave me a tape copy of Maxinquaye for my 25th birthday, and the world has never been the same since. I was still in acoustic singer/songwriter mode and hadn’t really listened to any electronic music (besides Björk) but all of sudden everything became clear. I could see the structure, loops, layering, texture and then text. The greatest revelation was (and it still is) those spiky rhythms that emerge, looping unusual sources, the uneven beats and lurches that works so well with the voices.

Belle & Sebastian
Tigermilk
(Jeepster 1996)
The Reindeer Section
Son of Evil Reindeer
(BrightStar 2002)
Obsessive home listening for me is bitter sweet Glaswegian pop, and has been for a few years now. After bagging Belle & Sebastian as limp and sappy on my first listen, they grew on me – now it’s like a nasty skin condition. Tigermilk is on high rotation. There’s nothing like ‘She’s Losing It’ to set an ugly morning on the right vibe. But my ultimate favourite is a CD compiled by a friend of mine from singles. Nothing beats the three-chord catharsis of ‘This Is Just a Modern Rock Song’. And just when I thought I might be kicking the bad habit – post Electrofringe 2003 when I needed some acoustic distraction – I found Reindeer Section’s Son of Evil Reindeer. Those painfully sweet melodies with the most devastating lyrical content you’d ever hope to find perfectly articulate every kind of heartbeat you have experienced. ‘Now that I’ve exposed my tune-based listening passions, I’m meant to tell you my favourite sound art epiphanies, but I don’t listen to sound art at home for my own pleasure. I have been known to play Peter Blamey’s Felt, Joel Stern & Anthony Guerra’s Stitch (Impermanent Recordings 2002, 2003 respectively), or Scott Horscroft’s 8 Guitars (Quecksilber 2003) from time to time, and quite recently been mesmerised by Robin Fox’s DVD Backscatter (Synaesthesia 2004).

But it just doesn’t seem to work by myself – I don’t have the same attention to detail and absorption in the texture.

What I love about live audio art events is being gathered in a room with other people sharing that listening experience, having a single uninterrupted focus for a specified time, capturing the sound in time and listening to people listening. In this context I’ve had plenty of epiphanies – the Husbands at Space 3 in September 2003, Kaffe Matthews in a Berlin cellar in February this year, and Anthony Pateras on prepared piano at Impermanent Audio in April this year. When it comes to art, that initial demand for ‘performance’ will just never lay and down and die.’

Gail Priest is now retired from Electrofringe and is working on several other projects. Check out mp3s of her sound art at cyclicdefrost.com
Dear Degrassi,

What’s your greatest disappointment?
Duane Glazafemty

Disappointment? You mean one singular instant in my life that has been more disappointing than another? No can do, my friend! My life has been littered with disappointments to the point where I’ve just tossed them all into a basket labelled ‘Disappointments’. Let me rifle through it now and reminisce in a state of perpetual self-indulgence.

BILL COLLINS’ DEMISE

The evaporation of Bill Collins from free-to-air television has meant that people are now expected to just watch films without any introduction. How else are you expected to find out fascinating facts and witty anecdotes about the particular print you are going to watch? In fact, I think that I can attribute Bill with my pernickety love of film and, more generally, pop culture. Thank your respective deity that cable TV has snapped him up and he can bring further joy and information to my life. How can you not trust a guy who lived with his mum until she died of old age and then promptly married her best friend?

I remember Bill Collins presenting Flashdance on free-to-air and going on about a huge disappointment he had with the film. In fact it so disappointed him, that he was afraid that if he revealed it before the film, he might ruin people’s enjoyment of it. So if we wanted to find out what it was, we would have to go and see him at some shopping centre public appearance the next day. My father and I have to go and see him at some shopping centre if we wanted to find out what it was, we would have to release an official soundtrack of the film. However, Marie didn’t know how to do a backspin, which features so prominently in the climactic dance scene. Hollywood, having stacks of cash said, ‘Hey, let’s get the best of the best to teach Marie to backspin in just one day,’ and so they called in Richard ‘Crazy Legs’ Colón of Rock Steady Crew fame. When he told them that you can’t teach a backspin in a day, they asked him if he wanted to do it. After being shown the money, Crazy Legs donned some leg warmers and a leotard... and millions of horny men were none the wiser.

FERRIS’ FIDDLER

‘Ehhhhhd Rooney’, otherwise known as Jeffrey Jones who played Ferris Bueller’s nemesis principal. I’d always been a huge fan, but wait, what’s that? Busted for child molestation. Nice one, Ed. I’ve never been able to watch him utter the words ‘The game is up. Your ass is mine,’ in the same way since.

SILENT SOUNDTRACK

And whilst we’re on the subject of Ferris..., I wish I could invite John Hughes around to my place for dinner and then box him around the ears for his distinct lack of good judgement. Foolishly, he decided not to release an official soundtrack of the film. He felt that the mix of songs would have been far too eclectic to have sold successfully. From the Star Wars theme to the most beautiful cover of a Smiths track ever (and yes, all you trainspotters who think they can teach me a thing or two, I do own the Morr Music compilation, and The Dream Academy’s version of ‘Please, Please, Please Let Me Get What I Want’ is far better). And who on earth would admit to knowing who Wayne Newton was if it hadn’t been for the street parade scene?

DURAN DURAN

I know I harp on about this one, but it deserves another mention: Duran Duran supporting Robbie Williams! SUPPORTING! I honestly shed tears when I found out about this situation, but I shed further tears when the 26-year-old colleague who was scopeing for Robbie tickets asked me who Duran Duran were. I could have solved NSW’s drought crisis with my tears! Only it gets worse. Whilst up late recently, I found myself watching a batch of ‘fresh’ video clips and once-raunchy-now-paunchy Simon Le Bon was leading the pack of similarly be-jowled Duran Duran leftovers with a terrible comeback single [which incidentally has been adopted as theme music for channel 7’s Sunrise – Ed]. Didn’t they prove that their creative pool was starting to resemble a desert back in the mid-’90s with the release of ‘Electric Barbarella’, a nod to the film from which they stole their name.

Time for another patented Degrassi segue... I’ve had a blast writing this column over the past six years, but unlike Duran Duran, I’ve decided to hang up my boots before I wear a hole in them. Stay tuned for the next Cyclic Defrost for a tacky, Vaseline-soaked ‘Best Of’. And hey, who knows, five years from now I may come back for a reunion issue sporting an appalling hair-do!

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Alas, Degrassi will be going the way of Sex and the City, Friends and Dicko and shall not be returning next season. She will of course be featured heavily in reruns and may appear in cameos for such things as Christmas specials and the like. A ‘best of’ will appear next issue.
Various
Skåne Revisited (New Speak)
This album takes as its starting point the amazing tune Skåne, drawn from Andreas Tilliander’s 1998 album 'Vena'. New Speak’s hand-picked team of mixers rework the original - staying true to its original inspiration, but not its sound qualities. Remixes by Xela, Bauri, Ludvig Elblaus + more....

Various
Switches (Audiobulb)
A unique compilation from Audiobulb Record’s global roster. Switches contains 14 complex, beautiful and disturbing tracks - each acting as a unique switch bringing new elements of audio exploration to the listener’s experience.

Dunaewsky 69
Contiguity (Shaped Harmonics)
This debut album from Ukrainian project Dunaewsky 69 is a beautiful atmospheric album that is romantic and subtle. Warm analogue synths abound in this modern take on classical music.

Claro Intelecto
Neurofibro (AI Records)
Neurofibro is a techno rarity. An album that works from start to finish, taking in a myriad styles, paying homage to the masters and developing some new tricks all its own. Modern and elegant it takes dance music to a whole new level.

Spark
Super Robot Battle Deluxe (n5md)
The perfect mix of acidic old school hardcore, breakcore trickery and subtle subliminal melodies that leave you wanting the battle to never end...“Super robot battle deluxe” is an infectious mix of modern experimental electronica.

Tiki Obmar
Seasons (Merck)
Another quality Merck release with tunes that move you with deft arrangements and mood-driven melodies - includes new material from tiki obmar plus remixes by helios, cepia, proswell, machinedrum, proem, tim koch, deru, deceptikon, la muerte blanca, miles tilmann, and adam johnson.

f.s. blumm & friends
Sesamsamen (Plop)
Another high quality release from this loveable Japanese label. F.S. Blumm, who has previously released on Morr music, explores the concept of cooperative composition. A symphony of his friends contribute to this album inspired by Blumms guitar based ethiopian rhythms. The end result is a lush world full of emotive soundscapes and random experimentations.

Keef Baker
The Widnes Years (n5md)
In his debut album Keef Baker draws together disparate realms of IDM and breakcore producing an album that is wonderfully diffused with anger and sadness.

Ontayso, Sense, Tim Koch
Where have you been? What have you done? And why? (u-cover)
One hour of diverse and inventive electronica - manipulated sounds and voices, broken rhythms, joyful drums.

Keep an eye out for these upcoming vinyl releases..... Machine Drum - Bidnezz and Machine Drums - Now You Know (repressing). Couchblip! now also distributes: Spezial Material, Neo Ouija, Spekk, Yunx, Shadetek, Lacerated, Device, Semisexual, Type, Kracifice, Coredump + more. Available now at all good record stores or online at http://distribution.couchblip.com. Distributed by Couchblip! distribution@couchblip.com
Mieli - Version
FM06
Released on Oct 18.

Lovers of graceful clicks and cuts will be entranced by this debut. Mieli launches Version at Frigid @Newtown on Sunday October 24 with a rare Sydney performance.

Various - The SBS Whatever Sessions 2
FM07
Released on Nov 1.

Exclusive tracks from Australia’s brightest underground musicians, recorded at SBS’ multitrack studios. Artifishal Limb, Barrage, Cinco Locos, The Emergency, Fo Tran, ii, Minimum Chips, The Tigers, Velure, Wagons and more.
37 tracks, 28 bands, 2CDs: 146 minutes of pure enjoyment.

In 2000, SBS began Whatever Music - seeking underground, unsigned artists and recording their work. The SBS Whatever Sessions 2 - the best so far.
For more info and exclusive multimedia content: www.sbs.com.au/whatever

Comatone - E-50
FM09
Released on Nov 15.

Comatone’s latest offering, E-50, follows his acclaimed debut One Into One Out, pushing the envelope again to create a modern sonic tour de force. Think Kid606, Akufen, Autechre and Squarepusher, but with Comatone’s unique DNA.

David Elliott Incogniti - I Sat On A Corner Of A Page Of The Novel Of My Mind
FM08
Released on Nov 1.

An ambitious, lo-fi, pastoral soundscape with no boundaries. Think Bowie’s Low recorded on a Pentium II.

Also available
FM01 Plankton EP
FM03 Comatone
FM04 Plankton
FM05 Catnip

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